

THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN ACADEMICS
IN A MALE-DOMINATED ENVIRONMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of women academics in a male-dominated environment, at a South African university. This report moves from the contention that the original classification of the academic world as a 'man's world' still holds true for present day women academics and argues that the only way in which women's experiences in academia can be validated is through an in-depth documentation and analysis hereof.

The essay begins by examining the patriarchal origins of the academic world and then claims that these origins have an impact on the power relations, structure, organisation and procedures within the university. A qualitative research design was used to explore the experiences of women academics in male dominated environment. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of ten academics, from the level of senior professor to that of junior lecturer. The constant comparative method of data analysis was used to search for recurring themes and patterns.

This study revealed that the experiences of women academics at a South African institution of higher education, an institution traditionally dominated by men, to be similar to that of women academics in other parts of the world. The findings of this research essay illustrate that the women academics at the Rand Afrikaans University identify both positive and negative aspects to their positions as women academics. Positive aspects include the lessening of visible, overt discrimination and the advantage of flexible working hours. Some of the negative experiences include the double workload of women academics, their ambivalent feelings about academia and the impact of operating in a 'man's world' on their reactions and behaviour. The study also highlights the importance of personal and professional support structures for women academics.

The essay concludes with a number of possible recommendations, which includes staff development activities especially in the arena of training for gender sensitivity for all role-players in the academic arena.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Our experience has been named by men, but not even in a language derived from their experience. Even this is too direct and too personal. And so it is removed from experience altogether, by being cast in abstract and theoretical terms. We need a women's language, a language of experience. And this must necessarily come from our exploration of the personal, the everyday, and what we experience – women's lived experiences (Stanley and Wise as quoted by Kathleen Weiler, 1988:61).

The above quotation which echoes a search for a “women’s language” emanating from their experience, was uttered by Stanley and Wise in 1983. Today almost 15 years later, despite the great numbers of women employed in all sectors of life, women are still operating largely in and through a “language named by men”. This is particularly true for women employed as academics in institutions of higher education, institutions, which are often commonly referred to as ‘a man’s world’. This essay focuses on the experiences of a sample of women academics in a male-dominated environment to firstly arrive at an understanding of such experiences and secondly to report on it, thereby contributing in part to the creation of such a “women’s language”.

The first part of this essay commences with an orientation to the research problem under investigation, followed by the statement of the problem and the aim of the study. This is followed by the literature review which draws on the field of feminist literature and literature in adult and higher education. Thereafter, I describe the research methodology employed and the process for data-analysis. Following this is a presentation of the findings, as well as a discussion thereof. The essay concludes with a discussion of the possible implications of this study for staff development activities in institutions of higher education in South Africa.

2. ORIENTATION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Since the emergence of the feminist movement in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, women have been progressively looking through ‘new eyes’ at their social, economic, political and educational situations. What essentially began as women emerging to question their inferior and subordinate status in society has grown into a movement,

which in itself, has grown and splintered into many schools of thought. This is reflected in the growing body of feminist literature, which focuses on different aspects of women's issues: their studies, experiences, problems, aspirations and questions.

One distinct body of feminist literature is located in the arena of education. Feminist scholars, amongst other interested parties, are engaged in an ongoing scrutiny of the unexamined manner in which students, particularly women, receive and learn about gender and sexism from the gendered education offered at pre-school level to that of higher education. Of further concern are the experiences, situations and actions of women as educators within these spheres of educational provision. For the purposes of this study the situation and experiences of women academics as educational providers in higher education has been examined.

There is a plethora of literature (Davies, Lubelska & Quinn, 1994; Morley & Walsh, 1995; Acker, 1994) documenting the situation of women academics in universities in North America, Australia and Europe. These generally describe women as "outsiders in academia" and question "whether it is possible to be a woman and an academic given the patriarchal nature of academia" (Davies, Lubelska, & Quinn, 1994:5). This body of literature is mirrored to an extent in nature and scope by research into this field in the South African context. Some such recent studies (Department of Education, 1997; De La Rey, 1998) have attempted to analyse the situation of women academics in South African institutions of higher education; environments which are traditionally dominated by men. These studies, by and large, have revealed a situation for South African women academics similar to that of their American, Australian and European counterparts.

This prevailing situation is pertinent in South African institutions of higher education especially in the light of the latest Gender Equity Legislation embodied in the new South African constitution, adopted in the wake of the country's first democratic elections in April 1994. For the first time in the country's history women are able to demand and are guaranteed the same rights as those accorded to men. This has implied specific and far-reaching effects for among others, institutions of higher education and the women academics in their employ.

However, despite the implications inherent in this pervasive legislation, the comments of the Director General in his address to the Gender Equity Task Team's Consultative Conference in July 1997, cautions that "it would be foolhardy to assume - irrespective of what the constitution states - that there is consensus about whether women's subordination exists, and if it does what its distinctive characteristics are" (Department of Education, 1997:27). He furthermore fears that "there is a degree of wearisome intolerance about discourse on gender equity" (Department of Education, 1997:27). This wariness from a body, which was specifically created by the national Department of Education to formulate guidelines for the establishment of a Gender Equity Unit, is especially relevant, yet perturbing, given the traditionally patriarchal history and nature of institutions of higher education in South Africa.

The main research question can thus be stated as follows:

- o What are the experiences of women academics in a male-dominated environment at a South African University?

3. AIM OF THE STUDY



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In view of the above-mentioned orientation and statement of the problem the aim of this study is to explore the experiences of women academics in a male-dominated environment in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of these.

4. ASSUMPTIONS AND PRESUPPOSITIONS

In my position as a newly-appointed junior woman academic in the employ of the university, at which this study had been conducted, I gained the impression that the academic world regards women as unequal participants and contributors. In my time at the university I experienced situations, in which I witnessed women being treated differently to men and had been privy to the recollections of women who had been subjected to this practice over many years. Prior to embarking on this study it was my assumption that in general women academics at the male-dominated Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) would have experiences, which were disempowering, negative, frustrating and contrary to existing university and constitutional legislation.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Introduction

The problem investigated focused on gaining an understanding of the experiences of women academics in a male-dominated environment. The empirical investigation has been informed by research literature in the arenas of adult and higher education and feminist literature, specifically in the sub-fields of gender and higher education. I have also drawn on relevant and applicable literature from a number of gender studies in various other areas of scholarship to serve as theoretical framework for this study.

This section focuses firstly on the importance of women's experiences. I then briefly clarify the use of the generic term 'women academics' before embarking on a discussion of the patriarchal origins of academia. This leads to a discussion of the impact of power relations between men and women and how it influences and is influenced by the structure, organisation and procedures within the university context. I then move on to a discussion of the issue of women academic's access to networks and their perceptions of themselves and their place within the academy. I conclude by making reference to two quotations by women from the literature, which I contend, aptly sums up the position or stance of women academics today.

5.2 The importance of women's experiences

In a consideration of the relevance of the experiences of women academics as an area of research, I argue that it would be of interest to note the prophetic words of Gerda Lerner (as quoted by Schuster, 1994: 199) when she declares that "to document the experience of women would mean documenting all of history: they have always been of it, in it, and making it ... half, at least, of the world's experience has been theirs, half of the world's work and much of its products". Her views serve to remind us of the often forgotten impact of the role of women in the family, in society and in the world at large. This is especially so for institutions of higher education such as the university where the experiences of women have often been neglected, sidelined or totally negated. This is, in my view vital, especially when one considers the utterances of magda gere lewis

(1993:145) about universities as “both the site where reactionary and repressive ideologies and practices are entrenched and, at the same time, the site where progressive, transformative possibilities are born”. Jane Thompson (1983: 66) tells us that it is up to women to “generate the knowledge, the creative anger, and the energy which can transform our relationships with one another and with men, which can resist patriarchal power and which can bring about change”. Longfellow (as quoted in Magda Gere Lewis, 1993:55) also alludes to this when she proposes that women [academics] “forge a collective voice, construct representations that could authenticate women’s experience without lapsing back into the old models, the old gestures, the circular movement by which resistance is undermined and returned as the same, as the mirror image of the status quo”.

5.3 Literature-based clarification of the term ‘women academics’

The term ‘women academics’ as I am using it in this study may be interpreted as implying that all women who work in academia can be regarded as one homogeneous group. This view is contrary to the declarations in recent feminist literature by contemporary feminists (bell hooks, 1994; Magda Gere Lewis, 1993) who clearly differentiate between women academics on the basis of elements like race and colour, sexuality, disability and culture. In fact in this regard, I would like to heed Marilyn Schuster’s profound questions (1994:199) “What are the differences among women? How do race, sexuality, ethnicity, religion and age change our understanding of gender?” in an attempt to avoid an inaccurate conception of the term women academics, because she cautions us that “even as we discover more about women, the definition of women is destabilised”. Furthermore the words of Kalwant Bhopal (1994:135,193) also speak to us about the same issue by admonishing us that “we may not assume the term women is a unitary category”. These views are countered to an extent by Ainsberg and Harrington (1988: xii) who claim that based on their studies “for the academic profession there is such a thing as *women’s* experience”. I do not wish to enter this debate within the confines of this research report, but I would like to acknowledge that cognisance has been taken of the above reservations to using the term ‘women academics’.

5.4 Patriarchal origins of academia

Bearing in mind the above qualifications to the term 'women academics' I aim in this section of the study to establish a framework for my discussion of the experiences of women academics in a male dominated environment by firstly considering the patriarchal origins of academia. In doing so I draw on the work of Breda Gray (1994:77) who argues that the very word academic "has many associations – books, men knowledge, brains, writing, ideas, questions, abstract, non-practical, cold and logical". I fear that it is precisely associations such as these which impact on the manner in which any woman regardless of her individuality, ethnicity, language and culture is described and characterised within academia – in terms of the patriarchal notions of the word 'academic'.

Perhaps then, it would be wise to start with *patriarchy* as the origin of the problem. One definition of patriarchy by Thompson (1983:11) literally defines it as "the 'power of the father'" and illustrates the manner in which it "was used increasingly to describe the explicit and implicit subordination of women by the rule of men". Another by Groz (as quoted in Luke & Gore, 1992:206) sees patriarchy as encompassing "the underlying structures and processes that regulate and organise women and men in different locations and value systems". magda gere lewis (1993:20) moves slightly away from the term patriarchy by coining the more descriptive and comprehensive word 'phallogentric' to encompass male dominance in the sphere or system in which our social relations are organised.

Carmen Luke and Jennifer Gore (1992:196) take these definitions one step further by locating them firmly in the context of the university by combining an understanding of patriarchy with the realm of knowledge and knowledge creation – tasks which are commonly associated with the university. These authors describe patriarchal knowledge as the "scaffold which supports the structural organisation and differential valuation of women and men; it serves to validate sexist knowledges" and finds patriarchal knowledge reflected in the "different valuations of women's and men's work, speech, and power" which result from institutionalised gender inequalities. The danger for me of this state of affairs for present-day women academics is when these inequalities

become institutionalised and are then perceived as natural and not as socially-constructed phenomena (Peterson & Runyan, 1993: 11).

This viewpoint is echoed by Jane Thompson (1983:66), when she implies that academic language and academia has to a large extent ignored women's experiences and exploits. She feels that "women have been, and continue to be, left out of the discourses which construct the knowledge that is considered valuable in the first place". In this regard she quotes Dorothy Smith who said that:

" Women have largely been excluded from their work of producing the forms of thought and the images and symbols in which thought is expressed and ordered. There is a circle effect. What men were doing was relevant to men, was written by men about men for men. Men listened and listen to what one another said. This is how a tradition is formed." One major consequence of this 'tradition' is the reality that women have become the "victims of decisions made *for* us and of definitions *about* us. ... *They* have told *us* what we think....what *we* feel...".

Thus the reality for women in academia is contending with the ever-present pressure of having to speak and take up a position in someone else's discourse, which can "generate for women a constant and profound disempowerment" (Luke & Gore, 1992:200). Resultantly, they feel that there is no guarantee that women's academic titles and positions will grant them immunity from domination and exploitation, and that in all likelihood it will continue to have an intense impact on their lives and their work. magda gere lewis (1993:59) quotes Adrienne Rich who says that even though we as women now find ourselves within the walls, which had previously held us out we are still participants of a system that "prepares men to take up roles of power in a man-centred society that asks questions and teaches 'facts' generated by a male intellectual tradition, and that both subtly and openly confirm men as leaders and shapers of human destiny both within and outside the academy". The implications hereof for women academics are myriad. For me perhaps the most important implication is that women academics often teach, learn and conduct research in a situation characterised by unequal power relations between men and women.

5.5 Power relations in the university context

The issue of power relations in the university context is raised in the introduction to the collection of papers for the book “Changing the subject. Women in higher education” by Davies, Lubelska and Quinn (1994:3). They do this by posing a though-provoking question: “Why should women in higher education want to change the subject?”. In answering this they highlight the *power* implicit in the “subject-object relationship” between men and women and resultantly inquire “... who are the subjects in higher education? Who are the initiators of action within the institution, the controllers of space and the agenda?”. Their analysis of these fundamental questions reveal that “men remain the subjects; their actions, agendas, knowledge and power are still predominant”. Klawant Bhopal (1994:134) also entreats us to examine the relationship of the powerful and the powerless within academia so that we may understand whose hands the power is in and constantly be engaged in a consideration of power. This finds support in the counsel by Foucault (as quoted in Luke & Gore, 1992:198) that many university academics (in this case specifically women) often do not anticipate or are not initially made aware of what he calls the “juridico-discursive power of law that rules the social organisation of academic life: the insistence on the rule, a logic of censorship, a cycle of prohibition and a uniformity of application that structures social and knowledge relations at different levels”.

5.6 Structure, organisation and procedures within the university

The issue of unequal power relations between men and women furthermore has direct bearing on the structure, organisation and procedures in use in the university. Luke and Gore (1992:202) feel that there are in essence very few other places, which exemplify patriarchal rule better than the university. In their view this extends from the “bureaucratic distribution of power to the Foucaultian ‘network of writing’ rationalised in the rule system of the form and memo that administers procedure, persons and knowledge”. In her analysis of the role of procedures in the organisation of the structures within the academy, Breda Gray (1994:81) argues that procedures in themselves are not wrong or necessarily bad, but that they definitely serve particular interests – those of men – and that they exclude those of others – women.

