Early career women academics: A case study of working lives in a gendered institution

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This thesis is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the PhD in Higher Education Studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State

September 2019

Declaration

I, Thandi Lewin, declare that the study hereby submitted for the Philosophiae Doctor in Higher Education Studies in the Faculty of Education, University of the Free State, is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted this work, either as a whole or in part, for a qualification at another university or at another faculty at this university. I also hereby cede copyright of this work to the University of the Free State.

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Abstract

This study was informed by my interest in a set of inter-related policy concerns about the academic profession in South Africa. Academic staff in South African universities remain predominantly white and male at senior levels, the pace of demographic change has been slow, and not enough young people are choosing academic careers and being retained in academic jobs. Women, and black women in particular, are significantly under-represented in the professoriate. The imperatives for change in South African higher education in the post-apartheid era have been linked both to social justice demands for a more equitable, representative and transformed system, as well as global pressures for more accountable, productive and competitive universities.

Despite progressive policy frameworks, South African universities retain highly gendered and racialised institutional cultures, which create constraints for academic staff in building academic careers. However, policy has limitations, and deeper exploration is needed to understand gender inequity. There is a dearth of research on the working lives of academics in the South African academy, in particular on the experiences of early career academics and women in the early career.

This study explored the working lives of a small group of early career academic women in one faculty at one institution through narrative research, informed by the following research questions:

- How does gender impact on academic working lives, career development choices and professional identities of selected early career academic women?
- How do early career academic women understand, experience and mediate gendered institutional environments and how does this affect their professional functioning and agency?
- What does this reveal about why gender inequalities persist in universities?

This study used a combination of feminist theorisation about organisations and the capability approach as a framework for analysis. Institutions are gendered in multi-dimensional ways and this impacts profoundly on academic lives and career trajectories. Gendered institutions affect the everyday experiences of academic women. Gender is implicated in the way institutions are structured and how they operate. Job structures, expectations and workloads are gendered. Gendered everyday interactions (which can be both overt and invisible) and individuals' own gendered socialisation, influence how women navigate academic working lives. All these factors affect how early career academic women form professional academic identities and what kinds of career trajectories they

follow. While academic careers emerge as multi-dimensional, systems of recognition are relatively one-dimensional. Experiences are diverse – some academics are able to successfully navigate institutions and achieve well-being- while others struggle to achieve a sense of stability.

The capability approach offered a normative social justice framing of the data, allowing for an exploration of individual experiences. It highlighted valued aspects of working lives, explored constraints and enabling factors, and ultimately arrived at a set of contextual and multi-dimensional valued capability dimensions. From the narratives and engagement with other capability sets, five capability dimensions emerged, based on the valued and aspirational functionings of the nine participants:

- **navigation:** to be able to navigate academic life successfully;
- **recognition:** to be able to be recognised and valued for one's academic work;
- **autonomy**: to be able to achieve professional autonomy;
- **affiliation:** to be able to participate in social and professional networks; and
- **aspiration:** to be able to aspire to a professional academic career.

The usefulness of these five dimensions is that they provide a way of understanding what kinds of careers early career academic women want, and therefore suggest ways in which institutions can reduce institutional barriers and enhance opportunities for career development and well-being.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the participants in my study for your time and for sharing your experiences so generously with me.

Professor Elaine Unterhalter - many years ago you guided me through a masters degree. Thank you for suggesting to me six years ago that I talk to Professor Melanie Walker about my PhD, and for your support.

Professor Melanie Walker, thank you for being a brilliant supervisor. I am privileged to have worked with you. You have been understanding, patient and generous over a long period, and I have learnt so much from you. Without your commitment and support I do not think I would have finished this project. You will always have my deepest respect and gratitude.

Thank you to my fellow PhD students at the Centre who all finished long before me. I appreciate our early engagements. Thanks also to Lucretia Smith for all the invaluable assistance over the years.

I would like to thank my former colleagues at JET, and my current colleagues at the Department of Higher Education and Training, in particular Dr Diane Parker, for allowing me the necessary time I needed to complete, and for the encouragement and support. Thanks also to Pearl Whittle, Dr Monica Mawoyo, and Denise De Klerk, for your support and friendship - throughout the past eighteen months in particular.

Dr Emily Henderson - thank you for support and intellectual guidance at some difficult moments. Professor Stephanie Allais - thank you for very practical help on a number of fronts - I know I don't

always listen. Fiona Wicksted – thank you for listening and helping me stay sane. Nasima Badsha - thank you for being a mentor, career advisor and friend. Angela Spencer – thank you for your help right at the end.

I cannot mention by name my wonderful friends who have offered love, support, and advice over the past six years. You know who you are, because you will be celebrating with me. Thank you dear friends.

Sarah Mazengera and Joyce Shayi – thank you for everything. Without you, this would not have been possible.

Tessa Lewin - thanks for your support in many different ways - I can't believe we ended up doing this at the same time!

Dr Jennifer Geel, my wife and partner and Tamai and Senzo, my wonderful sons, thank you - now we can spend much more time together. I love you.

Mum and Dad – this is for you. Thanks for everything you have done for me. Dad, I'm sorry that you are not here to see me finish.

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Introduction

This chapter presents an introduction to the study, providing a rationale for the research and an overview of the research questions selected and the research design. It also sets out the broad policy and higher education context within which the study is located, focusing on academic staffing and gender issues, and providing an analysis of gender equity in higher education policy as it impacts on the study. The chapter also reflects briefly on the conceptual framework of the study and provides an overview of the chapters in the thesis.

This study originates from a set of policy concerns that have arisen in post-apartheid South African higher education in two main areas: firstly - the slow change of the demographic profile of academic staff in South African public universities, and secondly - the related conundrum of how to encourage a new generation of staff to enter academic jobs and be retained in the academy. These two policy concerns are related and multi-dimensional (Higher Education South Africa, 2011; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015):

> A crucial factor in overall quality improvement and the development of the university sector is its academic staff. South Africa faces a significant and complex challenge in terms of staffing its universities. It has to sustain adequate levels of academic staff, build capacity within the system, develop future generations of academics for the system, and substantially improve equity (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013: 35)

This set of concerns are not simply about equity or academic pathways but relate to ways in which local imperatives for change intersect with global trends affecting universities and the academic profession. The local imperatives for fundamental transformation of the higher education system are a significant driver of change to the academy, but the competitive nature of global higher education is also creating changes to academic work. In its focus on academic staffing, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) 20-year review of higher education in South Africa describes the "local pull" of democratisation:

> the higher education system seeks to eradicate the deeply ingrained inequalities that were deliberately engineered by the apartheid state; inequalities themselves grounded in hard

realities of racialized social and economic division which run so deep that twenty years of progressive policy have barely been able to shift them (Council on Higher Education, 2016: 279).

On the other hand, the global effects are characterised as a "global push" relating to massification in higher education and an associated focus on greater efficiency measures, linked to an "undue narrowing down of the social purposes of higher education" (Council on Higher Education, 2016: 279). The local and global imperatives for change are also reflected in the specific ways in which gender inequities in the higher education system endure, as one aspect of the multi-dimensional challenges facing the academic profession. Specifically, in South Africa, as in many other parts of the developed and developing world, women students dominate at undergraduate level, and gender disparity decreases at postgraduate level. Indeed, women in South Africa often dominate at the lower levels of the academic hierarchy, clustered in particular fields of study, and often are the majority in temporary positions (Council on Higher Education, 2018). This is also the case internationally, and women continue to be excluded from the professoriate despite progressive policy frameworks, focused programmes to support change, and increasing participation of women in higher education overall (Morley, 2013a). Women make up 28% of full professors in South African public universities, and African women only 3.6%.[1] When it comes to gender equity, the slow pace of change is a feature of many higher education systems.

In South Africa, however, gender equity concerns do not stand alone: they are intricately linked to the profound history of racial inequality. The effect of this is that although gender equity has changed visibly amongst students and some levels of staff, black women are still significantly under-represented in the academy. The numbers of white women have grown faster than those of black women, as a result of equity policies post-1994 that focused on black people, women and people with disabilities in employment equity and affirmative action policies (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015a; Council on Higher Education, 2018). Concerns about the need for demographic shifts in the academic profession are not only expressed in policy and institutional mission statements, but increasingly form part of the demands of student activists frustrated with the continued colonial character of South Africa's higher education institutions (Jansen, 2017; Vally, 2016).

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[1] In this study I make use of apartheid categories for race in South Africa: African, coloured, Indian and white. Black refers to African, coloured and Indian together. These categories were used prior to freedom in 1994 in South Africa. While formal discrimination on the basis of race has long been abolished in law, apartheid race categories still have effect in real lives, and are still used administratively, both to support forms of redress in public policy, and to track progress in reducing past discrimination. I recognise the paradox of continuing to use race and gender categories for description and analysis, when ultimately change requires transcending apartheid race and binary gender categories.

The discourse about transformation is often expressed as a disjuncture between policy goals and institutional realities (Department of Education, 2008) which leads to a significant focus on the institutional cultures of organisations and how these may contribute to the slow pace of change. The answer to the gap between policy intent and achievement probably lies in the complexity of institutional realities and the working lives of academic staff, although it is also linked to the complexities of broader social change in South African society.