Nina Toren (1993:442) also alludes to the elements of procedure, structure and organisation in her examination of the temporal dimension of gender inequality in academia. She attributes the perception of the slower progress of women academics in comparison to male colleagues in part to the “organisational structure and culture of institutions of higher education”. Her argument is based on the notion of differently conceived timetables of career progress for men and women in academia. She argues that the progress of women academics is often evaluated in terms of being female and therefor being “allowed more time in order to overcome their assumed native incapacities and external constraints”. Such allowances give rise to what Berger, Rozenholtz and Zelditch (as quoted in Toren, 1993:443) refer to as “status organising processes” which have a rolling effect on women academics’ progress. These authors express the viewpoint that as gender can be defined as a “status characteristic” of which the female is the “lower state of this characteristic”, this results in the performance (like publications) of women academics being evaluated as less worthy. As a result they are then in a position where they are given fewer resources and opportunities to influence others and prove their competence. This would mean less access to grants for research, a corps of graduate students, access to and nomination to decision-making committees, and subsequently “lower rewards than men” which would ultimately translate into slower career advancement.

These findings are mirrored in a report, which was undertaken almost 20 years ago, in 1973, by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. It revealed that the discrimination against women is more often than not covert. An example hereof is the way in which women are moved up the ranks and steps more slowly than men and are retained in the lowest ranks for longer periods. In my view, this attests to the validity of the declaration by Luke and Gore (1992:203) almost twenty years later, that “at the level of patriarchal knowledges and relations, women in the academy continue to struggle for equality: of rights (to speak and be heard), access (to positions of power, resources), and representation (on boards, committees, etc)”. This message also reverberates in the experiences of women academics documented by magda gere lewis (1993:55), who maintains that despite the long road the women’s movement has travelled, patriarchy is still alive in the intellectual community of the academy, which she describes as an uncomfortable, unwelcoming home for women. She believes furthermore that although the statistics reflect an increase in the numbers of women

students and teachers in the years preceding 1993, we must not take this as “proof that we partake of social relations free of the male-dominated, phallogocentric discursive forms which pertain to society at large”. In this regard her views are in agreement with those of Madeline Leonard (1994:164) who points out that one cannot separate the experiences of women academics from their wider social context. This lack of progress for women in academia confirms that their situation replicates the situation of women in the wider social, economic and financial spheres.

This situation has had a two-fold impact on women academics. The first is the unhidden reality, that among others, pinpoints women as still being “grossly under-represented in senior positions”, thereby replicating the situation for women, in which men dominate on the editorial and review boards of journals and publishers, on promotions review committees and remain in control as department and faculty heads. The second and perhaps more insidious and hidden reality is the existence of the often, incontestable “subterranean politics that bind some men together against women” (Luke & Gore, 1992:202). By this they refer to the monopoly men still hold over women academics in terms of hiring and promoting them, the contributions they make to theory and research, their applications for the necessary funds for research.

This is backed up by magda gere lewis (1993:55) who also cites a number of ways in which women academics report their work has been hampered. Examples hereof include the prejudicial judgement of qualifications, research and course proposals which are assessed from an “anti-women bias that leaves open the question of ‘academic freedom’” and the inequitable allotment of resources”. This trivialisation and discreditation of their scholarship (Kritiek, as quoted in Bagilhole, 1994:19) often adds to their feelings of being outsiders who do not belong. This can have serious ramifications for women academics because most often their advancement or promotion will depend on “good recommendations from men” (Davies, Lubelska & Quinn, 1994:19).

She also cites the reality that many women, on entering the academy, do so at a junior level which implies very little real authority and a low salary. This situation is often further compounded by them remaining in those positions for quite a while, thus limiting their opportunities to promotion. The other alternative for women is

constituting a “loose, part-time, migrant, easily replaced group of intellectual workers who lack long term institutional support and whose poor pay and lack of job security undermines their self-respect and drains them of emotional and physical energy” (Magda Gere Lewis, 1993:55).

5.7 Women academic's access to networks

According to Luke and Gore (1992:201) this precarious situation of women in the academy, has resulted in women being subjected to “being outside the normative representation of ‘inside’”. Women are thus often precluded from getting ahead in the academy because they are not privy to the “codes with which to gain entry into the ‘old boy’s’ club”. They site one good example in the conference circuit where important networks are established. In their experience women have not effectively been able to “gain access to the discourse of networking these sites”.

Davies, Lubelska and Quinn (1994:20-21) also illustrate the importance of networking in academia. Networking in their opinion provides academics with exposure to a collaborative exchange of vital or insider information, the right contacts for procuring research funds, assistance with career planning, professional support and the encouragement and opportunities to publish. They feel that women are often excluded from this “crucial ingredient in professional career success”, because there are too few women in senior positions who are able to serve as mentors or models for other women academics. This is echoed by the studies undertaken by Ainsberg and Harrington (1988: 45) who document women in academia as lacking a “form of subsidy” in the area of “professional counselling – guidance and instruction in the actual rules of the game”. They feel that the success women are able to achieve will always be limited because they do not get the same level of socialisation into the profession as men. In essence then they express the view that “parts of the occupational identity and performance [as an academic] are obscured from women” (Davies, Lubelska & Quinn, 1994:20-21).

Luke and Gore (1992:206) add to this by lamenting the absence of the “rules of the game” from university contracts and job descriptions. Delamont (as quoted by Bagilhole, 1994:20) refer to these as the “indeterminate aspects of occupational performance... [like the] ...‘distinctive modes of perception, of thinking,... the taste of

the group, its characteristic taken-for-granted view of the world...' " As a result they refer to it as the "unspoken rules and unspeakable application of those rules [which] are the subtext of many women academic's experiences...". Research conducted by Yoder and O'Leary and Mitchell (as quoted in Bagilhole, 1994:18) emphasise that as a result of these factors women academics perceive themselves to be more isolated than men and do not see themselves as well integrated into departments at universities.

5.8 Women academic's perceptions of themselves and their place in the academy

Besides the prevailing situation in which men out-number women having a negative effect on women academic's access to networks and mentors, research has also highlighted the effect it has on the perceptions women academics have of themselves. This in itself may affect their careers in insidious ways. Research conducted at an American university (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990) on the effect of male domination on women's perceptions of themselves indicated two interesting phenomena. The first perception was that men define what it is to be an academic because they were there first, resulting in women feeling that they have to divorce themselves from their femininity in order to be seriously considered an academic. This was associated with having to be "harder and more professional" to counteract any preconceptions about the ability of women to do the job of an academic. A second observation was that women often do not know how to define the essence of what an academic is, and therefore end up defining it in terms of either being male or neutral, but never female. This paradoxical role is echoed in the writings of Judith Lorber (1994:5-6), who expresses the view that the endowment of the term 'gender' creates and maintains socially significant differences between men and women, which are often used to confirm and continue the exploitation of women.

This situation has created a few undesirable options for women academics: they either put incredible pressure on themselves to prove that they are worthy of the position they hold, by being more dedicated and more conscientious than their male counterparts, or they try against all odds to avoid being associated or identified with other women (Davies, Lubelska & Quinn, 1994:22-23).

Luke and Gore (1992:201) furthermore make reference to the “interminable references to the male subject in speech and text across the university”. This is aptly expressed in the outcome of much of their research, which indicates that while men may listen when women academics speak (in faculty and policy meetings), it is characterised by the reality that they do not really hear and resultantly they do not act on what women say. This means that many women academics are forced to choose from three paths: one in which they adopt a strategy which is characterised by “consistent vigilance and protestation”; another in which they “selectively struggle” by targeting some issues and letting others pass; and lastly, one in which they consciously decide not to speak (Luke & Gore, 1992: 210).

The comments of Breda Gray (1994:78) are relevant in this respect in that she also provides us with her reflections on the different roads women academics are forced to take. She separates them into those women who see their academic work as “just a job”, those who “compete with the academic system on its terms” and those who “dedicate their lives to challenging the system and traditional definitions of knowledge”. She also characterises the life of the woman academic as a one of dedication, which does vary among women, but which is essentially characterised by incredibly high levels of commitment. This reality can and does result in women academics describing themselves based on their experiences, as “ambivalent academic[s]” (Gillian Rose as quoted in Gray, 1994:79).

In addition, Davies, Lubelska and Quinn (1994:5), express the view that women’s experiences in higher education can be both contradictory and complex. Magda Gere Lewis (1993:145) also says that whether we describe the situation of women academics as “easy” or “hard” they are above all else “contradictory”. This is because even though they feel that masculine values, power and discourse eclipse all else in higher education, they concede that all women (and by implication all women academics) are not equally oppressed. They also raise important points about strategies like equal opportunities approaches to empowering women in academia by questioning the illusion of the existence of a “level playing field”, by illustrating the underlying forces at work against women. Ainsberg and Harrington (1988:67) also make a contribution in this respect when they quote the infamous line from George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, “everyone is equal, but some are more equal than others” in their allusion to two sets of ‘equality’ in

existence in the academic world. They feel that the “reality behind the veneer” is revealed especially when one considers the “flaunting of equal opportunities policies and of ‘successful’ women who have ‘made it’, without due consideration of the disadvantages, oppression and real needs of the majority of women in higher education.

The idea of a ‘level playing field’ is especially controversial when one considers the extreme measures some women academics have to take when applying for a new position especially one at another university. Luke and Gore (1992:197) provide examples in which women have learnt to play the men’s game by modifying their curriculum vitae so that it “doesn’t signal ‘FEMINIST’ in red flashing lights”, so that they will not immediately be perceived as non-hireable.

5.9 Conclusion

In this section I drew from the relevant literature those issues which affect women in academia and reflect their experiences in this male-dominated context. This has included an examination of the structural and organisational factors, which impact on the experiences of women academics as well as the psychological implications thereof in terms of women’s perceptions of themselves and their access to suitable mentors.

In conclusion, I argue that the words of magda gere lewis (1993:11) leaves us with a sense of vindication, that as women academics “we do not need experts to tell us that our experiences in the world, marked by the structural relations of patriarchy/phallogentrism, are massively different from those of men and that these different experiences generate profound inequalities between us”. She takes this statement further by cautioning us that these inequalities are often left undisturbed so that they become daily experiences, which in her view are marked fundamentally by disempowerment, the struggle to survive, and silencing. This wisdom is also apparent in the sage words of Davies, Lubelska and Quinn (1994:10), with which I wish to conclude this section. They feel that “It is not we, as women, who need to change so that one or two of us can occasionally burst through the ‘glass-ceiling’, leaving the rest of the building intact; rather it is the academy”.

6. RESEARCH DESIGN

6.1 Research Orientation and research methods

All research is conducted from a particular paradigm, which is described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:4) as “a set of overarching and interconnected assumptions about the nature of reality”. My philosophical framework for this research essay is grounded within an interpretative or socio-constructivist paradigm. An interpretative research orientation embraces the following main postulates: the existence of multiple socially-constructed realities and the inter-dependence of the knower and the known, how values mediate what is understood, that there are multi-directional relationships and that explanations are tentative for one place and time only (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:11). The paradigm of a researcher serves not only as a philosophical framework for research, but also underpins and informs the methods by which the research is undertaken.

The research methods chosen for this study have emanated from both my research orientation and the aim of this study. As the aim of this research is to gain an understanding of the experiences of women academics in a male-dominated environment, I am interested in “understanding the meaning people have constructed” or how they make sense of their worlds and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 1998:6). Qualitative research methods are therefore utilised to explore the experiences of women academics in a male-dominated environment. This study will therefore be focused on understanding the participants’ perspective of the research question. This is referred to by Merriam (1998:6-7) as gaining an emic or insider’s perspective.

The aim of this research also lends itself to the other aspects normally associated with qualitative research (Merriam, 1998:7). The first of these is that the researcher “is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis” which is perfectly suited to the need for a data collection instrument which is “sensitive to underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data” (Merriam, 1998:1). Maykut and Morehouse (1994:26) refer to this as “indwelling” while Guba and Lincoln (1989:149) refer to this as being the “*human-as instrument*”.

Furthermore, qualitative research involves fieldwork, which would involve the researcher physically going into the field of research and presents the product of the research in a richly descriptive report (Merriam, 1998:7,8).

6.2 Sampling

As this study proceeds from an interpretative perspective, “purposive sampling” was used to select participants who would serve as “information-rich cases” (Merriam, 1998:61; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:45; Patton, 1990:169-172). Patton (1990) differentiates a number of different types of purposive sampling. In this study I made use of maximum variation sampling in order to choose such information-rich cases. Patton (1990:164) describes these cases as “those cases from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the theme” or those “whose study will illuminate the question under study”. Maximum variation sampling therefore allowed me to purposefully select a sample of women academics, who were representative of the widest range of experience on the phenomenon under investigation (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:57) in order to elucidate important themes and patterns that cut across such a range or variation (Patton, 1990:182).

As this study was aimed at gaining an understanding of the experiences of women academics in a male-dominated environment, I began by procuring the necessary permission for the study to be conducted at the Rand Afrikaans University (hereafter referred to as RAU) from the academic registrar (Appendix A). Once permission had been granted, I then requested a list of all the women academics in the employ of the university (Appendix B) from the personnel division. This list provided me with the names of the women academics, their levels or ranks, the departments in which they work as well as their contact numbers. From this list I initially chose a sample of nine women academics ranging across three specific groups. The first group was at the level of professor, the second at the level of associate professor and senior lecturer and the third group at the level of lecturer and junior lecturer. When I got to my ninth interview, I chose a further senior academic at the level of professor to ensure that I had interviewed at least one person from each faculty in the university, with the exception of the Faculty of Education and Nursing.

This process enabled me to interview those participants who had been at the university for a long period and who had risen to the rank of professor in the hierarchy. These participants would have had a number of years of experience in the academic world and would have doctorates and extensive publishing and teaching experience. In addition, as full professors they would also serve on the RAU Senate, which is the decision-making body of the university.

The second group enabled me to interview those participants who had also been at the university for a number of years and who would also have a doctorate as well as some years of publishing and teaching experience. The third group enabled me to interview those participants who would be relative new-comers to the academic arena and with minimal publishing and teaching experience.

I initially planned to do 9 interviews but ended with an eventual sample of 10, by which time the data was in fact saturated and I ceased my interviewing.

I purposely chose not to interview any woman academic from the Faculty of Education and Nursing, which is the faculty in which I work, for a number of reasons. I feared that my closeness to many of the colleagues within the faculty could impact negatively on the research. They may not have felt comfortable discussing incidents or people in the faculty with me. Many of the assumptions and presuppositions I mentioned in the first part of this essay were also gained through discussions with women academics within this faculty.

6.3 The context of the data collection

As mentioned before this study was conducted with a sample of women academics at the Rand Afrikaans University. I was provided with information on the professional staff component in terms of gender for the years 1997 to 1999 from the academic registrar of the university. An examination of this information revealed the following:

- The female component of the total instructional/research staff reflects an increase from 39.5% in 1997 to 42.3% in 1999.
- The executive/managerial structures in 1999, reflects the presence of 2 women in comparison to none in 1997. The nature of the information however does not enable a specification of their rank or position in the overall hierarchy of the university executive/management structures.
- The number of women academics in the position of full professor has increased from 14 out of a total of 104 in 1997 to 20 out of a total of 103 in 1999. This indicates an increase from 13.5% to 19.4% in 3 years, but does not reflect the rate of increase in the years prior to 1997.
- The number of women academics in the position of associate professor reflects a change from 39.5% in 1997 to 35.7% in 1999.
- At the two lowest levels, that of junior lecturer and lecturer, the situation in 1999 is one where the majority of staff is comprised of women: 63% and 62% respectively.

6.4 Data Collection Methods

Data collection was accomplished primarily through the medium of semi-structured, in-depth interviews. As the aim of the study was to gain an understanding of experiences of women academics in a male-dominated environment, the participants' actions and particularly their words were very important. An interview schedule, with open-ended questions supported by probing and clarifying questions (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:83; Patton, 1990:324) were used. Participants were also supplied with a short questionnaire (Appendix C), which addressed their background, number of years at the university and office or position held within their departments.

Interview Schedule

The following themes were addressed during each interview:

Their experiences as woman academics in their departments and the wider university structures, the roles mentors play/played in their academic careers, their expectations of academia, support structures and networking, their perceptions of themselves.

Open-ended questions included the following:

- Can you tell me about your experiences as a woman academic in a male-dominated environment?
- Would you classify your experiences in academia as largely positive or negative? Why would you classify them in this way?
- Would you say that your experiences in academia are different from what you expected them to be? Could you elaborate?
- Did you have a role model or mentor when you first joined the department/ university? Was it a man or a woman? Can you tell me why you chose this person?
- Describe the kind of support you receive from your colleagues in your department/ faculty?
- How do you think others feel when you, as a woman, talk in a meeting?
- How does being a woman academic at the RAU influence your perception of yourself?
- Tell me about any informal or formal support networks in your department/ faculty.
- Can you give me an example of a positive experience in your time as an academic? What made the experience a positive one for you? How did it make you feel?
- Can you give me an example of a negative experience in your time as an academic? What made the experience a negative one for you? How did it make you feel?

Probing and clarifying questions were posed when:

- Answers were not clear
- When I needed an example to illustrate what the participant was saying
- When I wanted more information about the participants' feelings, motivations, actions, reactions and anticipations.

I conducted all my interviews myself, in locations which the participants' themselves chose. My pilot interview was held with Teresa, who was included in my final sample. In the interview with Teresa, I was momentarily stumped by her reaction to my first question, when she told me that I would not get much information from her because she didn't have much to tell. This, combined with the very open-ended initial question to which the participant expressed the view that I needed to tell her exactly what it was that I wanted so that she could get on with it, and my nervousness, as it was my first interview, resulted in me drifting slightly from the main question in order to allow me to probe what she was prepared to tell me. After about five minutes we did however move back to main questions and the rest of the interview progressed smoothly. This resulted in a qualification of my initial open-ended question: "Can you tell me about your experiences as a woman academic in a male dominated environment?" for ensuing interviews. I qualified this question in my following interviews by adding the dimensions of the participants' professional and personal lives to allow us to focus on the main question.

Furthermore in my second interview, the participant brought up an issue dealing with the reaction of the students to her as a woman, which I hadn't addressed either in my questions or my literature review, and spoke about it at great length. When my third participant also briefly spoke about the subject, I added it in to my interview schedule for subsequent interviews.

My general impression was that participants were very eager to discuss the topic openly and honestly once they had satisfied themselves that all they said would be dealt with the utmost confidentially. I did however discover some reluctance on the part of two junior lecturers, whom I contacted telephonically in relation to the research, to

participate. They were evasive when I tried to schedule an appointment for an interview, and promised to call me back. I surmised that their evasiveness might have stemmed from their apprehension at involving themselves in such controversial and sensitive research. After the second unsuccessful attempt to schedule an appointment, I was compelled to choose another two participants. Once participants had been informed about the topic of the research and had verbally consented to be interviewed, they were each sent a letter with details about the study (Appendix D) as well as a section in which they indicated their written permission for the interview to be conducted and tape-recorded (Appendix E).

Although my first language is not Afrikaans, the interviews were conducted in Afrikaans because the home language of most of the participants is Afrikaans. I felt that the participants would feel relaxed about expressing their views and experiences in a language in which they were comfortable. Resultantly, once my interview schedule had been translated into Afrikaans, it was checked by two colleagues, to ensure that the questions were clear and unambiguous. The audio reception in the initial interview was not very good, despite my having tested the equipment prior to the interview. Resultantly in subsequent interviews I utilised two tape recorders to prevent a recurrence of this problem.

6.5 Data Analysis

The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim in dialogue form. To protect the identity of the participants each one was allocated a pseudonym. These transcripts were then analysed for recurring themes and patterns using the constant comparative method as put forth by Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 126-144). This process is discussed in detail in section 7.

6.6 Ethical considerations

As a result of the sensitive and controversial nature of the question under study and the responses of the participants, I was aware of the implications inherent in their disclosure of this information to me, and the impact it could have on their professional lives. I

realised that their openness and honesty by implication carried a high degree of risk. Stake (in Merriam, 1998:214) refers to qualitative researchers as “guests in the private spaces of the world ...[whose]....manners should be good and their code of ethics strict”. On this basis I consciously chose a personal code of ethics based on the list of provisions provided by Patton (1990:356) for use during the research process, particularly the interviews. The important ethical considerations included taking cognisance of the following:

- Promises and reciprocity
- Risk assessment
- Confidentiality
- Informed consent

On the basis hereof I took the following steps to ensure an ethical study:

- I received informed, written consent from each of the participants, before conducting the interview.
- The participants were all allocated pseudonyms to protect/conceal their identities.
- As all the participants expressed an interest in the findings, I promised that once the study was complete I would inform them hereof.
- Due to the sensitivity and controversial nature of this research topic I reassured and confirmed every participant that whatever they said in the interviews would be treated as confidential. I accordingly erased any revealing information like department names from the interview transcripts.

6.7 Provisions for trustworthiness

Having addressed the ethical considerations in this study, this section addresses the issue of the trustworthiness of the study because as Merriam (1998:189) contends “all research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner”. To Maykut and Morehouse (1994:145) the question of trustworthiness examines the extent to which others can have confidence in the outcomes or findings of the study. This is especially pertinent for qualitative research because as Patton

(1990:460) points out “the credibility of qualitative inquiry is especially dependent on the credibility of the researcher because the researcher is the instrument of data collection and the centre of the analytic process”. As such the perspective and experiences of the researcher as well as the philosophical basis which underpins the study, are two crucial elements which require attention if validity and reliability are to be ensured (Patton, 1990:460).

Merriam (1998:206) argues that the traditional definition of the term reliability as “the extent to which the research findings can be replicated” seems to be somewhat of a misfit when applied to qualitative research. In her explanation of what constitutes reliability in qualitative research, she makes reference to the terms, consistency and dependability, as coined by Guba and Lincoln (1989). As such Merriam (1998:206) contends that in the case of qualitative studies, reliability in qualitative research refers to the dependability of the results or “whether the results are consistent with the data collected”.

On the question of internal validity in qualitative studies, Merriam (1998: 199) broaches two important issues. In her examination of internal validity she makes reference to the confidence or trust others have in the rigour with which the study has been conducted and the results or findings of the study. As reliability and internal validity are so intertwined in research, the following measures, which I, as the human-in-instrument, have undertaken in the course of this study, aim at ensuring that the study has both reliability and internal validity. I began by declaring and explaining my assumptions and presuppositions at the beginning of the study. Secondly, I tried to ensure that the inferences drawn from this study were consistent with the data collected by progressively building up a clear and unambiguous “audit trail” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:243, Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:146). This was achieved by providing the original interview transcripts (Appendix F for an example of an interview), the unitised data and a provisional category (see Table 7.2), which were utilised in accordance with the constant comparative method of data analysis as set out by Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 146).

Furthermore, once I had completed the data analysis process and identified the categories and subcategories, I conducted “member checks” and “peer examination”

(Merriam, 1998:204) in an attempt to enhance the internal validity of the study. These were respectively undertaken by consulting three of the participants on the credibility and plausibility of the findings, and by asking two colleagues to comment on the findings as they emerged.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) argue that external validity is only possible if the study has internal validity. In qualitative research, external validity is of importance for the reader who, after studying the research, is in a position to decide what is appropriate and fitting for their own situations (Merriam, 1998:211). To increase the external validity of the study, I have endeavoured to provide in this research report, a richly-detailed description or “thick description” of the research context, processes and outcomes, making it possible for others to understand the context and experience it vicariously (Guba & Lincoln, 1989:260-262). To elucidate this description further, I will in the next section deal with the presentation of the data.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

Merriam (1998:178) refers to data analysis as the “process of making sense out of the data”. As I have already mentioned in paragraph 6.5, the constant comparative method was used for data analysis. In essence, the constant comparative method hinges on the construction of categories or themes by “continuous comparison” of bits of data with each other (Merriam, 1998:179); in other words, there is a search for recurring patterns in the data.

One important part of the procedure of data analysis according to Merriam (1998:180) is that it is done in conjunction with data collection. Accordingly, this process for me started when I had completed my first interview. I began by reading through the photocopied transcript of my interview with Teresa twice. During the second reading, I began to unitise the data, by looking for “chunks or unit of meaning” as described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 128). I separated one unit of meaning from the next by drawing a line across the page and writing a word or phrase, which contained the essence of the unit of meaning in the margin alongside. Each unit of meaning in the transcript was further coded with reference to the original page in the transcript. For

example the code T/T-2 refers to the transcription (T) of the interview with Teresa (T), page two (2). Teresa's response, "*Kyk dis onuitgesproke, dit word nie uitgespreek nie, want kyk mans kan maklik bevorder word want hulle het baie tyd om aan hulle c.v's te werk, verstaan jy, so dis vir hulle makliker....so hulle produseer meer, so hulle gaan maar makliker bevordering kry*", to my question of her perception of the roles of men and women in academia were extracted as a unit of meaning, and the words "*differences roles of men and women*" were written in the margin. These units of meaning were then cut out of the original transcripts and pasted onto A5 size cards to facilitate further handling. These were then transferred to my discovery sheet, where I could begin the process of linking the emerging words, concepts and ideas, to find recurring themes, which would form the basis of the provisional coding categories.

From the interview with Teresa, about 11 provisional categories initially emerged. Some of these are listed in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: Some Provisional Categories from the interview with Teresa

○ age makes a difference	○ have to be extra stern with students
○ different roles of men and women	○ isolation of academics
○ women have to "fight"	○ advantages of academic life for women
○ academia is a man's world	○ views on feminism

Having prepared a list of provisional categories, I now placed each coded unit of meaning under the provisional categories, using the "look/feel-alike criteria" described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:137). In this process I continually used the "look/feel-alike criteria" to compare the data cards with other provisional categories. On this basis data cards, which did not fit into a particular category were placed elsewhere, or tentatively named to represent a new category.

When a provisional category contained approximately six to eight unitised data cards, I was in a position to being writing a "rule of inclusion ... which would serve as the basis for including (or excluding) subsequent data cards in the category" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:139). Lincoln and Guba (in Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:139) suggest

writing the rule of inclusion in the form of a propositional statement, which conveys the meaning contained in the data cards collected under a category name. Thereafter I used the rule of inclusion as the basis for incorporating further data. The rest of the interviews were all analysed by the same process of data analysis as described above. The analysis of the all the data I obtained from this process, continued in this way until there was no longer any data left. Table 7.2 is an excerpt from a provisional category. It includes the rule of inclusion, the applicable units of meaning and notes to aid further exploration.

I systematically increased my understanding of the categories, which were beginning to form, by subjecting the categories to constant testing, checking and exploration in order to identify ambiguities and overlaps. In this regard the rules of inclusion were refined and adjusted where it was deemed necessary. At this point I had a number of well-written propositional rule statements, which were the rules of inclusion for each of my categories. These were then compared to identify those that stood alone and those that had noteworthy connections with others. These were then written up as “outcome propositions” (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 144) and formed the framework of the findings.

As suggested by Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 157-158) the outcomes were organised around the outcome propositions, by prioritising them according to my focus of inquiry and their prominence in the data. The frequency with which units of meaning and categories recurred among participants was an indication of their importance. At this stage excerpts or quotations, which significantly contributed to each outcome proposition were identified and selected for use in the next stage of the report. These findings are now discussed.

Table 7.2 : Excerpt from a provisional category (advantage of flexible working hours), with units of meaning, the rule for inclusion and notes to aid further exploration.

<p><u>Advantage of flexible working hours</u></p>	<p><u>Rule for inclusion:</u> women academics value as an advantage of academia the flexibility of working hours as it allows them to accommodate their family/personal responsibilities.</p>
<p>Family responsibilities can be met</p>	<p>T/T-12 Ek sê die akademie gee vir haar baie tyd. Dis so dat sy haar familie verpligtinge makliker kan nakom in die akademie.</p>
<p>Family responsibilities and children fit in with flexible hours</p>	<p>T/D-8 Ek kan hier kom en kan my werk doen, ek is hier terwyl hulle in die skool is, ek is hier vanmiddag dan gaan ek huis toe en spandeer tyd met hulle en as hulle agtuur in die bed klim, dan gaan ek weer aan met my werk. So ek kry my werk gedoen, maar my voordeel hier is dat ek kan tyd met my kinders spandeer.</p>
<p>Ideal for a woman</p>	<p>T/J-1 Ek bly omdat ek gelukkig is met die werksure. Dit is ideaal vir 'n vrou.</p>
<p>Flexible hours ideal for family responsibilities</p>	<p>T/L-10 Ek dink dit is 'n groot voordeel en dit is die flexible ure. Ek kan nou byvoorbeeld half een ry om sê nou my seuntjie musiek toe te vat, dis iets wat 'n ma wat kantoor ure het, nie sou kon doen nie. Dit is vir my definitief 'n voordeel want dit maak dat ek die gesin se belange min of meer bymekaar kan kry.</p>
<p>Academic work can be done at home – with children</p>	<p>T/T-7 So ek is nog by die huis. Ek werk by die huis. Of ek nou tot twalf uur of tot twee uur moet werk ek is nog by die huis, ek is nog daar met die kinders. Dis absoluut vir my 'n voordeel.</p>
<p>Flexible hours allows for personal time</p>	<p>T/T-10 Ek dink ja dis lekker werk, en ek het dit nie sulke... ek dink dit maak my lewe maklik, verstaan jy. So ek het tyd vir naaldwerk, ek het tyd vir kuns, ek het tyd vir alles wat vir my belangrik is. Dis waaroor die akademie vir my so pas.</p>

8. Findings

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of women academics in a male-dominated environment. In this regard, the questions posed in the interviews with the participants enabled me, as researcher, to delve into and understand their experiences.