A gap has been identified in the empirical knowledge about the working lives of academics in South Africa (Council on Higher Education, 2016). In addition, the literature on gender and women in higher education in South Africa has tended to focus on senior women (see De la Rey, 1999, Prozesky 2006 and Shackleton, 2007), which means that not much is known about the experiences of early career academics or about gendered institutions. Filling these gaps is important for policy:

> There is as yet little systematic evidence on why individuals choose some career paths over others, which is crucial information for policies seeking to address the overlapping challenges of transformation and successfully developing new generations of academics (Council on Higher Education, 2016: 293).

This study therefore set out to contribute to knowledge about early career academics with a specific focus on gender, through the experiences of a group of women academics at one university. The study explores how the experiences of early career female academics are gendered, what this means for their working lives and professional development, and whether this can inform new ideas and approaches in policy and practice at institutional and national level.

Higher education in South Africa in the era of democracy: the policy context

Higher education in South Africa has undergone extensive alterations in the last twenty years, primarily driven by the priorities of a new democratic state and the influence of global changes in higher education. There have been significant areas of development and transformation: the policy and legislative regime, expansion and change in the student body, important growth in research, and major structural adjustments to the institutional landscape through a series of mergers (Council on Higher Education, 2016). The areas of success in higher education such as the transformation of the student profile are contrasted with areas of sustained inequity and sluggish change: the demographics of the academic staff of universities is one such area. The paradoxes are expressed by the CHE:

Intricately interwoven with the society in which it is embedded, the higher education sector in South Africa today is as much a creature of its past as it is a creature of sustained effort, through policy, legislation and institutional restructuring, to redirect and transform it (Council on Higher Education, 2016: 5).

In 1994, at the time of South Africa's transition to democracy, South Africa had a deeply divided and unequal education system at all levels, with public universities that had served distinct student populations, were insular, racially constructed, and differently funded. The system was "fragmented and uncoordinated" (Bunting, 2002: 59). The structures of universities, the student and research communities that they engaged with, and the knowledge that they produced and taught, were fundamentally affected by the political system of apartheid and its social effects. Apartheid policies had controlled access to higher education and who was able to teach in universities.

It was essential in a new democratic context, therefore, that fresh policy be developed to drive fundamental changes to the higher education system, signifying a break from the past and establishing a vision for a single higher education sector, appropriate for a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society. This public policy project has been the focus of implementation in South African universities for over twenty years now, and this period has seen both marked changes to universities and tenacious continuities within them, with new policy having both intended and unintended consequences (Cloete et al., 2002). Cloete et al. (2002) argue that this is in the nature of policy implementation. It is also linked to the tensions involved in making choices in the scope of a broad-ranging set of policies and the responses of institutions to the steering mechanisms of the State. In summary, the main goals for the transformation of the sector were set by the need to focus on equity and development, that is, creating a more equitable system (both in relation to student participation and staff representation and redressing historical institutional differences) as well as the need to build a system more responsive to the development needs of a new society (Department of Education, 1997).

Following the release of the report of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) in 1996 (appointed by the Minister of Education to advise on the form of new higher education policy) the Higher Education Act was passed in 1997 and the White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, released in the same year. Together these documents laid the foundation for a single co-ordinated system and set out a vision for a post-apartheid higher education system. The policy documents put in place new governance arrangements for universities, set up new

institutions, such as the Council on Higher Education, and put in place a system to "steer" change through three mechanisms available to the State: planning, funding and quality assurance. Following the release of the National Plan for Higher Education (2001), and a further planning process, a process of mergers and incorporations took place which resulted in twenty-three public universities, (now twenty-six, with the establishment of three new institutions between 2014 and 2015).

As the new policy framework for higher education has evolved since 1997, a number of changes have been put in place that control the planning and funding of the system (such as enrolment planning and a new funding framework), measure the performance of the system, and require extensive reporting on agreed plans by institutions (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2014). The policy goals for the transformation of the university sector, expressed in the White Paper 3 (Department of Education, 1997) responded both to the internal pressures for change in a new single unified higher education system (primarily about creating coherence, and addressing equity and redress, at personal and institutional levels) and external pressures for change relating to the expectations that universities would play a role in the social and economic development of post-apartheid South Africa. Equity and redress, both in relation to individuals (staff and students) and institutions, were key policy goals of the 1997 White Paper. It is widely acknowledged that South Africa has a progressive policy framework for equity, including gender equity (Higher Education Resource Services-South Africa 2008b; Morley et al., 2006), which is derived from the Constitution.

The changes to labour legislation since 1995 have also brought universities in line with other types of workplaces, requiring specialised human resources departments, and for employers to put in place mechanisms to prohibit unfair discrimination (Gibbon and Kabaki, 2002; Council on Higher Education, 2016). Through the Employment Equity Act of 1998, universities are required to put in place affirmative action measures for "designated groups" (women, black people, and people with disabilities) by putting in place employment equity plans and submitting regular reports to the Department of Labour. The Employment Equity legislation has had a notable effect on how institutions plan for and monitor their equity targets, and on reducing discrimination in employment policies and conditions (Council on Higher Education, 2016).

Arguably also, these changes have contributed to the perception amongst academic staff of increasing 'managerialism', as greater levels of accountability for improving staff equity fall to managers and create more reporting work at universities. It is likely, however, that without compliance with

Employment Equity legislation, women and black people may have been in an even worse situation in the academy (Council on Higher Education, 2016).

Until 2009, universities fell under the responsibility of the Department of Education, but with the change in government in 2009 the former Department of Education was split into two new Departments: the Department of Basic Education (responsible for schooling) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The DHET became responsible for a 'post-school' sector including workplace-based training, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges, adult education, and the university sector. The creation of the new department, and the significant time since the post-apartheid policy documents were released, created an impetus for new policy and led to a second white paper on post-school education and training, released in 2013, which set the policy direction for the new department. The new white paper, which focuses on the entire post-school system, and not just universities, raises concerns about equity in academic staffing as well as the need for a renewal of the academic profession and the urgency of addressing the next generation of scholars to replace an ageing (and predominantly white) academic workforce (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013; Council on Higher Education, 2016).

Changes to academic work and staffing

The section above has referenced high-level policy changes that have inevitably affected academic staffing within South African universities and the nature of academic work. There is no doubt that the new forms of centralised steering and new quality assurance regimes have created greater reporting and planning requirements for universities, and that these have affected academic work in relation to levels of administration and accountability in a more corporatized university environment (Council on Higher Education, 2016; Johnson, 2006; Gibbon and Kabaki, 2002; Bundy, 2006). There are also signs of significant increases in the numbers of professional administrative staff at universities (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015) in line with changes in other parts of the world, in response to the demand for greater accountability and auditing of university work. These changes, though central to the implementation of a post-apartheid higher education policy and the accountability required in a new co-ordinated system, also reflect the kinds of changes taking place in the global academy (Bundy, 2006; Council on Higher Education, 2016).

The massification of higher education has also had a significant effect on academic work, with student numbers growing significantly faster than staff. The growth of academic staff numbers has been slow in relation to the needs of the system (Gibbon and Kabaki, 2002; Higher Education South Africa, 2011;

Koen, 2006; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). While student numbers grew by 92% between 1994 and 2012 (from 493 342 to 953 373 students) permanent staff numbers have progressed far more slowly, growing by only 36% over the same period (Council on Higher Education, 2016: 295). This meant that the staff to student ratio deteriorated over this period and that there has been a growing reliance on temporary staff. Between 2007 and 2012, headcounts of temporary staff grew by 34%, whereas permanent academic staff grew by only 10% over the same period (Council on Higher Education, 2016: 295). The Department of Higher Education and Training noted:

> In 1994 there was an average of 38.5 students to every academic. By 2013 this had increased to 55.7 students per academic...The result of the rising student to staff ratio has inevitably been increased workloads for academic staff and an increase in class sizes; first year classes can comprise of many hundreds of students (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015: 11).

The increase in class size and the greater teaching loads of academic staff have definitely had an effect on academic work, with academics now "expected to do more with less" (Council on Higher Education, 2016: 296).

A related problem facing universities has been the decline in overall funding relative to the growth in student numbers in the system. It has been well documented that although budgets for higher education have grown, they have been unable to keep up with the pace of growth, so that the funding available in relation to the numbers of students in the system has actually dropped (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013; Department of Justice, 2017; Council on Higher Education, 2016). This has put a strain on the system and is a contributing factor to the slow growth in academic staff. It also led to the above-inflation tuition fee increases at some universities which sparked the #feesmustfall protest in 2015[2]. As a result of this, there was a commitment in the 2018/19 medium term budget of government to grow funding to higher education to reach 1% of GDP over a five-year period (National Treasury, 2018). This was combined with a substantial injection of funds for student financial aid, to provide full cost bursaries to poor and working-class students. Whether these significant budget increases in the current period will result in longer term changes to the academic pressures outlined, or will be sustainable, is not clear at this point.

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[2] South African public universities have three major sources of income: State subsidy, tuition fees and other forms of third-stream income. Despite calls for "free" education, tuition fees remain, with government contributing also to fully subsidised higher education for students from poor and working-class backgrounds through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme.

Linked to this are complexities relating to the changed profile of students in the higher education system. There is now a greater diversity of students entering higher education and evidence of an 'articulation gap' (Council on Higher Education, 2013) between schooling and higher education, which shows not just that weaknesses in schooling affect student success in higher education, but also that universities have been ill-prepared for students from different educational backgrounds (Lewin and Mawoyo, 2014; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015; Dhunpath and Vithal, 2012). South Africa has a relatively low participation rate of students in higher education and high attrition rates (Scott, Yeld and Hendry, 2007; Lewin and Mawoyo, 2014). While the proportion of black students in the higher education system has changed dramatically since 1994, with black students now making up 83% of the student body (from 55% in 1994), there are still inequities in participation rates, with white and Indian students participating in higher education at 50% and 47% respectively, while African and coloured students have a 16% and 15% participation rate[3].

In addition, "equity of access" has not resulted in "equity of outcomes", the terms used in the White Paper (Department of Education, 1997). Race and class are still highly relevant to getting through university, due to both educational and social conditions. In a study of student throughput and the importance of teaching and learning, Scott, Yeld and Hendry (2007) showed that of the 2000 intake of undergraduate students, only 50% of students had graduated within 5 years, and 38% had left institutions without graduating. This figure excludes the University of South Africa (UNISA), the major distance learning institution, so reflects mainly full-time students in contact study. These findings have been updated for later student cohorts, and there have been improvements in throughput rates, with 57% of students graduating after 6 years, lower dropout rates, and more students finishing their studies in the minimum required degree time (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2018a). The problems discussed above have their roots in the under-preparedness of students for university study, because of a persistently unequal schooling system, and the difficulties that universities have faced in responding to a more diverse student body. This points to a challenge for academics in relation to teaching a more diverse student body and the professional development requirements of academics in relation to teaching and learning capabilities (Council on Higher Education, 2016; Lewin and Mawoyo, 2014).

In addition to the greater emphasis on teaching and learning capacity of academics, particularly in a South African context, as well as greater teaching loads, academic staff are under pressure to respond

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[3] Participation rates are an international UNESCO measure that show the proportion of 20-24 year olds in higher education as a proportion of the age cohort in the population.

to the need for curriculum relevance and responsiveness. This can be complex and relates to a fast changing world of work (issues such as digitisation, artificial intelligence and the fourth industrial revolution), the requirement for responsiveness to social and economic development in a South African context, as well as a demand for contextual relevance relating to the need to break from the past, sometimes expressed in calls for 'decolonisation' of the curriculum (National Planning Commission, 2012; Jansen, 2017; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015a; Council on Higher Education, 2016). These combined with rapid changes to the use of technology in teaching and research methods, require significant professional development work for many academics.

The new policy regime for the single higher education system post 1994 has certainly created a more complex regulation and reporting regime. Ultimately there is a need for greater accountability within the system. Universities are subject to a planning and reporting regime that has become increasingly complex, and they are subject to accreditation of programmes, and a range of reviews and audits as part of the quality assurance regime (Council on Higher Education, 2016; Lange, 2014). The purpose of these interventions is to ensure greater accountability, improved efficiencies and greater coherence in the system. However it is acknowledged that the effect of the new policy regime has fundamentally changed academic work, with a growing focus on performance measures for academics, greater levels of reporting and administration, and a concomitant growth in managerialism, which is about the work of academics being more closely measured and managed, but also the growth of a management/administrative hierarchy in universities (Webster and Mosoetsa, 2001; Johnson, 2006; Council on Higher Education, 2016).

Concerns about equity in academic staffing

Despite a progressive policy environment with a significant focus on changing the demographics of university staffing, change has been slow, particularly in relation to race (Govinder et al., 2013). One of the major challenges facing universities in South Africa is the urgent need to develop a new generation of academic staff. There is a need for greater equity in the demographics of the workforce, an imperative to encourage a pipeline for new recruits, increase the numbers of PhD graduates and increase the qualification levels of personnel in the system (Higher Education South Africa, 2011; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013; National Planning Commission, 2012).

While the proportion of black students in South African universities has changed dramatically since 1994, the equity profile of academic staff has adjusted more slowly. There are many reasons for this, including the shortage of black people and women with the appropriate postgraduate qualifications,

persistent concerns about discrimination in academic work environments (Department of Education, 2008; Potgieter, 2002; Vandeyar, 2010; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015a), as well as competition with other employment sectors for qualified black professionals (Higher Education South Africa, 2011).

In 1994, although black South Africans made up 89% of the country's population, they represented only 17% of academics in South Africa's universities. By 2009, black academics (in apartheid category terms including African, Indian and coloured academics) made up 41.6% of academics, showing an increase, although in the context of an overall decline of academic numbers over that period, and in particular a decline in the number of white academics, who still dominate the academy (Higher Education South Africa, 2011). The White Paper on Post-School Education and Training indicates that in 2011 almost 55% of permanent professional staff at universities were white, while Africans made up less than 30% of this group (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). However, by 2016, according to the latest audited available data from the Higher Education Management Information System, there are signs of progress, with African academics making up 36.8% of all permanent academic staff, and black academic staff overall making up 54% of the permanent academic staff complement of all public universities (HEMIS data obtained from the Department of Higher Education and Training, 2018). In relation to gender, 46.9% of all permanent academic staff are women (as opposed to 50% of temporary staff), but only 31.4% of women academics are African and 48.4% are black. As much as these statistics show that the system is changing, it is the pace of change that is of concern, particularly because these figures are so different from the overall representation of black people and women in the population and indeed in the student population (where 72% of all students are African, and 83% black).

These are signs of change and consistent improvement, though patterns of inequity are evident at the top levels. In 2016 only 21% of the professoriate[4] were African, and only 19% of full professors were African. Only 5.1% of the professoriate were African women, and only 3.6% of full professors were African women, whereas overall, women made up 33.4% of the professoriate, though only 28% of full professors. Of full professors, only 13% of all women professors are African, and white women comprise 76% of full professors. There is also a significant concern that large numbers of academic staff are approaching retirement, without younger academics entering the system to replace them (Academy of Science of South Africa, 2010; Council on Higher Education, 2016).

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[4] I am including associate professors and full professors in this group - the figures only refer to permanent staff. Although there are more temporary academic staff in the public university system, the numbers in the senior ranks are very low.

What Higher Education South Africa (HESA) describes as a "multi-dimensional crisis in attracting, appointing and retaining academic staff" (Higher Education South Africa, 2011: 1), points to the need for an overall 'revitalisation' of the academic profession, a project that requires a number of different approaches (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2010). The HESA proposal for developing the next generation of academics also details challenges for changing the staffing profile of universities, namely the remuneration of academics and more lucrative professions being able to attract black and women academics. This is significant for women in particular, the HESA study notes, as there have been increases in female professionals in many fields and female graduates are highly sought after (Higher Education South Africa, 2011).

At a national level this has been addressed in part through the Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework (SSAUF) which forms part of the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) and provides funding for a range of programmes designed to support the policy concerns regarding academic staffing - addressing the size, capacity and composition of academic staff and in particular the renewal of the academic profession (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015b). The SSAUF includes a range of programme components, including supporting emerging scholars, supporting posts for early career academics, the retention of experienced academics for mentoring purposes and the professional development of academic staff (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015b).

Concerns about the doctorate and the pipeline for academic jobs

Related to the concerns about the need for growth and change in the academic staff employed at South African public universities are the concerns about the 'production' of PhD graduates. As the PhD is increasingly an entry-level qualification for an academic job (Cloete, Mouton, & Sheppard, 2015; Academy of Science of South Africa, 2010), the number and quality of PhD graduates is strongly related to the push for a next generation of academic staff.

South Africa produces approximately twenty-eight PhD graduates per million of the population, which is widely thought to be inadequate and compares poorly with similar developing countries such as Brazil (Cloete et al., 2015). This is also out of step with South Africa's stated requirements for an increase in knowledge production and the need to develop a pipeline of scholars to staff the university system. PhD graduates are essential for producing cohorts of well-qualified academic staff. The system, it is argued, is simply not producing in large enough numbers, and in the right areas

(Academy of Science of South Africa, 2010; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013; National Planning Commission, 2012; Cloete et al., 2015).

The National Development Plan sets a goal of 75% of academic staff with PhDs by 2030 (National Planning Commission, 2012). In 2016 (latest available data), 44% of permanent academic staff at South African universities have PhDs. This has gone up from 37% in 2011, so there is significant progress. The percentages of academics without PhDs are lowest amongst professors and highest amongst lecturers, lowest at the traditional universities[5] (which tend to be the higher research producers), and highest at the universities of technology (Cloete et al., 2015). Only seven universities have over 50% of permanent academic staff with PhDs and there are four universities with less than 20% of academic staff with doctorates (Center for Higher Education Trust, 2019). In addition, five of the top research-producing institutions, all historically white, produce over 50% of all published research (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2018b). The push for academic staff with PhDs is also critical for the supervisory capacity needed to produce the approximately 5000 PhDs per million of the population annually by 2030, a target of the National Development Plan (National Planning Commission, 2012).

It is a matter of some concern that there are still gender disparities at the PhD level – women made up only 42.6% of doctoral enrolments in 2006, increasing to 45% in 2016, despite making up 57% of overall postgraduate[6] student numbers. Between 2000 and 2005 there was no significant increase in the participation of women in postgraduate studies at all levels (Council on Higher Education, 2009), but now women dominate up to masters level. Between 1994 and 2016, the percentage of women in postgraduate studies changed from 30.2% to 57%. This is a significant increase. Only at doctoral level does the proportion of women drop (Council on Higher Education, 2018).

Formal programmes contributing to a growth in PhD training and developing academic staff for equity purposes have been a focus of work in and across many universities over several years. A few universities have had targeted support and mentoring programmes in place for several years, often

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[5] South Africa is acknowledged to have a differentiated university system, with three institutional forms discussed in policy: traditional universities, comprehensive universities and universities of technology. The latter were formerly named technikons, and similar to the pre-1992 polytechnics in the UK. Traditional universities offer a combination of general formative and professionally-focused degree programmes, and comprehensive universities (formed in the mid-2000s process of mergers) were formed from mergers between technikons and traditional universities. It should be noted that formal differentiation policy is in the process of being developed, and that the three university "types" mentioned do not have a formal status in the Higher Education Act.