As I have already indicated the outcomes were prioritised according to my focus of inquiry and their prominence in the data. By the end of the data analysis process, I identified a number of categories and subcategories. These served as a basis for the findings of this research and are listed in Table 8.1. In this section, I discuss each major category and its subsequent sub-categories in the order in which they appear in the table. In my discussion of each 'finding', I draw on excerpts from the interviews, which illustrate or substantiate the discussion, and inter-weave this with the applicable research literature from section 5. I then conclude with a summary of the findings.

Table 8.1: Table of Categories and Sub-categories and the Outcome Statements as derived from the process of data analysis.

Category and subcategory	Outcome statement
<p>1. Changes in the university over time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Lessening of overt discrimination○ More covert discrimination➤ Old boy's network/club➤ Glass ceiling➤ Gate-keeping➤ Not heeding needs/voices of women➤ No real change in attitude	<p>Women academics recognise the positive, visible changes over time in the university especially the lessening of overt discrimination. They do however believe that covert discrimination is entrenched in the university at all levels.</p>

<p>2. Double workload of women academics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ impact on family life ○ impact on career development ○ need personal support structures ○ advantage of flexible working hours 	<p>Women academics recognise their double loads/roles, in comparison to men, which impacts on both their personal/family life and their career development. Women academics therefore emphasise the importance of personal support structures and the advantage of flexible working hours.</p>
<p>3. Ambivalent feelings about academia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overwhelmingly dominant negative feelings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Frustration ➤ Stress, anger and guilt ➤ Regression ➤ Self-doubt and insecurity ➤ Sexual harassment 	<p>Women academics express ambivalent feelings about academia, but negative feelings are overwhelmingly dominant in their descriptions of academic life.</p>
<p>4. Academia originally a man's world and influences women's behaviour and reactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Over-reaction and over-compensation ○ Treatment of and relationship with students ○ Retreat from 'battles' ○ Ignore or joke about sexist remarks ○ Play the 'game' ○ Isolation of femininity and academic life 	<p>Women academics agree on the original classification of academia as "a man's world" and feel that this perception of male domination does have an influence on their behaviour and reactions.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Avoidance of labels, especially feminism 	
<p>5. Role of mentors/role models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Professional and career development ◦ Junior women academics – youth, lack of stature/title, isolation, exploitation, heavy workload, lack of professional support structures. ◦ Older women as mentors/ role models/ advisors. 	<p>Women academics acknowledge the influential role of both female and male mentors in their professional and career development. Junior women academics perceived it as advantageous as they felt disadvantaged by their youth, lack of stature/title, isolation, exploitation, heavy workload and lack of professional support structures in the university. Older women saw themselves as role models/ mentors/ advisors to younger women academics and students.</p>

8.2 Discussion of findings

8.2.1 Changes over time in the university

The women academics interviewed for this study, recognise that there have been positive, visible changes over time in the university. This is mostly so for those academics, who have been at the RAU for a long period of time and so are best in a position to describe the extent of these changes. One remarkable change for these academics has been the lessening of overt discrimination and a move to more transparency. Some of these changes were ascribed in part to the entry of more women into academia, to the insistence on the part of women academics to be employed on the same basis as men and to the new government. As one participant said “*the ANC government has improved the position of women because if we look at what was happening since 1994 that very overt form of discrimination is gone; no longer there*”.

The overt discriminatory practices described by the participants were entrenched in the over-arching policies of the university. In the interviews it emerged that two senior

professors, who have each been in the employ of the RAU for more than fifteen years, were themselves subject to overt discriminatory practices in their early years at the university. Some of these practices were evident in the policy of not allowing women academics to nominate their spouses as dependants for medical aid purposes or to enable them to study without cost at the university. Women also did not qualify for housing subsidies. A few of the academics also made mention of the prevailing practice of offering lower entry-level salaries to women candidates in comparison to men. In real monetary terms this definitely amounted to a preferential treatment of men over women in the academic arena. Women also gave accounts of being interviewed for positions with an all-male panel, who asked invasive personal questions like what they planned in terms of their families. One senior woman academic was asked, as recently as six years ago, by members of a selection committee, if she could cope with the demands her children and academia would place on her.

Despite the explicit and discernible positive changes and the lessening of overt discrimination, the participants are convinced of the entrenchment of covert or subtle discrimination in the university. They see evidence hereof in the existence and active operation of the 'old boy's club/network', the perpetuation of the 'glass ceiling or gate-keeping' and the disregard of the needs/voices of women. To many, this implies that there has in effect been no real or tangible change in the university as regards the situation of women academics. This echoes the findings of the research conducted by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education referred to earlier in the literature review, that discrimination against women is more often than not covert.

One junior academic, Julie, describes the academic world as a "*boetie boetie wêreld*" and the "*topbestuur*" as consisting of "*die broeder bond*". Another junior academic, Adri, feels that her negative experiences in academia are associated with the frustration of "*die old boy's club, met ander woorde as een van daai manne nee sou sê vir iets dan sal almal nee sê, ongeag die bepaalde reëlings rondom 'n bepaalde funksie of wat*". This in my view points to what Khalwant Bopal (1994:134) refers to when she appeals to us to examine who the powerful and who the powerless in academia are. This viewpoint is reiterated by the three senior women academics who see this being validated in the top management where "*daar is bloot te veel mans en hulle kies soort*

van hulle buddies” and the place where “*the men get co-opted onto committees*” so that they can “*drive their issues*”.

Another interesting aspect of the existence of the old boy’s club and its effect on the integration of younger academics, is pointed out by Adri. She feels that young men in academia “*word makliker aanvaar. ...hulle skakel makliker in die old boy’s club en hulle word makliker aangehoor en geleentheid gegee as vrou, want sy moet haarself bietjie meer bewys, daai ekstra myl gaan voordat dit wat sy doen aanvaar word as gelykaan*”. Her views are in line with those of Luke and Gore (1992:201) who refer to this practice as keeping women “outside” of the “normative representation of ‘inside’”.

A senior academic, Sarie, strongly expressed her belief in the existence of a glass ceiling for women academics. She shared the following in this regard “*you as a woman are more or less in the situation where if he [male superior] doesn’t want to do anything about you, you are stuck because you can work as hard as you want, if someone doesn’t nominate you for anything. If they don’t take your case somewhere and plead it on your behalf you know you’re not gonna get anything*”. She particularly cites the instance of a women academic in another faculty, who in her view had a “*very, very tough fight to even get to the position of associate professor and it was only when she started doing things that were recognised outside that she got the recognition inside*”. Another instance according to Sarie, in which the glass ceiling is apparent, is in the practice of certain faculties of deciding via a committee, often consisting only of men, who will be nominated to the position of professor. This practice finds resonance in the research by Luke and Gore (1992:202) who argue that this is indicative of the monopoly and power men still hold over women in the academy.

The senior women academics also indicated the existence of the ‘glass ceiling’ and the practice of ‘gate-keeping’ in the slow advancement and promotion of women to the level of professor. One participant gave three specific examples of women in different faculties who were doing excellent work but who were not promoted to the rank of professor until fairly recently; about three to five years ago.

Another senior academic, Genny, who in her capacity as full professor often serves on selection committees for new appointees, also raised the issue of gate-keeping in

academia. She cited instances where the discussion of the selection committee before the candidates are interviewed, often sets the tone for all the members of the committee. It is in this discussion in which women, particularly young, newly married women who are likely to soon start families, are very often disadvantaged. This in her opinion gives a similarly qualified male candidate an unfair advantage and often serves to restrict the equal chances of the women candidate to the position.

On the issue of women academics in meetings, there are usually according to participants, one of two reactions: women are either blatantly asked to adopt a traditionally woman's role and pour the drinks or act as secretary or their input is simply ignored or passed over. This is precisely the situation described by Adrienne Rich (in Lewis, 1993:59) who argues that although women may now be 'inside the walls' women academics are still expected to "take up roles in a man-centred society". Both senior and junior academics had comments in this regard. Adri felt that "*dit het in baie opsigte te doen met lyftaal, algemene houding, meer as wat hulle ooit reguit iets so sê, die feit dat jy partykeer by 'n vergadering gevra sal word skink asseblief die tee, as jy 'n opinie het oor 'n saak wat bespreek word, is dit amper asof ja goed hulle luister na jou, maar hulle sal eers die res van die tafel wil hoor, omdat daar omtrent net mans is. Ja jy weet so hulle neem jou opinie in ag en jy kan agterkom daar was half 'n huiwering daarin of hulle nou vir jou moet luister of nie*". This tallies with the outcomes of the research conducted by Luke and Gore (1992:201) in which they indicate that that which women academics say in meetings is often not taken seriously.

This view is echoed by Genny, a senior professor, who has the impression that in a meeting "*daars 'n mate van kom ons kyk of sy meer emosioneel is oor die saak as wat sy veronderstel is om te wees*", thus substantiating the contention that "women's academic titles and positions will not guarantee them immunity from domination and exploitation" (Luke & Gore, 1992:200).

Many of the participants also felt that this subtle or covert discrimination is evident in the entrenchment of males in the ranks of professor as well as in the decision-making committees and bodies of the university like the Senate. Because women academics at this level often lack numbers and representation the decisions made at this level often fortify subtle discrimination against women academics even further. So for many

women academics the reality of the situation is that this male dominated environment is somewhat different for women than it is for men.

8.2.2 Double workload of women academics

One major difference for the participants interviewed, lies in the fact that as women and academics who had families, their workloads were markedly different from those of men and that their roles were resultantly defined differently to that of men.

Although many did not attribute this problem to the university, they did feel that it was often not taken into consideration when defining applicable workloads for men and women. Davies, Lubelska and Quinn (1994:134) allude to this when they question whose agendas are still predominant in academia. Lynnette particularly was very vocal about this and felt that *“as ‘n vrou ervaar jy dit anders want jy het altyd hierdie dubbelle lading, wat nie herken word nie. As werker lei almal onder dieselfde druk, maar as vrou ervaar jy dit op ‘n ander manier, want jy is baie bewus hoe dit jou familie en kinders affekteer...”*. Marina expresses the difference in the following way: *“ek dink die ding wat dit maklik maak vir mans is dat hulle weet as hy sy kantoordeur by die werk toetrek, is sy werk klaar vir die dag. So dan kan hy by die huis by die televisie met sy voete op die tafel gaan sit. As die vrou haar kantoordeur toetrek dan is daar nog kos om te maak, huis om skoon te maak, wasgoed om te was”*.

Women academics recognise that this double load has an impact on both their family or personal lives and on their overall career development. This viewpoint is emphasised by Darelle who felt that *“ek het net te veel goed om te doen. Want na ek my werk gedoen het wat ek moet doen, en ek het al my ander huislike goed gedoen, is daar net nie in ‘n dag meer tyd nie”*.

This situation has serious ramifications for women academics in that it does have an impact, often negative, on their career development. Without ascribing blame to either men or the university, these women academics do view the situation as one in which men in academia find it easier to gain the necessary experience and promotions because they are not hampered with the same constraints as women are. Teresa sums this up

wonderfully with her declarations that *“ek dink dis onuitgesproke, dit word nie uitgespreek nie, want kyk mans kan maklik bevorder word want hulle het baie meer tyd om aan hulle c.v.’s te werk, so dus vir hulle makliker”* and *“hulle [mans] kry maklik ervaring. Ek is vrou met kinders, en hulle [management] weet ek gaan nie skuif vir geld nie, verstaan jy? Waar ‘n man op my leeftyd skuif maklik vir geld. Hulle [management] gee vir hulle [mans] makliker...bevordering om hulle te hou...so dus as die mans nie bevordering kry dan waai hulle”*. Once again one is compelled to note, as pointed out by Breda Gray (1994:81) that without ascribing blame the academy does serve the interests of men and often excludes the interests and roles of women.

This double role/load of women academics often has a detrimental impact on the family or personal life of women academics and is best summed up by Julie who said *“dit het definitief ‘n impak op my huishouding. Omdat ek vier nagraadse kursusse aanbied is dit in die aand. En dit vang my hoor. So twee aande ‘n week is ek hier van halfvyf ...tot nege uur in die aand en dit het ‘n impak of my huislike lewe. Ek voel vir die afgelope jaar en ‘n half daai druk ...it is getting to me. Ek voel ek moet in die oggend beplan wat om te kook en wat om te maak en dit vang my”*.

The double load also implies further that women academics often find it extremely difficult to maintain a healthy balance in their lives. This is especially true for Sarie, who declared that she was finding it extremely difficult to *“carry the workload that I carry and balance that with the rest of my life”* and for Genny who pronounced *“ ek het nou amper hierdie twee persoonlikhede. Ek dink dit is maar moeilike omstandighede om te versoen. Jy weet my rol as vrou by die huis en my rol as akademikus by die universiteit is twee totaal verskillende situasies”*. As a result women academics are often forced to limit their time with their families even more, because as Lynette says *“die soort van min tyd wat hulle toelaat, ... dwing jou eintlik om jou navorsing in jou vryetyd te begin doen, wat jy eerder aan jou gesin of jou kinders moes gespandeer het”*.