[6] Postgraduate studies in South Africa includes honours degrees (a one-year programme post-bachelors and pre-masters).

linked to the creation of academic posts, but the success of these programmes has been mixed and, as the figures above show, growth has been sluggish (Cloete and Galant, 2005). PhD-related 'next generation programmes'[7] have been supported by many funders and are often funded as partnerships with other African universities (Grant Lewis, Friedman and Schoneboom, 2010). These tend to be related to particular fields of study but are making a contribution to doctoral and research training in some universities. The urgency of building a new generation of scholars is an Africa-wide challenge (Tettey, 2006; Mihyo, 2008; Partnership for Higher Education in Africa, 2010; Southern African Regional Universities Association, 2011), and partnerships have been supported across the continent, often with South African university partners, given the relative strength of South African universities on the continent.

These programmes go some way to addressing the challenges in some universities and play a role in creating a pipeline of new academics. They also assist with building conducive environments for young academics and methods of induction into the academic profession. However, there are limitations to such programmes as they are targeted at individuals, are not widespread and:

> while not necessarily changing the structure of the academic working environment and shifting the way in which institutions operate that might militate against the achievement of greater equity (Council on Higher Education, 2016: 291).

Where they are linked to the creation or availability of academic posts, research suggests that next generation posts tend to be better at retaining staff (Cloete and Galant, 2005; Badsha and Wickham, 2013). However, as Higher Education South Africa proposes (2011) and the White Paper (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013) acknowledges, what is needed is a much larger, nationally-driven programme to properly address the scale and complexity of the problems outlined above, hence the SSAUF (Staffing South African universities Framework), which responds in part to these challenges.

Gender equity in South African public higher education: policy and transformation

When gender equity is measured looking at key statistics, such as the proportions of women students in universities, the improvement in gender equity is one of the most sustained shifts in the South

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[7] Many universities have formal programmes to develop new generations of academic staff, to address the policy imperative of changing the demographic profile of academic staff and encourage a stronger pipeline for young researchers to become academics. These differ in form from institution to institution and are discussed in more detail in chapter two.

African higher education sector in the post-apartheid era, so that South Africa mirrors countries in the developed world in terms of the participation of women (Morley et al., 2006). There are three caveats to this progress, however: one is that gender equality has by no means been achieved in the academy in highly developed countries (Morley, 2013a). Secondly, though it is clear that there has been considerable progress in South Africa, the statistics mask a number of persistent inequalities, as racial and class inequities still impact significantly on the achievement of women's full participation in higher education and the quality of that participation (Scott et al., 2007; Mabokela, 2002; Higher Education Resource Services-South Africa, 2008a). Thirdly, the cultures of institutions remain socially conservative, reflecting patriarchal social ideas about women and gender (Department of Education, 2008; Khunuo et al, 2019).

Women dominate as students in the South African public higher education sector, with current figures showing that women students make up 58% of overall enrolments (Council on Higher Education, 2018). However, the public university system is characterised by persistent inequalities between women and men as the figures above show. Racial inequality is also a major issue because although women have made significant gains in the higher education sector, black women have benefited the least from these improvements (Mabokela, 2002; Higher Education Resource Services-South Africa, 2008a; Council on Higher Education, 2009; Rabe and Rugunanan, 2012).

Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) data shows that 47% of all permanent academic staff are women (and 51% of temporary academic staff) (Department of Higher Education, 2016). While women make up 53% of lecturers, they are only 45% of senior lecturers, 40% of associate professors and 28% of full professors. Women are better represented in senior administrative positions. Funding figures released by the National Research Foundation (NRF) show that men are the primary recipients of research grants (National Research Foundation, 2018). The same report shows that a low percentage of women and black people are 'rated researchers'[8]. NRF ratings are crucial for securing research funding, and form part of promotion processes at universities so they are an important indication of the state of science staffing in universities and the research councils. Peer-reviewed NRF ratings are a tool to promote research and recognise high output researchers (National Research Foundation, 2016). The majority of rated researchers are staff of universities; 27% of rated researchers are black, and 33% are women (National Research Foundation, 2018: 81). There has been significant growth in this area (Council on Higher Education, 2009), though the inequities are still

[8]The NRF ratings for researchers are as follows: A – Leading international researchers; B – Internationally acclaimed researchers; C – Established researchers; P – Prestigious Awards and Y – Promising young researchers.

notable. Between 1996 and 2002 the majority of rated scientists in natural sciences and engineering were men. In 2018, women were under-represented in all rating categories: 17% in category A (the highest rating for internationally recognised researchers) and 23% in category B (National Research Foundation, 2018). Black women make up only 3% of A-rated researchers, and 1% of B-rated researchers (National Research Foundation, 2018).

Women are particularly under-represented in the leadership and management of universities. A South African study published in 2003 showed that only 13% of senior and executive posts in South African public universities between 2000 and 2002 were held by women (Zulu, 2003). In 2018 there were five women Vice-Chancellors out of twenty-six (all were black women) and seven women chairs of university Councils. An audit of women in senior positions in South African universities was carried out by Higher Education Resource Services-South Africa in 2008 and showed that 21% of Deputy Vice-Chancellors, 22% of Registrars, 21% of Executive Directors and 28% of Deans were women (Higher Education Resource Services-South Africa, 2008b). Current figures are not easily available but may have improved. It must be noted that the low numbers of women in academic leadership and management is a global phenomenon. Representation of women in senior positions in the private sector is also low in South Africa (Department of Labour, 2018).

South Africa does not have a single policy on gender equity in higher education. Rather, gender equity is included in a package of equity-related and higher education policies that cross the policy spectrum, and all impact in varied ways on the progress towards gender equality in higher education. Having said this, the primary driver of equity policy in the higher education sector remains the policy and legislation guiding public universities. This was initially expressed in the 2001 National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE), which operationalized the goals for the unified higher education system envisioned by the 1997 White Paper 3, a Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education and Training (Department of Education, 1997). Though policy impacting on universities was later released in the form of the 2013 White Paper for Post-school Education and Training (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013), the later White Paper did not significantly shift equity goals, nor did it provide gender-related targets. The National Development Plan released in 2012 also sets out a range of goals for the higher education system, but again none are specifically focused on gender equity.
It is widely acknowledged internationally that the nature of academic institutions and gendered cultures within them impact on the achievement of gender equity in higher education. Structural and power-related constraints for women in the academy are real. While this is a complex area to address as it is often difficult to identify the precise roots of discrimination and the kinds of strategies that

might ameliorate the problem, it has received some attention in policy discussions in South Africa (Wolpe, Quinlan and Martinez, 1997; Department of Education, 2008).

Gender and policy in higher education

As the international and South African literature on gender in higher education has shown, a progressive policy environment for gender equity does not necessarily lead to real improvements in gender equity within universities, particularly at the level of its academic staff. Policy may be a necessary factor in stimulating change, but it is certainly not sufficient. Despite progressive policies, change has been slow and the 'glass ceiling' for women in academia appears firmly in place, both internationally and in South Africa. As Louise Morley has noted about Europe:

> Whereas change has been rapid and extreme, areas such as gender equity remain remarkably resistant to change processes despite four decades of legislation (Morley, 2011: 224).

While policy change has brought about a greater focus on the measurement of gender equity to identify equity trends there has also been a focus on the qualitative aspects of the working lives of women in universities and the gendered cultures of universities (Morley, 1999; Morley and Walsh, 1996; Brooks and MacKinnon, 2001; Wagner, Acker and Mayuzumi, 2008; Brooks, 1997; Pereira, 2007; De la Rey, 1999; Bagilhole, 2002; Walker, 1997a+b; Mabokela, 2002; Rabe and Rugunanan, 2012; Kwesiga, 2002). These literatures date back to the 1980s in parts of the world such as the USA and the UK, but are more current in Africa and South Africa, where until recently the focus was primarily on the measurement of gender equity.

A focus on measuring gender equity, in terms of the differential participation of men and women in higher education has been described as a "liberal feminist approach to gender" where gender is used "as a noun, rather than a verb or adjective" (Morley, 2011: 226). The Commonwealth study by Morley et al. showed a significant focus on measuring gender, particularly in relation to access, but few detailed qualitative studies on gender in universities (Morley et al., 2006). Morley, Sorhaindo and Burke showed that many studies (in developing countries) used liberal feminist approaches to change and assumed that quantitative change is the route to gender equity (Morley, Sorhaindo and Burke, 2005).

As Brito noted in her address to the Higher Education Resource Services-South Africa 2008 conference, universities often state their commitment to gender equity in their mission statements,

but continue to measure success in terms of numbers, which "results in a failure to understand how the subtle forms of discrimination in institutional cultures create barriers to women's success" (Higher Education Resource Services-South Africa, 2008a: 2). In addition, using gender as a "shorthand" for men and women, does not address the "relational aspects of gender, of power and ideology, and of how patterns of subordination are reproduced" (Baden and Goetz, quoted in Bacchi, 2001: 17).

Indeed, there is evidence in South Africa that focusing on quantitative achievements leads to an assumption of meaningful change. Shackleton has shown how a focus on numbers, and a merging of gender equity concerns into those of race (also reported in Higher Education Resource Services-South Africa, 2008a), as well as the complexity of dealing with changes to institutional cultures and practices leads to a "disappearing" of gender (Shackleton, 2007: 31). Bennett et al. describe how establishing sexual harassment policies, which has happened in many South African universities in the last twenty years, has led to a sense amongst some managers that "gender is over; the gender issue has been dealt with; we have other issues to deal with now" (Bennett et al., 2007: 99). However, recent work conducted by the Higher Education and Training Health, Wellness and Development Centre (HEAIDS) showed that some universities still do not have sexual harassment policies in place and the scope of policies varies (personal correspondence, 2019).

The key policy documents of the post-1994 period placed the responsibility for changing the equity profile of the sector on institutions themselves, and though gender (and racial) equity is a strongly articulated goal in the documents, the policy instruments themselves are largely gender neutral, lacking targets or penalties. In addition, the National Plan for Higher Education indicated, in referring to the achievement of parity between men and women in student numbers that "gender equity has been achieved" (Department of Education, 2001). The lack of penalties is consistent with the nature of South African universities as legally autonomous, and as Pandor and Badsha have also argued:

> Quotas and sanctions have not been necessary, thanks largely to a sector-wide consensus about the need for redress (Pandor and Badsha, 2010: 276).

This consensus approach to policy-making that characterised the early years of post-apartheid policy-making (Cloete et al., 2002) as indicated by the above statement, may have contributed to the lack of formal policy mechanisms or strategies to drive change in the area of gender equity or may signal that gender may not have been a key priority.

The reductionist approach to thinking about gender equity is evident in recent South African research (van Broekhuizen and Spaull, 2017) that suggests a cumulative advantage for women students in accessing and succeeding in undergraduate education. This research analysed the school-leaving examination data alongside the cohort data for undergraduate students in the South African university system. The statistics show that more women than men qualify for university study, more women than men enter the university system, and more women obtain a degree. This so-called "female advantage" exists even when controlling for school performance, age, race, socio-economic class and province of schooling. Women are also 20% less likely to drop out of their university studies, even in areas where they are under-represented (van Broekhuizen and Spaull, 2017). They argue that:

> At each stage in the higher education process females succeed in higher and higher numbers, pointing to not only a large, but a growing advantage that cannot be explained by prior achievement (van Broekhuizen and Spaull, 2017: 3).

This is important data for understanding gender trends in the school and university system and is an accurate reflection of the changing statistics relating to gender differences in schooling and undergraduate performance. It certainly raises new questions about social aspects of gender in schooling and university. However, a focus on the quantitative data in isolation from the qualitative work on gender in universities provides only a partial picture. From postgraduate level, through the academic staff ranks, and most acutely at the senior leadership levels, the numbers-based 'female advantage' erodes. It is necessary to turn to qualitative, social and organisational analysis to understand why this is the case.

Institutionalising policy on gender

Gender equity considerations are often subsumed in favour of other more urgent considerations. It has also been suggested that equity discourses have "lost ground" in competition with the dominant discourses in modern higher education of efficiency and excellence (Blackmore 1997, in Wagner et al., 2008: 11). Elsewhere, it has been noted that equity discourses have subsumed gender equity considerations, and sometimes even subverted them (Morley, 1999; Bacchi, 2001). Amina Mama makes the point that:

> As universities become less accountable to the African public, the gender equality agenda risks being submerged along with other considerations of public good. The signs are that, if hegemonic arguments favouring technocratic market-driven notions of efficiency and

financial diversification prevail, educational philosophies imbued with a sense of regional history and mission, including those espoused by feminist intellectuals, are likely to be mortgaged. In this case, Western and patriarchal intellectual hegemonies and institutional forms are likely to be re-inscribed in African universities as the money comes in, perhaps to the detriment of any sustained gender equality agenda (Mama, 2003: 122).

Gouws and Hassim (2014) writing specifically about gender in South Africa twenty years after the transition to democracy, have argued that "the institutional turn" in gender politics in the way in which it has been incorporated into State policy, has "yielded uneven gains" (Gouws and Hassim, 2014: 4):

> over the past twenty years the economic and reproductive questions appear to have been edged out by a focus on this version of liberal feminism that delinks formal equality from the question of equality outcomes (Gouws and Hassim, 2014: 4).

The challenge, in their view, is how to think about gender beyond the numbers to incorporate "a deeper set of criteria to assess our progress" (Gouws and Hassim, 2014: 4). This is supported by Lindiwe Makhunya:

> Formal democratic procedures cannot deliver gender justice if they are not combined with notions of substantive equality that embody socio-economic rights that will deliver solutions to poverty, unemployment and marginalisation (Makhunya, 2014: 6).

The disjuncture between the extensive social justice policy goals for higher education in South Africa and the pace of institutional change is well documented. The Soudien Report (Department of Education, 2008) and the Report of the South African Human Rights Commission on Transformation in Higher Education (2015) for example, show that both race and gender discrimination are alive in the university sector. Indeed, recent activism on universities provides rich evidence of the concerns of both staff and students about the relatively slow pace of transformation in South African higher education, particularly in relation to demographic change in academic staffing. There is also evidence that race is a more prominent and urgent issue for transformation in universities. While this can be very starkly shown by the statistics outlined earlier, it is also documented in qualitative studies (De la Rey, 1999; Mabokela, 2002).

Lis Lange has described the institutionalisation of transformation in higher education in South Africa in five phases: the incorporation of transformation goals into policy and legislation; the "tacit acceptance of a 'common-sense' notion of transformation; using transformation as a market gimmick (conferences with transformation themes, for example); as a "State ideology"; and transformation becoming part of the performance indicators of the state, that is, part of the "administrative logic":

> from this perspective transformation needs to be measured, benchmarked, multiplied, squared, divided, exhibited in graphs and pie charts, monitored and reported on quarterly and annually, and must be re-evaluated and meta-evaluated each decade (Lange: 2014: 3).

Her analysis of how political arguments are translated into policymaking is that the institutionalising of complex transformation-related matters sanitises and reduces them to quantifiable indicators and renders the complex invisible. Booi, Vincent and Liccardo have also described the need to measure and count transformation as a feature of the neoliberal shifts in the academy (Booi, Vincent and Liccardo, 2017):

> I would like to argue that in the process of translating evolving political arguments into policymaking, the intellectual, political and moral elements that seem to have shaped the conceptualisation of transformation in the early 1990s were reduced and oversimplified (Lange, 2014: 3).

As part of this process, a common-sense notion of transformation emerged as expressed in policy texts, while also locating transformation thinking as sector-based, "and whose conceptualisation did not take into account the broader social context within which sector-specific transformation took place" (Lange, 2014: 3). The effect of this, she argues, is to develop strategies that do not pay attention to "the structural conditions that might accelerate, slow down, halt or make impossible social transformation of any depth" (Lange, 2014: 3). In relation to gender equity, this has implications for considering more in depth and multi-dimensional aspects of gender equality (Loots and Walker, 2015). Lange argues that moving beyond a performance of transformation is necessary to allow for adequate regard for history and context and to allow for:

> broader debates about knowledge and social justice that operate against the grain of accepted orthodoxies (Lange, 2014: 5).

Gender disappearing in policy

Following the analyses above, as gender equity becomes expressed in policy texts and state practice it is institutionalised and sanitised for performance and measurement, and reduced to performance indicators which express the aspects of change that are most easily quantifiable, while the more complex aspects of gender justice and transformation disappear because they are not easily expressed through policy agendas. Policy impacting on equity (including gender equity) is not located in one policy text, but includes higher education policy, employment equity and gender mainstreaming for government. In addition, although gender equity as a policy goal is often signalled, there is a lack of policy targets or drivers (apart from the Employment Equity Act which requires institutions with over fifty employees to report annually on their progress towards agreed equity targets, including race, gender and disability). In higher education this is a because gender parity at undergraduate level was achieved at the time that post-apartheid legislation and policy were being developed, and so gender equity was not considered to be a major priority area for policy development. This means that the responsibility for interpreting policy, identifying strategies and developing tools for improving gender equity is left to individual institutions. It is also the case that there are no sanctions built into policy if there are no shifts to greater gender equity in institutions and the absence of targets respects the autonomy of institutions to determine their own targets.

So, gender equity influences policy, but in non-specific ways. Strong signals may have had an effect on changes, as De la Rey has argued (2010), but it is also likely that many of the gains in gender equality in higher education have resulted from other social factors such as greater opportunities for women brought about by democracy and a new constitution. The fact that the major shifts towards gender equity happened before the policy changes took place would support this:

> The participation of women students increased at a rate three times faster than that of women, and overall, the proportion of women increased from 42% (in 1994) to 53% in 2000. Again, this remarkable equity improvement was not brought about by policy instruments but reflects the changing demographics of the population and the school system (Cloete et al., 2002: 417).

My conclusion is that gender equity is starting to disappear from higher education policy documents, and is rarely referred to independently of equity in relation to race. The reasons for this may be:

- Racial inequities have been slow to change and gender equity has shown progress;

- A premature triumphalism about the achievement of gender equity because of women's predominance at undergraduate level has shifted focus away from gender equity;
- There is a lack of consistent focus on gender equity in policy and policy analysis;
- The complexity of managing gender change is significant and requires layers of enquiry and understanding; and
- Much of the real change required is at institutional level and may be difficult to drive through national policy.