As a result of having to balance multiple roles, the reality for many women academics, especially those with children, is the importance of personal support structures. Marina, although not a mother herself yet, saw it as important that *“jy vir jouself ‘n situasie so inrig dat iemand sorg vir die kinders totdat jy daar aankom”* and Sarie who described her home situation: *“I’ve got someone who cares for them [two young children] and*

I've got a very good domestic helper". Many women also expressed the importance of a supportive spouse who often took care of the 'traditionally woman's jobs' like cooking and cleaning. Two of the older, senior women however qualified this 'support' by revealing that they believed their husbands were still of the "old school" and so were supportive of their academic careers, as long as their wives still ran the home to their satisfaction.

Despite the difficulty of the roles and tasks of women in academia, all the participants felt that one major advantage academic life was the flexible working hours, which allowed them to accommodate their personal and family responsibilities. Lynette voiced her satisfaction in this regard: "*ek dink dit is 'n groot voordeel en dit is die flexible ure. Ek kan nou byvoorbeeld half een ry om sê nou my seuntjie musiek toe te vat, dis iets wat 'n ma wat kantoor ure het, nie sou kon doen nie*". Both Teresa and Julie also respectively expressed their contentment with this situation by the following: "*sy ['n vrou] kan al haar familie verpligtinge makliker nakom in die akademie*" and "*ek kan hier kom en ek kan my werk doen, so ek is hier terwyl hulle in die skool is, dan gaan ek huis toe en spandeer tyd met hulle en as hulle agtuur in die bed klim, dan gaan ek weer aan met my werk*". This complexity which characterises the situation of women academics certainly does have the effect of impacting on or influencing their feelings about academia.

8.2.3 Ambivalent feelings about academia with the precedence of overwhelmingly negative feelings

The women academics interviewed expressed ambivalent feelings about their experiences in academia. Although they describe many positive aspects about their experiences as academics, some of which have been referred to in the above discussion, negative feelings are overwhelmingly dominant in their descriptions of life as women academics.

Junior and senior women academics, in describing their experiences, referred to the reality of subtle discrimination, the double workload of women, as well as the requirement to take on more work in an increasingly competitive market, as some of the factors contributing to their feelings of frustration, stress, anger and guilt.

The reality of having to work in an environment characterised by subtle or covert discrimination meant that some women academics were increasingly frustrated and angered at having to waste unnecessary energy and time trying to deal with being treated differently to men. Some also perceived this as the source of additional pressure because they had to constantly put in extra effort to show that they were capable of doing the job. Two of the participants introduced the aspect of unwelcome sexual harassment in the form of touching. The following excerpt from the interview with Sarie in which she spoke at length about the dilemma it caused her, is in my view illustrative of the additional pressure and stress it may cause some women academics: “... *I've had people touching me but I've always chosen to believe that the touching is more in kindness and and I guess it's how you want to read the things. I think my way of dealing with it in this point in time is to always try and understand whether or not the person..... I try and take the best sort of view of the thing*”. Such practices oblige one to consider the impact of power implicit in this “subject-object relationship” (Davies, Lubelska & Quinn, 1994:3) between men and women in academia and reflect on who the subjects are and who the objects are in such situations.

The double workload of the women academics was greatly responsible for the feelings of stress, frustration and guilt experienced by the majority of the participants. This was alluded to by Sarie: “ *I'm starting to feel like I'm becoming like the people I didn't want to be....my career is becoming so important and that somehow the rest of my life is becoming diminished. I feel like I've almost got no control. I have to do what I do as best as I can possibly do it but in the process I think I'm paying the price and I feel guilty about it. I mean I often discuss these things with my husband and he says to me but you know at the end of the day it's your choice and what you're doing is you're choosing RAU. And that causes immense guilt because on the one hand I feel a commitment to the people here because I feel they look up to me... I have to be. I can't expect of them to work as hard as they have to if I don't do the same so that's causing all sorts of dilemmas on a personal level*”. This was echoed by many of the academics, who felt that as women, they were not only under pressure from the university and their families but also by the greater society.

One major consequence of the above was that many of the participants have at some stage experienced feelings of self-doubt and resultantly felt that they were regressing in terms of their positions and careers. When women are faced with having their input rejected or passed over, especially in meetings, then they often respond as Lynnete did: *“wel hulle neem my beswaar nie baie ernstig nie, en omdat hulle dit nie baie ernstig neem, het ek ook gedink, jy weet, miskien is dit nie, miskien het ek ook nie ‘n saak nie. En ek voel ek het waarskynlik niks om [hulle] te bied ...gaan weg”*. This feeling of self-doubt and regression reverberates particularly in the utterances of the senior professors whose promotions progressed at a much slower rate than their male counterparts. One professor who was passed over for promotion although she had all the qualities and qualifications expressed it in the following way: *“...as jy nou regtig diep gaan delf dink jy ‘sjoe, eintlik is ek oorsien in die pos’, jy weet dit laat jou selfs half twyfel in jou self”* while another felt that *“weet jy dit laat my in ‘n sekere sin minderwaardig voel. Hulle laat my verstaan dat ek heeltyd vrou is en dit plaas nogal druk op ‘n mens. Jy weet dat jy moet heeltyd presteer en jy moet versigtig wees in terme van stereotipes op te doen”*. Both these women’s verbalisations are in accord with those found in the literature, which indicates that women academics have to deal with the consequences of having their worth and work regarded as less than worthy.

To all extents and purposes then the ambivalent feelings associated with the experiences of the majority of the participants, influenced their behaviour and reactions as women academics.

8.2.4 The influence of male domination on the behaviour and reactions of women academics

All the participants agreed on the original classification of academia as “a man’s world” and felt that this perception of male domination in combination with their feelings of frustration, anger, stress and guilt did exert an influence on their behaviour and reactions in the academic world.

By far the most prominent reaction was to over-react or over-compensate. This type of behaviour took on many forms of which working harder to prove that they are capable, and being defensive, aggressive or rude when faced with instances when they perceived

they were being subjected to covert or subtle discrimination. Other typical reactions included being very tough in order to show students, particularly large groups of male students, who was in charge, retreating from 'battles' and ignoring or joking about sexist or discriminatory remarks that were made. The women also made mention of 'playing the game', separating their femininity from their academic role and isolating themselves from other women to avoid being labelled.

The issue of working harder in order to prove that they were in fact capable of doing the job well was common to the majority of the participants. Genny, a senior professor who had been at the university for more than fifteen years, put it this way: "...dit is maar 'n geval jy het jou plek en merk gemaak en dit word makliker van daar af, maar dit is 'n geveg om dit te doen. Ek sê eerlik vir jou, as dame in 'n manswêreld, werk jy harder om vol te staan of in die eerste plek jou plek daar te kry en om hom te behou is 'n groter geveg". She also further spoke about her perceptions about being judged in a man's world which influenced the way in which she felt in meetings: "as die hele omgewing jou soort van uitsonder om jouself te bewys, dan voordat jy in 'n vergadering ingaan, dan gaan jy al reeds met die gevoel in 'ek moet myself bewys'". Another senior women also spoke about over-compensating and cited as examples hereof, her quicker than normal return to academia once she had her children and her willingness to continue with her evening classes even when she was on maternity leave or long leave.

One participant who works in a particularly male dominated subject area described her over-reaction as being openly rude or aggressive when she felt she was being subjected to subtle discrimination. She would, for example, if asked by male colleagues whether a meeting at 14h30 would suit her and if she could make arrangements for her children, immediately retaliate by asking them, in as sarcastic a tone as she could muster, if they could make plans for their children.

The majority of participants work in departments where they teach extremely large class groups. Some of the participants mentioned that they felt they needed to prove their authority as women academics right from the beginning. In this regard many of them felt that in order to prevent problems they exhibited very tough behaviour in order to show students, particularly male students, who was in charge. This behaviour ranged from insisting on "*doodste stilte, daar moet doodste stilte wees, niemand kom laat in my*

klas nie” to having the attitude of “*dissipline is vir my geweldig belangrik*” and setting the tone in the first class for the rest of the semester by being “*ontsettend kwaai*”.

The participants also disclosed the reaction or behaviour they adopted when faced with subtle discrimination in meetings. The reactions and behaviour recounted by the women academics in this study reverberate in those of the academics studied by Luke and Gore (1992:210) who they document as being forced to choose between “consistent protestation”, “selective struggle” and consciously not speaking. One participant, a senior professor, coined the following saying in describing her reactions and behaviour: “*shut your mouth and wear beige*”. She reacted to this ‘retreat from the battle’ because “*where it counts I’ve got autonomy so for me to take on the fight at university level is really not worthwhile. So I more or less switch off which I think is not the right thing to do*” and “*I would only speak up if there was something to do with my subject, that’s the only time I would actually get up to defend something*” thus illustrating that she sometimes chose two of the three paths depending on her particular circumstances.

Another interesting reaction described by the participants was ‘playing the game’, which often results from women academics acclimatising themselves to discrimination, expecting it, getting it and trying to move around it (Hochchild as quoted in Howe, 1975:52). Sarie quotes a professor in another department, from whom she has learnt to ‘play the game’, and this woman describes it as “*being the head girl, which is yes sir, no sir and oh isn’t she cute sir, but as long as she doesn’t make any ripples or waves then we’re very happy with her*”. This ‘playing the game’ was also alluded to in the way in which some women academics approached males, particularly those in management, for assistance. If it was done by the woman academic saying “*I need help. Please I need help, I can’t manage this anymore*”, then they tended to be very sympathetic and give more leeway, supporting the assessment of the term ‘gender’ by Judith Lorber (1994:5-6) as maintaining differences between men and women often in order to confirm and continue the domination of women by men.

Two more types of behaviour, divulged by the participants, entailed separating their femininity from their academic role and isolating themselves from other women to avoid being labelled, drawing parallels with the research by Hare-Mustine and Marecek (1990) in paragraph 5.8 on the effect of male domination on women’s perceptions of

themselves. Genny describes her behaviour in this regard in the following way: *“Jy kom sterker oor as normaal. Jy is baie aggresief, Jy kom meer aggresief oor, meer uitgesproke oor. Soos ek sê daar is definitiewe onderskeid tussen die vroulike rol en jou akademiese en professionele rol. En die professionele rol is jy definitief meer aggresief as andersins ook. As ek vir die eerste keer ‘n vergadering ingaan waar niemand my nog ken nie, dan vermy ek enige omstandighede waar ek geklassifiseer word as ‘n vrou veral wat hier is om notas te neem”*. In this regard her attitude is a reinforcement of the views of women academics in the literature who feel that they have to act in this way in order to counteract the perception that they as women they are not capable of being an academic.

The unwelcome dilemma for women academics of this division into two separate personas extends to their attitudes about feminism and mixing with other women. Of all the participants, only one was comfortable with announcing her feminist interests. The majority of participants in fact were quite emphatic in declaring that they were not feminists, despite this not being a question in the interview. To most of the participants the idea of feminism was associated with being labelled as *“difficult”*, *“wat veg vir vroue regte”* and *“pushy”*.

The participants also mentioned isolating themselves from other women to avoid being classified with them as a group of women as discussed in paragraph 5.8, which would in their view impact on the way in which they were perceived. This then, as one participant remarked, was probably why women found themselves in the position they are in. Although Sarie could see the pitfalls of not collaborating she was also fearful of the perceptions, which would be created if women did collaborate, giving rise to what Davies, Lubelska and Quinn (1994:5) describe as the contradictory nature of academia. This is evident in her remark: *“we need to collaborate more and ... we need to be more of a force in terms of standing together ... We’re just not enough to actually swing any vote you know in terms of female representation and I think that there are faculties that lobby very effectively in terms of who they put onto particular committees and then I think there is a reluctance with... especially woman who have been fairly successful. I don’t think they ever want to be branded militant and it’s being seen as being a radical feminist”*. I contend that this avoidance of being branded a feminist reinforces the illusion of ‘a level playing field’ for both men and women in academia, because it is

only women who have to modify their behaviour in order to avoid such a label. In light of the above discussion the importance of most of the participants describing the role of or need for mentors/ role models in their professional career development assumed greater portent.

8.2.5 The role of mentors or role models

Most of the women academics acknowledge the influential role of both female and male mentors or role models in their professional and career development. Junior women academics perceived it as advantageous as they felt disadvantaged by their youth, lack of stature/title, isolation, exploitation, heavy workload and lack of professional support structures in the university. Older women saw themselves as role models, mentors or advisors to younger women academics and students.

The older, more senior academics who had been at the university for a while, spoke about the influential role of chiefly male mentors or role models in their career development. Often these mentors were their immediate supervisors or heads of departments and therefore the relationships were not formally recognised or established. The participants mentioned that they learnt a great deal about how to function professionally in academia from them. This included learning the ropes as far as teaching, research and community work was concerned. Some of the qualities which drew them towards particular persons were *“want hy weet so baie en hy werk so hard daaraan, en hy is so pligsgetrou en op datum”* and *“hy het my voorgestel in die vergaderings as ‘n gelykwaardige deelneemer”*.

One aspect, which emerged in the interviews, was that there was often no female academic who could have served as role model or mentor fifteen years ago. Even when there were, women were reluctant to be associated with them, again either through fear of being labelled or because they did not epitomise the role the academic was seeking. This was aptly illustrated by one participant as *“you know even though I’ve got a lot of respect for women like Professor (name erased) I always said to myself, I don’t want to be like her. She never got married. She had a career at which she was very successful, but I think I always felt that I didn’t want to pursue the role models that were one-sided in terms of the way they developed”*.

The junior women academics I interviewed perceived the role of mentor/role model as generally advantageous to their future professional career development. The role of age and its accompanying lack of stature and title put young women academics in a difficult position reiterating the assertions of magda gere lewis (1993:55) that women at a junior level often have very little real authority. One participant described it as follows: “...as jy op ‘n komitee sit wat die universiteit dien, dan is dit asof hulle baie skikkerig is oor wie is hierdie persoon, sy het nie eers ‘n’D’ nie, sy is nie ‘n professor nie, sy is boonop ‘n vrou ook, wil ek na haar luister?”

The junior women academics also spoke about their extremely heavy workloads and how it influenced their ability to complete the other tasks, which would guarantee them promotion. Many of them were still trying to complete their doctorates and were trying to publish, but were finding it exceedingly difficult due to their other obligations. One junior academic revealed that she had four undergraduate and four postgraduate courses, which left her very little time for anything else and described her feelings in this regard: “As jy junior is word jy misbruik. Elke nuwe jonkie wat gaan inkom wil hulle, wil hulle leeg suig van wat kan hulle gebruik. En ek voel ek het ‘n hengse werkslading”.