The limits of policy

Recognising the context above, it is also necessary to refer to the nature of policy itself. Policy is recognised as being organic and complex (Trowler, 2002). Policy is made as it is received, interpreted and implemented, by "street level bureaucrats" (Lipsky, 2010). As Ball has written:

> Policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended. Policies are always incomplete insofar as they relate to or map on to the 'wild profusion' of local practice (Ball, 1994: quoted in Trowler, 2002: 5).

Trowler describes this process in relation to an "implementation staircase", where "outcomes are contextually contingent" and "divergence is inevitable because of the complexity of reality on the ground" (Trowler, 2002: 10):

> At the institutional level, as at the national, policy-making and policy implementation are more likely to be the result of negotiation, compromise and conflict than of rational decisions and technical solutions, of complex social and political processes than careful planning and the incremental realization of coherent strategy (Trowler, 2002:5).

Bacchi's (2001) research has shown that what policy is interpreted to be matters in the analysis of policy. If gender equity is only understood as an issue of the representation of women and men then we do not look at the deeper ways in which gender inequities operate. Ball (2008) makes a distinction between the big P of policy, which refers to policy created within government, which is formal and expressed in legislation, and little p policies which are "formed and enacted within localities and institutions" (Ball, 2008: 7):

Policies are contested, interpreted and enacted in a variety of arenas of practice and the rhetorics, texts and meanings of policy makers do not always translate directly and obviously into institutional practices. They are inflected, mediated, resisted and misunderstood, or in some cases simply prove unworkable. It is also important not to overestimate the logical rationality of policy. Policy strategies, acts, guidelines and initiatives are often messy, contradictory, confused and unclear (Ball, 2008: 7).

The above discussion on policy shows that an analysis of policy provides only a partial explanation of why gender inequity and other forms of inequity continue in higher education. It is therefore necessary to look at gender as a social and institutional concept and how gender in its social and institutional forms may impact on equity and transformation. It is also necessary to look at individual narratives and how the agency and choices of gendered individuals interact with the institutional and social ideologies and practices of gender to sustain inequalities in higher education. As Loots and Walker (2015) argue from a capability and human development perspective:

This implies identifying what gender equality in and through higher education should look like, and how we could challenge those factors reproducing inequalities (Loots and Walker, 2015: 364).

In this approach:

equal numbers would be only one aspect of the informational basis of justice judgements (Loots and Walker, 2015: 365).

The Council on Higher Education report on the state of higher education concluded that higher education "needs a revised set of goals" (Council on Higher Education, 2009). This is particularly the case for gender equity, given the assumption of achievements, and the absorption of gender equity goals into the more predominant goals for racial equity. De la Rey (2010) also argues that policy on gender equity needs to be "sharpened".

This section has provided an overview of the context that has informed this study. It argues that, on the one hand, there must be a high level policy focus on the academic profession and the specific need for gender equity and on the other that more needs to be done to understand the structural and cultural nature of academic work and institutions, and how they can better accommodate younger,

black and women academics to shift the institutional cultures of the past that marginalised these groups. My motivation is partly informed by the following statement:

> Finding out what most academics value may also deepen an understanding of what would make the profession attractive. Although academic identities are plural and not homogeneous, an empirically based knowledge of such values could help shape the enabling conditions for these to flourish and could inform the development of appropriate and effective recruitment drives and reward and career advancement processes and structures (Council on Higher Education, 2016: 307).

Ultimately change will come from a deeper understanding of how policy is interpreted at institutional level and within institutions and how this is responded to by early career academic women themselves.

Outlining the research questions and research design

In the sections above I have outlined key features of the South African higher education system and policy environment as they have developed over the period since the transition to democracy in 1994, with a specific focus on problems related to gender equity in universities. My own career has been focused on aspects of the transformation of the university system in South Africa, working in the higher education sector as an administrator, research consultant and bureaucrat, with a broad focus on transformation matters, system planning, gender equity and university policy. My interest in conducting this research was to explore a policy-relevant area of research that could fill a gap in research knowledge about gender equity in higher education and the working lives of academic staff in South African universities. I wanted to understand why, despite progressive policy frameworks, gender inequities persist in the academy, and to explore in depth the working lives of academics from a feminist and social justice perspective. This interest prompted me to explore academic working environments from a gender perspective, informed by the substantive literature on gender equity in higher education and a growing literature on academic professional development within a rapidly changing academic world.

Research has shown that progressive policy is a necessary but insufficient tool for improving gender equity in the academic workplace. There is substantial evidence from the literatures on gender equity and academic work that the reasons for continued gender inequities in universities are both multi-dimensional and complex. While there is evidence that over time equity policies and initiatives can

influence gender equality, structural and institutional constraints and opportunities combined with personal agency and decision-making interact in different ways to both enable and constrain early career academic women in achieving their professional aspirations and professional well-being.

The research design is qualitative, and the findings are drawn from in-depth semi-structured interviews held with a small group of nine women academics who identified as being in their early career phase in one faculty at a South African university.

The following research questions informed the study:

- How does gender impact on academic working lives, career development choices and professional identities of selected early career women academics?
- How do early career academic women understand, experience and mediate gendered institutional environments with what effects for their professional functioning and agency?
- What does this reveal about why gender inequalities persist in universities?

Small-scale qualitative studies are increasingly used to approach the study of experiences and working lives in academia. There are also growing numbers of auto-ethnographic accounts of academic careers (Wilkinson, 2018; Ndlovu, 2014; Madileng, 2014; Msimanga, 2014; Nathane, 2019). While such studies cannot provide a generalised account of the experiences of all groups of academics in a system, institution or even an academic department, they can shed light on qualitative aspects of working lives, and provide a partial account based on narratives of a set of individuals in a particular context. This can be combined with data from other studies to provide a broader picture of what academic working life may be like for some early career women academics and what effect gendered institutional cultures can have on individual working lives.[9]

Choice of theoretical frameworks

Qualitative studies of gender equity in the academy have taken many different theoretical approaches to explaining and understanding gender inequality in university environments, depending on the

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[9] While the limitations of the research design are described in chapter four it should be noted here that the focus only on women limits the gender scope of the study. It is also important to note that "women" and "gender" are both contested concepts in gender studies. The focus on the binary category of women as research subjects was a clear choice in the design. In chapter three I explain more about my understanding of gender as a concept and how it was used in the study, as well as the limitations of its usage.

nature of the studies. I chose to approach the study by drawing on a broad set of questions about academic working lives and gendered institutional cultures, taken from the literature. This meant that I needed a flexible theoretical framework to approach the data analysis.

The theoretical framework for this study draws on feminist work on gender and gendered organisations combined with the capability approach, to make sense of the data. At the start of the research I designed the research questionnaires drawing on a wide understanding of gender issues in relation to academic careers and a strong feminist perspective that understands that all organisations are gendered. Once I came to analysing the data, I identified the capability approach as a framework that would assist me to make sense of the data, using the tools of the capability approach in combination with a wide range of feminist concepts, already widely used in analysis of gender in higher education.[10]

The capability approach is widely used to research issues of social justice and human well-being. Within higher education it has been used to explore the purpose of higher education (Walker and McLean, 2015; Boni and Walker, 2013), and the role of higher education in addressing inequity and marginalisation and achieving social justice (Walker, 2006; Wilson-Strydom, 2012; Hall, 2012). It is used in a growing number of studies to provide a set of conceptual tools to help identify capability sets within different educational environments to better understand educational contexts and the broader social goals of education (Walker and McLean, 2015; Wilson-Strydom, 2015). It has also been used in a recent Danish study looking at how women early career academics opt out of academic careers (Nielsen, 2017). The approach has further been used in a range of theoretical and empirical studies of gender inequity and gender injustice (Nussbaum, 2000; Robeyns, 2003; Agarwal, Humphries and Robeyns, 2005; Walker and Unterhalter, 2007; Comim and Nussbaum, 2014; Okkolin, 2013; Ongera, 2016.) including in education and higher education.

Capability analysis has transformed development studies and development economics by recognising that it is important to evaluate people's lives in terms of what they are able to do and be, rather than framing development in the narrower frames of utilitarian economics and human capital development that still dominate policymaking and policy analysis. However, the "bewildering breadth and dexterity of the capability approach" (Alkire, 2005: 129) allows it to be applied to many different

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[10] It should be noted that there is no single feminist approach to theory and research (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). Indeed Catherine Rottenberg has written about the rise of "neoliberal feminism" in which an awareness of feminism is translated into individualised understandings of feminism which "disavow" the structural forces at play in producing and maintaining inequalities (Rottenberg, 2014).

circumstances and to be used in combination with a range of other theoretical approaches (Robeyns, 2003).

I have found this useful for a gender study, given the 'wicked' (O'Brien et al., 2017) nature of gender inequity in higher education. Wicked policy problems are complex matters to address; the solutions are not clear; and the information about the possible impact of interventions is limited. There is also no one definitive understanding of the problem or solution (McConnell, 2016). As a woman scientist explains about the persistent lack of women in science: "It's what a scientist would call a wicked problem: Pull at one thread and discover ten more just as unsolvable" (Crowe, 2016: 2).

Gender can be defined in multiple ways, and even if there is some agreement about what a gender-equitable institution may look like, the complexity of gender inequality in society and organisations and its persistence despite multiple policy interventions requires analysis from many different perspectives. Importantly:

> The definition of capability does not delimit a certain subset of capabilities as of peculiar importance; rather, the selection of capabilities on which to focus is a value judgement (that also depends partly on the purpose of the evaluation), as is the weighting of capabilities relative to each other (Sen, 1992 in Alkire, 2005: 123).