Another participant felt that often the unpleasant tasks were handed to the younger lecturers without consideration as to whether or not they could handle it and without any formal support structures in place if they did get into difficulties. She particularly pointed out in this respect, the allocation of large first-year classes (ranging from 180-300 students) to the new, young, junior academics, who were often unable to handle important issues like discipline, without any tangible support. She felt that as a junior, she was not being offered any support or encouragement in this regard and was being left to muddle along on her own. She particularly bemoaned the lack of concrete policies and structures from the university to support new, young academics. This issue was reiterated by the other young women academics in the study as well. As a result of their heavy workloads and lack of support structures, there was a feeling of isolation, which did not aid their current situations.

Three of the four junior women academics revealed that they were in search of an older, more experienced, women academic as a role model or mentor. One participant said the

following about her search for a mentor: *“ek dink op hierdie stadium soek ek ‘n vrou, vir die rede dat ek dink ‘n vrou kan meer.....ek is nou op die punt in my lewe ... ek word nege en twintig en ek is in die punt in my lewe waar ek aan ‘n familie dink. Jy weet ek gaan moet familie en werk kombineer en ek soek iemand soos die. Ek dink ‘n vroue mentor sal my makliker die toue kan wys hoe om suksesvol te wees in die akademie as vrou met kinders op ‘n meer realistiese wyse”*. The fourth participant revealed that she regarded one senior woman as a role model and felt that she had learnt much from her. Among other things she had learnt *“in watter tydskrifte te publiseer, die ‘tactics’, die ‘politics’ van die akademiese wêreld, dit is nie wie jy is nie maar wie jy ken, hoe om met die regte ouens te gesels, by wie te laat ‘slip’ ek was by daardie internasionale konferensie”*. This lends credence to the claims by Luke and Gore (1992:206) that the “rules of the game” and by Davies, Lubelska and Quinn (1994:20-21) that the “parts of the occupational identity as an academic” are often obscured for women, but is countered by the reality that senior women academics acting as mentors can assuage this breach.

The more senior women academics saw themselves as role models, mentors or advisors to younger women academics and students. Many of them had experienced the difficulties for women in academia and thus recognised the contributions they could offer younger women in this respect. One senior participant, who teaches in a male dominated field, described her role in the following way: *“Ek probeer om subtile leiding te gee aan jonger dames dosente en jy weet raad te gee, hoe om oor te kom. Moet nie in die slaggat val om in die klas te stap jy weet met jou goue skoene en goed nie, moet nie ‘n vriend word met studente, berei jouself goed voordat jy in ‘n vergadering stap”*.

8.3 Summary

This section dealt with the findings, which emerged from the data analysis process. I discussed in detail the following five categories and their sub-categories: the changes over time in the university, the double workload of women academics, their ambivalent feelings about academia, the impact of operating in a 'man's world' on the reactions and behaviour of women academics and the role of mentors/ role models in their career development. In this process I drew on the applicable literature dealt with in the literature review in order to draw parallels and find substantiation. I also in the discussion of each category allowed the 'voices' of the participants to emerge by including appropriate quotations to illustrate the emphasis of the discussion and to allow the reader to experience it vicariously (Guba & Lincoln, 1989: 260-262).

9. CONCLUSION

This essay has focused on the experiences of a sample of women academics in a male-dominated environment. The first part of this essay commenced with examining two main reasons for this research, namely to understand these experiences and report on it in order to contribute in part to the creation of a women's language emanating from their experiences.

This study has found that the experiences of these women academics in a South African institution of higher education, an institution traditionally dominated by men, to be similar to that of women academics in other parts of the world. The findings of this research essay illustrate that although women academics at the RAU do have many positive experiences, they identify a number of areas of concern. I believe these require the attention and endorsement of management if we are to ensure that all role-players reach consensus on the characteristics of women's subordination within academia and work towards promoting true gender equity.

In conclusion, I would like to express the belief that the articulation of these women academics' experiences will not be viewed as "a vulgar voice ... inharmonious, abrupt, impolite and out-of-place" because it seeks to disrupt the dominant phallogentric

discourse” (Lewis, 1993:56), but as the voices of women asserting their identities and defining their own terms (Davies, Lubelska & Quinn, 1994:131).

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

In this respect I would like to close with a discussion of the possible implications of this study for staff development activities, in institutions of higher education in South Africa.

On browsing through the web site of the Rand Afrikaans University, one is immediately struck by the major changes, which have taken place at this institution. Among these are the introduction of an equal opportunities programme, which “aims to advance the development and progress of individuals and groups who have been adversely affected by the previous dispensation through unfair discrimination” (RAU, 1998, paragraph 2). Mention is also made of the existing in-service training programmes, the new developments in terms of salary matters, and the improved conditions of service. While all of the above changes are laudable and necessary, they do not in my view actually specifically address the position of women, of all race groups, ages and post levels, in academic posts in the university. It is my contention that in this respect there is still much to be done in order to address some of the specific issues, which have emerged from this research. Resultantly, I would like to offer a few recommendations, which I believe would aid this process.

- I believe that it is incumbent upon the top management to take the lead in the elimination of gender discrimination. A holistic approach to eliminating gender discrimination can and must emanate from top management and be entrenched in firm, unambiguous policies. These policies furthermore need to be driven by and actively and visibly implemented by top management if they are to achieve any success.
- As the greater majority of participants spoke about the issue of subtle discrimination, I argue that this is paramount for this to be addressed as a matter of urgency. It is often the case that many people are not always aware that they are acting in a manner, which may be perceived as discriminatory, so staff

development activities or discussions especially around the issue of sensitivity for gender could help alleviate this. In the same breadth this could aid the situation of women academics at the R.A.U. by raising awareness of gender issues thereby ensuring that it does not become something about which there is “wearisome intolerance”.

- The lack of professional support structures particularly for young women entering academia presents a serious lacunae for the way in which the human resources of this institution are currently being managed. This aspect could be addressed via exposure to more staff development activities for young women academics in order to ease their path into academia. This could help address the issues of access to networks, forms, procedures and organisation within the university.
- An initiative in the form of a university-wide policy, which lays down applicable guidelines for the establishment of a formalised mentoring system to link up junior and senior women academics could put an end to the isolated conditions under which many young women in academia are forced to operate. Such a system would aid the process of mentoring for women in academia. It would also ensure that younger women academics have a process or procedure in place which allows them to gain adequate access to older, more experienced senior women academics who have travelled the road and could thus offer indispensable advice and aid in this regard.
- Another issue is the one of language. I would like to advocate for the promotion and implementation of more gender sensitive writing. Much like the insistence on the use of two of the official languages within the university, the insistence on the use of gender sensitive language would also go a long way towards raising consciousness about womens’ issues among all role players in the university context.
- Laura Bierema (1998:98) argues for an end to the dearth of opportunities for women academics with young children. She argues for a more flexible infrastructure that

supports women and advocates for flexitime and job sharing as dimensions hereof. This too would need to be conceptualised and implemented in a university-wide policy to ensure a holistic, integrated approach to the human resources of the university.

- I think two of the most radical and progressive recommendations however are forwarded by Laura Bierema (1998: 98). The first of these centres around training for women so that they may be initiated into those unknown aspects of the organisational culture in academic institutions. This is combined with more effective human resource development in the form of “selecting more women for high-potential careers opportunities and reviewing existing selection criteria for upper-level positions, to check for hidden biases”. The second of these relies heavily on the input of middle management like the heads of departments, who are in powerful positions to advance or restrict the positions of women in their departments. They suggest a system of rewards for managers who put policies and structures into place to promote women’s careers. In fact I would argue this type of policy is equitable to the chairman’s bonus mentioned briefly by one of the participants in the study during her interview; it is simply a question of a change in focus.

I believe that if the RAU wants to be true to its proclamation that it is up to meeting the challenges of transformation and progress then it needs to meet this challenge head on and handle it “to the best of its ability and understanding” (RAU, 1998, paragraph 1).

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APPENDIX A

P.O. Box 279
Maraisburg
1700
15 April 1999

Professor P. Von Staden
Registrar: Academic
Rand Afrikaans University
P.O. Box 524
Auckland Park
2006

Prof Von Staden

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WITH A SELECT GROUP OF
WOMEN ACADEMICS AT THE R.A.U. IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF A
MASTER'S DEGREE IN EDUCATION

I, the undersigned, Nadine Felicity Petersen, am presently employed at the University, in the Department of Education Sciences, and I am also a registered student in the Faculty of Education. I am currently enrolled in a master's degree in Adult Education under the supervision of Professor Sarah Gravett.

In partial fulfillment of this degree, I will have to complete a research essay in which I wish to focus on the area of gender studies. As you may be aware there has not been much research of this nature in the South African arena, and my supervisor and I feel that a study of this nature may in a small way contribute towards the growing pool of South African research on gender in education. The study I aim to undertake in the coming months will be from an interpretative paradigm in which the experiences of women academics in a male-dominated environment are explored. This will be done by means of interview-based research with a number of selected women academics. I should therefore like to procure your permission for this study to be conducted with a number of women academics at the Rand Afrikaans University. It is our view that knowledge gleaned from this study could furthermore be utilised in staff development activities within the University, specifically around the issue of gender sensitivity.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

Nadine Petersen

Prof. S Gravett

MEMORANDUM

TO: MRS. T VAN WEZEL
FROM: NADINE PETERSEN
DATE: 04 AUGUST 1999

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR A PRINTOUT OF INFORMATION ABOUT WOMEN
ACADEMICS IN THE EMPLOY OF THE UNIVERSITY

Dear Theresa

I am in the process of conducting research at the university, which would involve interviewing a number of women academics. As my research is of a limited nature, I need to choose a sample of women academics from three distinct groups or levels.

I would appreciate it if you could assist me in this process by accessing and making a printout of the following information for me:

Please note that the following information only pertains to women academics currently in the employ of the university.

- A list of their full names and surnames
- Phone numbers at which they can be contacted, both office and home
- The post level which they occupy
- The department in which they work
- Whether they are on long leave or not
- If possible, the number of years they have been in the employ of the university

I would appreciate it if you could contact me as soon as you have the above information at your disposal so that I may collect it personally.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Nadine Petersen

Bring 439
Ext 3487

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire for participants being interviewed on the experiences of women academics in a male-dominated environment:

Background information

Participant's name and surname: _____

Official rank/level: _____

How long have you been at this level: _____

How long have you worked at the Rand Afrikaans University: _____

Do you hold any office or position (such as chairperson) in the department/ faculty you work in? If so, please specify: _____

Department of Education Sciences
Faculty of Education and Nursing
Bring 4
Rand Afrikaans University
18 August 1999

LETTER OF CONSENT TO CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW

Dear Ms / Mrs/ Prof _____

I, the undersigned, am presently employed in the Department of Education Sciences, and I am also a registered student in the Faculty of Education. I am currently enrolled in a master's degree in Adult Education under the guidance of Professor Sarah Gravett.

In partial fulfillment of this degree, I have to complete a research essay in which I wish to focus on the arena of gender studies. As you may be aware there has not been much research of this nature in the South African context, and my supervisor and I feel that a study of this nature may in a small way contribute to the growing pool of South African research on gender in education and may aid staff development activities within the university, especially in the arena of training for gender sensitivity. The study I aim to undertake in the following month will be from an interpretative paradigm and will focus on gaining an understanding of the experiences of women academics in a male-dominated environment, *through the medium of interviews*. The necessary permission for this study to be conducted with women academics at the university has been granted by Prof. PMS Von Staden (see accompanying letter).

I have obtained your name from a list (of women academics at the R.A.U.) supplied to me by the personnel division and would like to request your permission to conduct an interview with you. I will, according to prevailing practice, like to assure you that whatever is discussed in the interview will be subject to the utmost confidentiality. Accordingly I should like to request that the accompanying slip be completed and signed to indicate your consent to be interviewed for the above purpose. To facilitate confidentiality, I will telephone prior to collecting these slips myself.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Nadine Petersen
Student

Prof Sarah Gravett
Supervisor

APPENDIX E

18 August 1999

I, the undersigned, Ms/ Mrs / Prof _____ (please print full name) hereby grant consent to Nadine Petersen, Department of Education Sciences, to conduct an interview with me for her research in partial fulfillment of her master's degree.

Signature of participant



EXTRACT OF INTERVIEW WITH JUNIOR WOMAN ACADEMIC (ADRI) IN
THE POSITION OF LECTURER AT THE RAND AFRIKAANS UNIVERSITY

N: Nadine – researcher

A: Adri - participant

N: Kan jy vir my vertel van jou ervaring as vroue akademikus by die RAU?

A: Binnekant my departement ervaar ek nie diskriminasie. Ek dink ek het al van heelwat vroue gehoor wat sê hulle werkswaardes verskil, so ek persoonlik ervaar nie dit nie, tot so 'n mate. Ek dink dit het grootliks te doen met die feit dat my professor aan wie ek rapporteer, Professor (naam uitgelaat), baie samewerkend is, jou toelaat om te laat ontwikkel, jou toelaat om jou idees te gebruik en ek het nog nooit van sy kant af enige diskriminasie ervaar nie. Wat betref die res van die RAU, sodra ek buitekant die departement beweeg, dan ervaar ek baie van die mans akademici is baie verstok, oud en baie Afrikaans en tradisioneel.

N: Hoe kom dit uit?

A: Dit het meer in baie opsigte te doen met lyftaal, algemene houding, meer as wat hulle ooit reguit iets so sê. Die feit dat jy partykeer by 'n vergadering gevra sal word: "Skink asseblief die tee." As jy 'n opinie het oor 'n saak wat bespreek word, is dit amper asof... ja goed, hulle luister na jou, maar hulle sal eers by die res van die tafel wil hoor, omdat daar omtrent net mans is. Ja, jy weet, so hulle neem jou opinie in ag en jy kan agterkom daar was half 'n huiwering daarin of hulle nou vir jou moet luister of nie.

N: Hoe laat dit jou voel?

A: Ek dink dit is makliker vir my, omdat ek dit in my alledaagse werk nie ervaar nie, is dit as ek uitgaan, kry hulle eintlik jammer want ek dink hulle is in 'n posisie waar hulle baie skrikkerig vir verandering en hulle is glad nie besig om enige iets daaraan te doen, om verder te beweeg uit hulle gemaksone nie. So, in 'n mate dit maak my hier en daar kwaad, veral as daar belangrike besluite wat geneem moet word en jy voel dat jy werklik iets het van belang is om te sê, maar oor die algemeen moet ek sê ek wil die engels daarvoor gebruik, "I pity them", want ek dink hulle is ook in 'n baie moeilike posisie. Ek dink vir baie jare is die blanke man in Suid-Afrika as klein godjies ervaar en behandel en vir hulle, om nou uit dit te breek, is 'n moeilike ding.

N: As jy iets soos dit teëkom, byvoorbeeld iemand sê vir jou "Sal jy die tee skink?" Hoe reageer jy?

A: Gewoonlik sal ek vir hulle sê: "Ag nee, kry gerus vir julle self eers." of so iets. Jy weet, ek probeer dit teruggooi, "I put the ball back in their court." Dit is gewoonlik hoe ek dit sou hanteer. Daar is nie regtig dat ek dit ooit sal weier, tensy ek dit regtig as bedreigend ervaar en dan sal ek dit maar net hanteer na die gelang van die situasie. Tee skink is maar net regtig 'n voorbeeld, so dit is amper half simptome van deel van hulle gedrag teenoor jou. Ek, ek dink regtig hulle kom dit nie eers agter nie.

N: Sê jy vir hulle ooit hoe voel jy?

A: Ag, nie regtig nie, want ek kry nie so baie met ander akademici te doene nie en ek het nog nie so bedreig gevoel, dat ek gevoel het dat ek wil regtig my mening daaroor lig nie. 'n Kollega van my het wel probeer om 'n funksie te reël by RAU en van die topbestuur se kant af het sy net met blanke mans gewerk, behalwe een anders kleurige. Ten opsigte van daai ervaring van haar het sy baie negatief gevoel en jy weet, toe sy terug rapporteer aan my en ons moet nou plan maak of ons nou verder voortgaan met die funksie of nie, maak dit dan net moeilik, want jy weet die amper half "invisible" muur, waarmee jy "contend" en om daai ding af te breek is dan baie moeilik. So dit

maak dit dan net vir jou moeiliker om goed uit te voer wat jy graag so wou en jy moet maniere om hulle vind en ek dink dit is eintlik die kruks. Ek weet nie, miskien is ek verkeerd, maar ek wil eintlik nie die energie daaraan spandeer om hulle te wil verander nie. Ek wil eerder sê daar moet 'n manier om hulle wees.

N: So, is jy bereid om daai paadjie te vind?

A: Eerder as om my tyd te mors op 'n persoon wat werklik nie eers bewus is daarvan dat hulle partykeer so 'n houding het nie, of as hulle bewus is nie bereid is om te verander nie, ek moet eerder my energie spandeer om 'n paadjie om dit te kry en gewoonlik kry 'n mens dit dan ook reg.

N: Jy het gepraat oor negatiewe ervaring met topbestuur. Kan jy so bietjie uitbrei daaroor?

A: Dit het grootliks te doen, wat amper die "Old Boy's Club is, met ander woorde, as een van daai manne nee sou sê vir iets, dan sal almal nee sê, ongeag die bepaalde reëlins rondom 'n bepaalde funksie of wat. Ook as hulle 'n sekere standpunt inneem - oor dit was 'n funksie gewees waar hulle 'n klomp sprekers wou kry, as hulle voel 'n sekere tipe spreker daar moet wees, dan sal almal daaroor instem, maar as hulle uitstap uit die kantoor dan sal hulle vir jou sê: "Nee, hulle weet nou nie. Jy weet, ek dink jy het nou nogal 'n goeie idee. Of as hulle terugkom in die vergadering waar almal is, dan stem hulle weer almal saam.

N: So, hoe sien jy dit?

A: So, dit is amper asof hulle bang is vir groepsdruk en dit het baie te doen met mans oor die algemeen. Die groepsdruk is net vir hulle te veel om by mekaar van mekaar te verskil.

N: Kan ek jou vra, waarom dink jy dit is so?

A: Ek dink dit is 'n definitiewe kombinasie van faktore. Ek dink vrou wees het daarmee te doen, in die sin dat op die oomblik, as mens kyk na regstellende aksies ensovoorts, is vroue ook daarby ingesluit en ek dink die wit man oor die algemeen is net ongelooflik bedreig. En ek dink dit is punt nommer een en in die tweede plek ook, omdat ek dink die tradisionele akademiese, 'n manswêreld reg deur die bank is, en nou dat vroue toe tree, voel hulle dat hulle dat hulle op 'n ander manier met 'n vrou werk. Ek is nie heeltemal seker of die vrou in die werkplek ten opsigte van emosionele behandeling, te hanteer ensovoorts en dan ook dink ek, omdat daar nou vir jare lank net mans was, is dit definitief 'n bedreiging. Die Afrikaner wit man, vir hom is dit ook nog 'n ding van in die ouerhuis het hy op 'n skere manier, in sy kerk het hy op 'n sekere manier geleer hoe om 'n vrou te hanteer en hoe maak hy nou met haar in die werkplek. En ek dink by baie van hulle het hulle miskien al oor in hulle verstande oor dit gekom, om daarvoor kan logies redeneer, maar ek dink in hulle houdings en in hulle harte het daai verandering nog nie plaasgevind nie. Dit is half daar op die logiese vlak is dit al verwerk, maar nie die emosionele vlak nie.

N: Jy het gepraat twee keer oor lyftaal en houding, kan jy my 'n bietjie meer daarvan vertel?

A: Ek dink dit is... jy sal nou byvoorbeeld in 'n vergadering sit met 'n hele paar ander mans, miskien twee vrouens om die tafel en ek dink dit het ook te doen met hoe oud jy is as 'n vrou, en jou staturus het definitief ook daarmee te doen. Sê nou maar jy wil jou opinie lig oor wat bespreek word, dan is dit amper asof hulle eers almal se opinies hoor en dit is asof hulle vir jou 'n aanduiding gee: "Ja goed, wag net so bietjie. Laat ek net eers by die ander hoor". En dit is asof hulle nie vir jou dadelik 'n kans gaan gee nie en as jy so praat, dan "O, 'ok' goed dat ons mooi hieroor dink" en dan later sal hulle miskien later iets van inkorporeer of hulle sal sê: "Ja, goed, ons hoor wat jy sê," maar dit is asof hulle eintlik heeltemal ignoreer wat jy sê en hulle gaan maar net in elkgeval voort. So, dit is asof jy nie heeltemal jou stem aanvaar as miskien iets wat by kan dra tot die oplossing van die probleem ensovoorts. So, dit is eintlik half 'n onserkerheid, 'n huiwering van hulle kant af.

Die rede hoekom ek noem ouderdom het ook daarmee te doen en natuurlik jou titel en verdedigingstruktuur ensovoorts is, as hulle jou nie ken nie en ek is nou maar twee jaar by RAU en hulle ken jou nog nie. Soos ek sê, ek beweeg nie baie buite die departement nie. As jy op 'n kommitee sou sit wat in die universiteit wyd dien, dan is dit asof hulle baie skrikkerig is oor wie is hierdie persoon. Sy het nie eers 'n 'D' nie, sy is nie 'n professor nie, sy is boonop 'n vrou ook. Wil ek eintlik na haar luister? Kom ons gee vir haar gou-gou 'n kansie, want sy is nou deur haar prof aangewys om hier te sit, maar ek weet nie eintlik nie of wat is haar statuur nie.

N: Hoe is dit in vergelyking met 'n jong mans akademikus is wat op dieselfde vlak is as wat jy is?

A: Wel daar is min sulke mans in ons departement. Ek sou sê wat ek ervaar van (naam van departement uitgelaat om persoon te beskerm) is dit is my persepsie nou, dat daai jongman word net makliker aanvaar. Dis amper hulle skakel makliker in, in die "Old Boys Club" en hulle word makliker aangehoor en geleentheid gegee as 'n vrou. Sy moet haarself bietjie meer bewys, 'n bietjie meer daai ekstra myl gaan, voordat dit wat sy sê, dit wat sy doen, aanvaar word as gelykaan.

N: Watter impak het dit op as jy iets wil sê in 'n vergadering. Hoe gaan jy daarin?

A: Gewoonlik 'n bietjie meer gereserveerd. Jy is amper half defensief voordat jy instap, want jy weet, voordat ek hier iets gaan sê ek ek aangehoor gaan word, gaan ek moet baklei in 'n mate om aangehoor te word. So, ek dink dit beïnvloed definitief jou konsentrasie vermoë in daardie vergadering, want jy konsentreer juis op die verkeerde goed. Insteede daarvan om net in te gaan en jou saak te stel en basta met die res, voel jy jy moet eers die "barriers" breek, dat hulle my kan sien vir iemand wat gelyk is aan hulle en dan kan ek my saak stel.

N: Hoe evaar jy dit?

A: Ek dink dit is definitief addisionele druk. Ek dink dit kan vir baie vroue en hier en daar vir my ook by sekere vergaderings, ervaar jy dit as baie negatief en dit is addisionele druk wat jy nie graag sou wou hê nie. Baie beslis as jy nie daai druk het nie, dink ek die lewe gaan baie makliker, maar aan die anderkant dink ek ook dat ek baie leer daarvan, leer hoe om sulke mense te hanteer en leer hoe om rondom hulle te werk en dan saam met hulle te werk, wat eintlik 'n jammerte is, want jy wil eintlik saam met hulle werk. Maar die energie wat mens spandeer aan so iets om daai brûe te probeer bou, is amper nie eers die moeite werd om aan te spandeer nie. Ek dink in elkgeval en dit ervaar jy ook in die besigheidswêreld, dat vrouens, wanneer jy met hulle wil meng en wanneer jy wil deel word van die "Old Boys Club" of net op 'n gelyke vlak hanteer wil word. As jy nie in die aand ook byvoorbeeld in die kroeg en saam met almal 'n drankie maak nie en as jy nie op 'n sekere manier met hulle praat nie, as jy nie oor sekere manssportsoorte praat nie, rugby ensovoorts en sokker nie, dan is dit nou maar jammer, dan is dit klaar net nie die hegte groepie en dan maak dit net vir jou moeiliker. So ja, die emosionele druk is amper asof ek wil rebeleer en dit is die manier hoe dit is en ek wil nie deel daarvan wees nie en ek sal 'n ander manier vind.

N:Hoe raak dit jou persoonlike lewe?

A: Ja, ek dink daar is in spesifiek waar ek is by (beroepsbeskrywing uitgelaat om persoon te beskerm) is daar baie druk vir 'n mens, spesifiek druk ten opsigte van jy moet die geld verdien vir die departement om die departement aan die gang te hou. So, op daai vlak dink ek, ja, in jou persoonlike lewe, ja, definitief, ek het 'n baie ander houding as enige ander akademikus in die gang vir die rede dat ek weet dat as ek nie genoegsame inkomste verdien nie, is daar net nie volgende jaar 'n werk nie. So ek dink ten opsigte daarvan het dit verskil. Ten opsigte van mans op 'n mens, ja, dit sou tog as jy by 'n vergadering uitstap en jy voel regtig geirreterd. Mens voel bietjie afgehaal, maar ek dink nie dit is meer as die gewone werksdruk nie. Waar daar wel baie ou geykte goed is, te probeer om vernuwend te probeer dink, (beroepsbeskrywing uitgelaat

om persoon te beskerm) dan frustreer dit jou tot die punt dat jy voel dat wat jy beplan, kan nie verder gaan nie. Dit hang af van die mense se goedkeuring en hulle staan vas en dan maak dit baie moeilik. Maar byvoorbeeld, hoe ek hierdie jaar daarmee moes werk, (’n hele paragraaf uitgelaat om die identiteit van die persoon te beskerm) So, dit veroorsaak addisionele werksdruk en frustrasie.

N: En dink jy deel van daardie probleem is, dat jy vrou is wat hierdie voorstellings maak?

A: Ek dink dit is ‘n kombinasie, nie net vroues. Ek dink dit is ‘n kombinasie met vernuwende dinge wat in opleiding en onderwys gebeur. Dit is hoekom ek sê ek kry amper die wit afrikaner man baie jammer. Ek dink hulle is op hierdie stadium van hulle lewe, daar word so baie dinge rondom hulle werk en hulle lewens verander, hulle weet nou nie meer waar nie en ek dink hulle is op hierdie stadium in ‘n groot verdedigingsbehoud. Ek dink baie keer wil hulle net sê: "Laat ons nou net remme aanslaan" en "stop nou net die bus, want ek kan nou nie meer verander nie." Dit is amper half daai houding as enigiets anders, maar verander moet hulle.

N: Jy het op ‘n stadium gesê dat die akademiesewêreld as ‘n manswêreld. As iemand nou vir jou moet sê hulle sien die akademiesewêreld as ‘n manswêreld, wat sou jy vir hulle persoonlik sê?

A: Ek sal nie eers twyfel daaroor. Ek het baie vryheid in my departement en oor die algemeen, tensy ek nou regtig goedkeuring van die universiteit moet kry het ek niks met die ander akademici te doen nie, en ek is eintlik half dankbaar daarvoor. Ek dink, sodra jy begin beweeg in die bestuurstruktuur akademies, jy sien ook net mans. So, punt nommer een, daar is net mans omtrent. In die tweede plek, van die vroue wat geskuif word in hoër poste ensovoorts. Party van hulle voel ek amper half is "sheltered employment" en hulle word daar gesit as ‘n tipe van ‘n "token" en wie nie as ‘n "token" daar is nie, dink ek, moet baklei elke dag van hulle lewe, net om die erkenning te kry. En hulle selfs soveel meer moet bewys, as ‘n mans akademikus binnekant die RAU struktuur. Ek is nie seker, hoe dit is internasionaal, maar ek ervaar dit regtig as, veral by

departemente waar die voorsitters baie verstandig is en op baie ou werkswyse werk ensovoorts. Daar sou ek definitief sê, as ek kyk na van die koördineerders van ons programme in ons departement, is almal wit mans.

N: Hoekom?

A: Jy weet, daar is baie bevoegde vrouens, wat ook daai werk kan doen. Ek ek dink ook in 'n groot mate baie meer "committed" sal wees om dit te doen, maar dit is wit mans. Maar dit kom baie terug na die storie van in die skoolstelsel sal die wit man oor die algemeen meer betaal word, want hy het 'n familie om voor te sorg, maar ek dink dit is ook nou 'n geïkte konsep nou al, want die vrou is in baie gevalle nou al die broodwinner. So, mens kan nie meer daai redenasie gebruik nie. Dit het baie te doen met die regstellende aksie ook. Ek dink, dit gaan nie meer net oor blank en nie-blank nie, ek dink dit gaan baie sterk oor vrouens ook en die hele geval van hulle voel miskien daar is miskien nie iemand wat hulle in 'n opvolg beplanning in plek gesit het nie, maar ek dink tog ek dink hulle is besig om hulle self half te bluf. Ek dink ons maak ons oë toe en totdat die wetgewing nie vir ons sê ons moet sekere dinge doen nie, dan karring ons nou maar net aan, ensovoorts. Selfs in my departement wat redelik liberaal is, is dit blanke mans in die koördineerders van die program.