In thinking about the capability approach and its relevance to this study, I have found the ideas within it "intuitively attractive" (Robeyns, 2017: 7) as a normative approach that focuses on achieving justice in the real world because it provides tools for engaging with injustice. It provides a language to assess how people relate to each other and what types of relations and institutional arrangements or opportunities to do or be what persons have reason to value, best expand their well-being (Deneulin, 2014: 46).

In this way it is a useful frame for engaging with South African higher education policy and its achievements, where there is a need to reverse inequities in participation and employment in higher education (Department of Education, 1997; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013) and where gender continues to be an area of inequality.

The capability approach is also a useful evaluative framework for understanding people's well-being and functioning in various aspects of life, and is used here to understand the work environments of

what might be considered an elite group in the South African context of extreme inequality and widespread poverty (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Statistics South Africa and the World Bank, 2018), and to make sense of the processes and experiences that lead to the development of professional identities and careers for early career women academics. Academics in South Africa are part of an elite group, having achieved high levels of education in an unequal society. The approach provides a tool for reflecting on professional functionings and agency in the university environment, revealing the factors that constrain and enable individuals in achieving professional well-being and success, and analysing the quality of their working lives as academics and which capabilities they have reason to value and which functionings they have been able to achieve.[11]

For Sen, there is no one set of valued functionings as this will depend on context, on individuals and on what is being evaluated: "A person's achieved functionings at any given time are the particular functionings he/she has successfully pursued and realized" (Alkire, 2005, 120). This approach therefore allows for an examination of capabilities and functionings in relation to a group of people (in this case early career women academics) and in particular environments. It then allows for an exploration of what institutions can do to support early career academic women, accommodate new academics and reduce gender inequity in the academy.

Though the capability approach is most often used to analyse marginalised groups, it can be used for understanding lives in elite circumstances (Alkire, 2005). Alkire's argument, based on Sen, is that the breadth of the approach makes it applicable to a range of circumstances and that quality-of-life considerations could relate to all aspects of people's lives – not just basic material functionings and capabilities, but also a range of other quality of life considerations:

> So the capability approach, fully developed, could appreciate all changes in a person's quality of life: from knowledge to relationships to employment opportunities and inner peace, to self-confidence and the various valued activities made possible by the literacy classes. None of these changes are ruled out as irrelevant at all times and places. One can thus analyze the capabilities of a rich as well as a poor person or country, and analyze basic as well as complex capabilities (Alkire, 2005: 119).

Accepting the possibility of the capability approach to analyse the professional well-being of an elite group and to analyse relative inequality within such a group was an important condition for this study, as the capability approach is not often used in this way. In this context, therefore, capabilities

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[11] 'Functionings' and other capability approach terminology are explained in chapter three.

are examined as a relational tool to look at the differences between individuals and to complement the use of a gender lens. Advantage is a relative concept, so even with relatively elite groups, capabilities research can illuminate inequalities that relate to social categories such as class and gender (Calitz, 2015; Wilson-Strydom, 2015; Walker and Loots, 2015). Even amongst highly qualified academics therefore, people can have different experiences, mediated by their class background and gender identities and influenced by social structures that impact on working environments.

The capability approach has been criticised for being too individualistic (Robeyns, 2017). However, as Robeyns argues, by recognising the social and environmental factors that affect people's ability to turn resources into functioning, the capability approach pays attention to social structures and norms as well as matters of individual choice and freedom. The distinction between capabilities and functionings also accounts for agency and choice in moving from capabilities to functionings by taking account of structural constraints in this process (Robeyns, 2017). This study therefore uses a number of analytical tools from the capability approach. Firstly it looks at valued capabilities and achieved functionings in support of professional well-being: what is it that women in early career academia are able to do and be and become. Then it considers professional aspirations: what shapes professional development and agency of early career women academics and what they aspire to become. After that conversion factors (personal, social and institutional) are considered, as they impact on what this group is able to achieve, to become and to choose. Analysing freedoms and functionings tell us what capabilities may be necessary to achieve gender-equitable academic environments, and what is necessary to induct new academics into academic professional life and to assist them to progress.

Outline of chapters

Chapter one introduced the study and gave an overview of the context which informed the research questions and research design. This includes the higher education policy context and a more specific focus on how gender equity and academic staffing is conceptualised in the South African context. It also provided a brief explanation of the conceptual framework informing the study.

Chapter two is the literature review and provides a broad overview of a diverse set of literatures relating to academic careers and gender equity in higher education. The first section focuses on the literature relating to early career academics and the nature of the academic workplace, drawing on both South African and international literature and how changes to academic work impact on gender equity. It then discusses literature relating to the development of academic identities, in particular

amongst early career academics, and issues relating to the professional development of academic staff. The second section of the literature review focuses specifically on the diverse literature relating to gender equity in higher education, especially women's careers in higher education, drawing on both South African and international literature. The chapter concludes by focusing on literatures relating to gender and institutional culture and discussing evidence of gendered institutional cultures in universities to set the context for the conceptual framework.

Chapter three presents the conceptual framework for the study, outlining three major components of the framework that have been used to analyse the data in the later chapters. In the first section I outline the conceptualisation of gender used as a framework for the study, drawing on feminist theories of gendered organisations as explained through the lens of Joan Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organisations, which is a multi-dimensional framework for understanding how gender operates within organisations. Acker's framework covers the structural dimensions of gender equity, gendered ideologies, gendered interactions (discussed broadly under the frame of institutional cultures), the effects of gendered processes on identity, and gendered sub-structures.

The second section briefly discusses intersectionality and its relevance to studies of gender, particularly in the South African context. This is an understanding of gender inequality as a concept that cannot be studied in isolation from other forms of inequality and injustice such as race and class. The third section outlines the main concepts of the capability approach, as developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum which is used broadly by many scholars in the fields of gender equity and education. The capability approach is used as an analytical framework, in combination with the idea of gendered organisations and gender as intersectional, to make sense of the data, and in addressing how individual early career academic women make sense of gendered institutional cultures and experience working lives as academics in one institution. It provides the conceptual tools for exploring the factors that enable and constrain the participants in their career development and the interactions between the institutional environment and their own decision-making and agency. Furthermore, it assists in highlighting the valued functionings of the participants, with a view to understanding the capabilities dimensions relevant for a group of early career academic women in a quest for professional well-being and a more gender-equitable institution.

Chapter four provides an overview of the research design and methodology for the study, highlighting the research design as a feminist study with a qualitative design which uses narrative methods. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were held with nine early career academic women

in one faculty in one South African university, and narrative method was used to illuminate the participants' own understandings of their working lives within the social context of a gendered institution. The interview processes are discussed. The chapter outlines and provides the rationale for the data collection methods and ethical procedures applied to the study, and describes the interpretive process of data analysis, concluding with some discussion of the constraints of the methods and approach chosen.

Chapter five presents the first data analysis chapter. It is a presentation of the career development choices and professional identities of the early career academic women in the study from starting out, through career development and thinking about moving on in the academy. The chapter first explores the narratives of the participants around how they started out in their academic careers, describing their early influences and experiences of becoming academics and highlighting the factors that both constrained and enabled them in entering the academic profession.

The next section details the narratives of academic work, with a focus on the aspects of academic work valued by the individuals, the challenges they face in their everyday working lives and what processes are involved in developing an academic identity and an understanding of their jobs. The next section focuses on narratives of professional development opportunities and experiences and highlights the institutional and personal factors that support (and constrain) these individuals in the process of developing as academics. The final section discusses the narratives of the participants in relation to their professional aspirations for academic work, their plans for future careers and how they navigate the institutional environment to achieve professional identities. Throughout, the capability approach is used as a broad framework to make sense of the data.

Chapter six presents the data analysis with a focus on gendered working lives and gendered institutional environments as linked to the aspect of the conceptual framework that outlines the multiple dimensions of a gendered university. The first section focuses on aspects of the narratives that were linked to experiences of being junior academics, and the overlapping effects of a gendered institution on a woman with early career status. The next section draws on wide-ranging aspects of the narratives that talk to gendered work environments and cultures to illuminate the 'everyday' gendered experiences of early career academic women. The third section focuses on intersectional narratives linked to discourses of transformation and gender overlapping with race, drawing on the experiences and decision-making of the participants in relation to linked experiences of gender and race, which are sometimes inseparable. The final section focusses on parenting and families - how

these women narrate their experiences of balancing home and work life and how the gendered institutional environment is constructed in relation to the reality of individuals with family responsibilities.

Chapter seven draws the data produced in the study back into a dialogue with the conceptual frameworks to theorise about the valued functionings of early career academic women and to produce a set of capability dimensions that could be considered important for this group of women and could be generative for thinking about how institutions and institutional policy might change to focus on enhancing capabilities for this group and reducing barriers for the progression of women in universities. The chapter starts by focusing on the narratives of four of the women in the study - two who have achieved some level of professional well-being and academic identity and two who are still struggling with what it means to be an academic in their environment. Together the narratives represent some of the diversity in the experiences of the participant group. The second section discusses the valued functionings of the group, drawing on the four narratives, both in relation to functionings achieved and not achieved and aspirations for well-being in working lives and the achievement of a professional identity. Three broad areas of functioning are described: navigating academic life; recognition of academic work; and achieving autonomy. These are discussed in relation to the four participants.