N: Jy is nou twee jaar hier. Het jy ooit 'n mentor of 'n rolmodel gehad?

A: Nee, dis nooit formeel gedoen nie. So, ek sou sê professor (naam uitgelaat) op hierdie stadium is die naaste wat daaraan kom vir my. Die groot rede daarvoor is hy is 'n persoon wat, dit is sy veld ook (naam van studieveld uitgelaat om persoon te beskerm). Jy weet, hy het lewenservaring waarvan jy ongelooflik baie kan van leer. Hy is ook baie akkomoderend en hy stop my nooit met enige ding nie. Al waar hy my sal stop: "Is dit nie te veel werk? Oorlaai jy nie jouself nie?", maar andersins laat hy mens loop en ek aanvaar dat hy my baie vertrou en ek waardeer dit ook en daar is daai sin van "Ja, ek vertrou jou, daarom kan jy voortgaan". Daar is nie 'n huiwering in my gemoed wat ek het nie. So, daar is... dit is nooit formeel gedoen nie en dit is die naaste wat ek

daaraan sou kan kom. Dit is wel so dat ek al van verlede jaar af probeer soek het na 'n mentor.

N: Soek jy spesifiek 'n vrou of 'n man?

A: Ek dink op hierdie stadium dat ek eerder sal gaan vir 'n vrou, vir die rede dat ek dink 'n vrou kan meer... ek is nou op die punt in my lewe. Ek word nege en twintig en ek is in die punt in my lewe, waar ek dink aan familie en dan moet jy familie en werk kombineer en ek dink alhoewel mans familie en werk kombineer, dink ek dit is moeiliker vir 'n vrou baie keer, baie keer meer moeiliker om dit te doen.

So, dit is amper asof ek voel, as ek 'n vroue mentor sal hê en dan 'n persoon wat moontlik 'n familie het en nogsteeds suksesvol is. In die akademie sal mens beter kan leer van so 'n persoon, van wat en hoe hanteer jy hierdie lewe, hoe hanteer jy die werkplek en familie en die gehalte van werkslewe, kwaliteit van lewe om daai balans te kry, want tot dusver het my werkslewe, ek is baie gefokus op my werkslewe, baie energie daarin gesit en ek kom op 'n punt nou waar bo-en-behalwe, waar ek nou voel ek wil nou oorgaan en dit is waar ek agterkom jou lewe is nie net werk nie en dat daar 'n balans moet wees. En ek dink, amper half 'n mentor en 'n vroue-mentor, sal mens makliker daar touwys kan maak, oor hoe om hierdie goeters te doen op 'n realistiese wyse en stede daarvan om te sê: "Ja, goed, jy kan die 'goeters' kombineer" en kry nou net vir jou 'n ondersteunende subtiele plek met baie mooi woorde en as jy praat met ander vrouens sê: "Hoor hier, dit werk nie, dit werk nie noodwendig so nie", en vir 'n paar jaar gaan jy moet jou loopbaan afskaal en ek soek amper half 'n manier om met iemand te klankbord, om te sê: "As dit sou gebeur dat jy moet afskaal gaan ek van my kop af of is ek ok /?/"

N: Sal jy sê jou ervaring hier in die akademie is anders as wat jy sou gedink het dit sou wees?

A: Dit is iets met 'n kombinasie ek het my 'M' hierdie jaar klaar gemaak en dit is seker 'n kombinasie tussen die twee. Ek het my MCom hierdie jaar gedoen en ek moes net 'n kort skripsie inhandig, maar ek het klas gedraf die res van my M en dis amper toe ek in die werks die wêreld, die privatektor was.

My 'M' het goed ingepas daarby die vakke wat ek gedoen het ensovoorts, maar dit was amper asof ek die gedagte gehad van akademiëci weet alles, hulle het die antwoorde tot alles. Akademiëci is mense wat bo verdenking is. Hulle kan jou baie help in die besigheidswêreld. Toe ek ingetree het hier, het ek vir die eerste keer agtergekom dat, omdat jy nou in 'n akademiese pos is, jy dikteer wat ander mense moet leer. Wat ek dink aanleiding gee tot baie mense se wanpersepsie dat hulle afgodjies is, want alhoewel daar in groepe saamgewerk word om die kurrikulum te bepaal, moet jy bepaal aan die einde van die dag wat dit is wat jy vir die studente moet gee. En dit het amper half gekom as 'n skok, jy weet, sjoe, ek weet nie hoe het ek andersins daarvoor gedink nie, maar dit was die eerste skok. Toe, daarna, het ek agtergekom met algemene navorsing, sowel as die mense se amperhalf apatie, of miskien luiheid, dat daar baie mense is wat in die gang hier is, wat rerig nie eintlik veel doen nie, en nie regtig eintlik hulle self veel verbeter nie. In teen deel, hulle miskien glad nie eers miskien self verbeter nie, maar hulle staan jaar na jaar voor 'n klas en is veronderstel om nou hierdie sogenaamde ekspert te wees. So, dit was vir my ook wat ek nie kon glo nie.

Dan die algemene, in 'n mate miskien geldhonger van die akademiëci, moontlik om die feit dat die salarisse nou nie so hoog is nie, maar amper half asof hulle voel dit kom hulle toe om meer te verdien omdat hulle nou sogenaamd al die kennis het. En ek dink hulle byt dan ook die praktyk redelik uit. Jy weet, in daai verband en gee voor hulle weet meer as wat hulle eintlik het en gee voor hulle het die antwoorde wat hulle nie eintlik het nie. En die praktyk betaal daarvoor, omdat hulle in dieselfde, hulle het dieselfde persepsie as wat ek gehad het, voordat ek hier ingekom het. So, dit was vir my nou nogal van 'n skok ook. Dan dink ek net oor die algemeen, ek dink dit miskien net 'n feit dat jy regtig in 'n ongelooflike magposisie is, om mense te kan maak of breek, ten opsigte van hulle ontwikkeling. Ja, dit was vir my een van die grootste skokke wat

ek ervaar het en wat ek gedink het hoe belangrik is dit tog dat waardes, akademikuste het baie sterk waardes en dat 'n persoon moet regtig weet waarheen jy op pad is en wat jy met die mense wil doen en dat dit regtig eintlik soos 'n /?/. Jy weet dis nie... jy stap net hier in en doen maar nou net en maak en breek en dit is nou maar net mors van tyd nie. Ek dink ek het dit net redelik baie ernstig op my skouers gerus.

Dan dink ek die ander 'goeters' is, ek is in 'n mate ten opsigte van my M-studies, maar miskien is dit omdat ek dit redelik lank uitgereek het. Ek is amper half teleurgesteld gewees en is nou 'n M. Jy weet, ek het twee jaar daaraan spandeer en toe 'n jaar het ek nie aan my skripsie gewerk nie en toe het ek my skripsie klaar gemaak hierdie jaar en dis amper asof ek nou voel: "Ja, nou goed, is dit nou my 'M'?" "What's so big about this" en ek dink die groot ding vir my is en ek dink nie dit is, omdat nie noodwendig maklik of moeilik of wat ook al nie, ek dink die groot rede daarvoor is, omdat ek soveel ander mense hier in die gange ontmoet wat nou 'n M-graad het en wat voorgee asof hulle nou so opgelooftlik intelligent en wonderlik is en toe ek nou my 'M' klaar gedoen het, toe besef ek: "Maar wat is ek nou anderste" en "wat is hulle nou anderste as ek?" en "wat maak hulle nou eintlik so 'grand'".

N: Is dit anders ten opsigte van vrouens?

A: Ek dink daar is 'n paar vrouens wat natuurlik dink die akademie is vir hulle die gemaklike plek vir hulle om te wees, juis omdat hulle familie ensovoorts en ek dink dit kan daai kant toe oorneig. Wat die mans aanbetref, weet jy, ek dink dit is amper maar 'n deursnit van lui of nie lui nie. Die "commitment" partykeer is sterker by vrouens, omdat hulle sterker in 'n sekere saak glo, maar ek dink jy kan seker ook nie so veralgemeen nie, want jy sal miskien 'n man kry wat baie sterk oor 'n saak voel. So, ek weet nie noodwendig of daar regtig so groot verskil is ten opsigte daarvan nie.

N: Watter tipe ondersteuning kry jy spesifiek as vroue akademikus van die mense in jou departement?

A: Ek dink daar is 'n redelike mate van ondersteuning van die voorsitter en so aan is daar ondersteuning. Die res van die mense is amper jaloers. Jaloers op 'n manier van goed ons /?/ jou, want ons weet dat jy sekere goeters kan doen en ons weet dat die voorsitter ondersteun jou, maar maar "Baby, you won't just cut it if you are not in our group! So we tolerate you", maar moontlik as jy in 'n kleiner groepie in 'n spesifieke gedeelte van die departement sou moes wees en dit moeiliker sal ervaar. In ons departement is daar dan ook 'n duidelike (paragraaf uitgelaat om persoon te beskerm) en in hulle groepering definitief, ek dink dit is 'n groot mate van "tolerate", maar ons aanvaar jou nie regtig nie eintlik nie.

N: So, sê jy vir my, verstaan ek jou reg? Hulle sê ons "tolerate" jou vir wat jy doen, maar ook dat jy vrou is?

A: Ja, ek dink dit is in 'n mindere mate dat jy vrou is. Ek dink dit gaan meer daar, oor die vakgebied en dat sekere vakgebiede in (veld van spesialisering uitgelaat) se oë as minderwaardig beskou word, maar ook in 'n groot mate daar, sal ek sou sê dis meer ouderdom en rang as vrou. Ek is jonger en ek is nog nie 'n dokter of 'n professor nie, miskien verdien ek nog nie om aanvaar te word nie.

N: Hoe beïnvloed dit die feit dat jy 'n vroue akademikus is, jou persepsie van jouself?

A: Vroue akademikus.... Eerstens van alles, die feit dat die akademici partykeer so en ek sê die akademici /?/ dat hulle partykeer so half 'n lui beeld het. Jy weet dat hulle lui is oor goeters, dat hulle traag is en dat hulle ongelooflik traag is om te verander, groot weerstand teen verandering en dan beskou ek myself nie altyd as akademikus nie. So, ja, dit is 'n akademiese pos en ek doen die dinge wat 'n akademikus doen, maar ek beskou myself nie as 'n akademikus nie, want ek probeer myself amper half onderskei van daai mense.

Dan, wat betref 'n vrou as 'n akademikus. Ek dink dit kan vir heelwat vrouens 'n ongelooflike "power trip" wees om te dink hulle is nou 'n vroue akademikus. Dit, vir my, persoonlik pla dit nie, ek dink nie daar was vir my ooit nog so 'n vreeslike skeidslyn nie. Ek dink, wel, as ek buitekant die departement beweeg, sou dit moontlik kon word in die grootter RAU-struktuur, ja, maar binnekant my departement nie nie spesifiek op geslag nie, meer op rang en ouderdom.

N: Wat wil jy graag sien van 'n vrou se oogpunt vir die toekoms by die RAU?

A: Ek dink net 'n groter oopheid. Ek dink dinge het tot dusver en RAU het 'n goeie naam in die bedryf ensovoorts, maar ek dink dinge het tot dusver baie regied gebeur en baie volgens 'n selektiewe groepie wat bestuur en besluitneming en dinge doen en as jy nie deel van daai groepie is nie, dan dink ek jy het nie veel sê oor wat met jou hier gaan gebeur. Ek weet dan ook nie of RAU die plek is waar ek vir die res van my lewe sou bly nie nie noodwendig net RAU nie, maar enige akademiese instelling. Want op die oomblik bied dit my die vryheid wat ek graag, wat ek geniet en ek dan dinge ontwikkel en mense help ontwikkel, maar ek het so 'n idee of ons noodwendig op pad is na meer samewerking nie. Ek kry amper half die gevoel ons is /?/ en ek dink dit het te doen met die veranderinge en mense wat wil vasklou aan ou dinge en nie wil geleentheid gee vir verandering, nie ensovoorts en jy kan dit duidelik sien aan die beleidstukke wat in die departement begin en in die universiteit begin sirkuleer. Beleidstukke ten opsigte van werk, beleidstukke ten opsigte van jou handeling as 'n dosent, ensovoorts en ek dink baie goeters gaan al hoe meer beheer word, ten minste vir die kort en medium termyn. Moontlik na die langtermyn sal mense begin sien dat dit nie regtig werk nie en aanbeweeg.

Maar ek dink heelwat van die goeters wat op die oomblik gebeur is amper, maar mens moet dit seker maar sien in die groter konteks, maar ek dink daar is baie mense wat baie bang is vir watter invloed dit op hulle gaan hê. So, ten opsigte van 'n vrou in die akademie sou ek graag wou sien dat daar meer vroue akademiëci in hoër poste inkom,

nie net in die bestuur, ook baie beslis in die bestuur, daar moet 'n groot verandering inkom. Ek dink daar is redelik, ek wil nie genoegsaam, maar daar is al redelik professore, vroue professore ensovoorts. So, ek dink amper in daai gedeelte het die mense gereken ok hulle kan nie veel skade daar doen nie. Ek weet nie, maar in die bestuur dink ek tog daar moet 'n hele paar vrouens bykom en dan nou natuurlik ook baie beslis, moet die kleursamestelling van die universiteit. So, dit is vir my 'n kombinasie van geslag en dan kleursamestelling en daar is 'n groot probleem.

N:Dankie. Is daar miskien enige iets wat jy wil byvoeg?

A:Ek dink nie so, ek dink my ervaring ten opsigte van vroues in die akademie is relatief, mits ek binnekant my departement is. Buitekant die departement is dit 'n ander saak. Ek wil amper half sê, die mense waarmee ek te doen gekry het van ander universiteite, is daar 'n besliste samehorigheidsgevoel as mens oor sulke goed praat. So, dit lyk asof dit reg oor die akademie, reg oor die land, soortgelyk is.