The final section of the chapter identifies capability themes and dimensions for early career academic women. It does this by bringing together the discussion on valued functionings into conversation with capability sets generated in six other studies, that have been used the capability approach broadly working within the fields of gender equity and education. While these studies have taken different approaches to identifying capabilities, they provide a useful framework for engaging with the capabilities dimensions that emerge from the data in this study. I propose five capability dimensions relevant for early career academic women generated from the narratives of the participants in the study. These capabilities are both multi-dimensional and relational. They do not stand alone but together provide a rich base of possibilities for thinking about what kinds of academic careers are valued and what could be done to enhance the capabilities of early career academic women.

Chapter eight is the concluding chapter and returns to the research questions. It summarises the main findings of the study in relation to the research questions posed at the outset and suggests what contribution the study has made to the research field. It briefly discusses the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for further research in the area, as well as setting out new ways of

thinking about gendered universities and what could change to enhance the capabilities of early career academic women in universities in both policy and practice. The chapter concludes by discussing how to create more socially just and inclusive universities. It does this by answering the question of what could be done to address the policy imperatives of developing new generations of academics and more women academics, in a gendered academic world.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In chapter one, a broad overview of the context of South African higher education was provided, which located the research questions about gender equity within a set of multi-dimensional challenges relating to the higher education system. The South African system faces complex inequalities that have national and institutional dimensions and at the same time, has emerged from the isolation of the apartheid era into a rapidly changing higher education world. The past twenty years of policymaking have focused on both dimensions of social justice in the transformation of higher education, and the need to be responsive to global changes in higher education. I have argued that gender equity ought to be a core concern for South African higher education within the context of the need for broader forms of social justice, alongside a renewal of the academic profession for a system that faces both the pressures of rapid change and enduring inequalities.

This chapter will review some of the literatures that have been identified as relevant for this study, in two sections. The first reviews some of the local and international literature about early career academics, with a focus on themes relating to the professional development of early career academics. The second section reviews literature relating specifically to gender equity in higher education and identifies major themes from the international and South African literature that are relevant for this study.

This study focuses on academics in their early career, and, as discussed in the previous section, has developed from a concern in national policy circles that South Africa is not producing a new generation of academic staff to replace those who will be retiring from the system in the next few years. A further concern is to improve equity in the overall profile of the South African academy. This is linked to relatively low numbers of postgraduate students, particularly at the PhD level, from where most academic staff will be recruited.

More specifically, the study explores the problem of interactions between policy discourses and the experiences and decisions of academics in their early careers. In particular, how academic identities are understood and developed from the perspective of early career academics and, how their careers are shaped by different levels and types of structure, institution, policy and culture, interacting with their own personal histories and choices. Although the study has developed through a South African policy lens, exposure to the relevant international literatures has shown that these are key questions

being explored in all academic contexts. Indeed, it has been said that early career academics are an under-researched higher education population (Sutherland and Taylor, 2011).

Defining early career academics

There is little consensus on what constitutes the early career part of being an academic (Bazeley, 2009; Sutherland and Taylor, 2011). It is often not defined, and where attempts have been made to define an early career academic, there is no one definition. Most commonly, it refers to the first five years of an academic appointment and/or the first formal academic appointment, and this can include periods of doctoral study and post-doctoral research. This is particularly the case in South Africa where large numbers of academic staff have not yet obtained a doctoral qualification (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2012). In some studies where early career academics have been targeted, they participate through self-identification as early career academics, rather than having been identified by the researcher, or by a specific set of criteria (Bazeley, 2009).

In the case of South Africa, since 2001, the South African National Research Foundation (NRF)[12] has had a capacity building programme in place called Thuthuka, promoting race and gender equity in research at all levels, but including the early career, assisting academics in targeted groups to complete doctoral study, develop as researchers, and attain NRF ratings (obtained online: www.nrf.ac.za). These targeted programmes are seen as part of different stages or 'tracks' of a career, but all three tracks are accepted to be part of an early career. Applicants for Thuthuka funding must have full-time employment (though not necessarily permanent) at a South African university or research institution, and should generally be under the age of 45, though there is no age restriction for the third category (attaining an NRF rating). In the case of the second track, post-PhD applicants must have received their doctoral degree within the last five-year period (National Research Foundation, 2016). So, early career academics in NRF terms potentially cover a large group, and the eligibility criteria cannot be distilled into a single definition of an early career academic. Recent research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa surveyed early career academics on

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[12] The NRF is an entity of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) which provides research funding to support research development in South Africa. The objective of the NRF is to: "promote and support research through funding, human resource development and the provision of the necessary facilities in order to facilitate the creation of knowledge, innovation and development in all fields of research, including indigenous knowledge, and thereby to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of all the people of the Republic" (NRF Act, 1998).

permanent contracts and found that of those who responded at least half were second career academics, with an average age of thirty-seven (Subbaye and Dhunpath, 2016). It may not therefore be unusual for academics in South Africa to enter academic careers after following other employment pathways, though there is currently no nationally survey data to confirm this.

However, it must be noted that research achievements should not be the only way of defining academics. Academic work also includes teaching and administrative responsibilities and considerations of public or community engagement or service. In fact, many academics may be appointed for some time before establishing themselves as researchers. There are many different routes to an academic career, some less linear than others, and careers are different in different kinds of institutions (e.g. institutions with a greater focus on teaching than research, such as the post-1992 'new' universities in the UK, and SA's universities of technology).

Despite this, the PhD is now seen to be a global marker of entry to an academic career (Henkel, 2000; Academy of Science of South Africa, 2010) as well as the foundation for research productivity and innovation (Nerad and Heggelund, 2008; Cloete et al., 2015). A senior university administrator interviewed for this study confirmed that there is no standard definition of 'early career' at the university, but that increasingly, obtaining a PhD was a starting point for entry into a permanent academic job, and therefore early career could be defined as commencing with a PhD.

Policy discussions about creating new generations of academics sometimes focus exclusively on the development of academics in terms of achieving the PhD as an entry-level qualification, and then establishing a research career and far less on the professional development required to become a higher education teacher or lecturer (Lucas and Turner, 2007). Indeed, PhD training rarely involves preparation for university teaching (Simmons, 2011). This is supported by a promotion and reward system that favours research production over teaching responsibilities (Lucas and Turner, 2007). The tension between teaching and research as core activities of an academic career is well documented internationally. This study focused on a research-intensive university, where the PhD benchmark is relevant.

Chapter four provides details about how the participants for this study were selected. However, the relevance of discussing this here is to indicate that 'early career' is not a clearly defined concept, and the literature on the early career therefore varies in its coverage, sometimes including postgraduate study, sometimes not, and not necessarily incorporating those in permanent jobs (in many parts of

the world very few academics achieve permanency). There are also those who enter academic careers after periods in other professions, which means that early career does not necessarily equate with being under thirty years old.

South African academics have relatively low research production rates, so although publication is essential for career advancement in South African universities, the overall level of research output is relatively low per person (Badsha and Cloete, 2011; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013), although it has grown from an average of 0.49 annual outputs per permanent academic staff member in the system in 2007 to 0.95 in 2016 (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2018b). This includes high and low research-producing institutions.

Although literature on academics and the early career is growing internationally, there is very little research in South Africa that covers the early career, or indeed the nature of academic careers more broadly (Council on Higher Education, 2016). It is therefore necessary to draw on a wider set of related literature on work that can build a picture of the nature of the academic profession and academic identity in South Africa. Even here, though, the research is limited. It includes some focus on postgraduate studies and the doctorate (Academy of Science of South Africa, 2010; Herman, 2008; Backhouse, 2009; Cloete et al., 2015) and becoming a researcher (Dison, 2004; Geber, 2009; Hugo, 2009; Kaniki et al., 2008); the literature on the professional development of academics (particularly as lecturers) which is growing in South Africa (Quinn, 2012; van Laren and Mudaly, 2012; Hassan, 2011; Jawitz, 2007; Cloete and Galant, 2005; Badsha and Wickham, 2013). This area is also relatively limited and includes no large-scale research. Indeed, in a review of South African higher education research between 1995 and 2006 it was noted that few large-scale research projects existed at all (Deacon et al., 2009). Some descriptive, policy-related overviews of the academic profession have been published (Koen, 2006; Gibbon and Kabaki, 2002; Pienaar and Bester, 2006; Higher Education South Africa, 2011; Council on Higher Education, 2016) and there is a focus on equity, with a growing number of qualitative studies (Vandeyar, 2010, Potgieter, 2002; Reddy et al., 2016; Osman and Hornsby, 2016; Webster and Mosoetsa, 2001; Johnson, 2006) and some quantitative work (Koen, 2006). However, there is little consistent research on academic working lives and what exists is limited. This means that our understanding of how academics work within institutions and what this means for their academic identity and professional well-being needs greater exploration.

Key university roles and the academic workplace in South Africa

This section reviews the literature relating to policy that impacts on academics and is important in the light of a relatively thin literature relating to academic working lives (Council on Higher Education, 2016). It expands on the broader context outlined in the first chapter.

Equity considerations are one area of a set of problems that require a multi-dimensional focus. The introduction has pointed to many dimensions of academic staffing that have come into policy focus in recent years and point to a crisis in multiple areas: funding, academic careers, race and gender equity, PhD development, retention of staff, and many other areas. These are linked to a combination of high-level expectations of universities (and by extension academics) in South African policy, the urgency for transformation of the academic profession, and increasingly the influences of external pressures on South African universities, which are in line with those being experienced around the world.

The National Development Plan (2012), the overarching development framework for the South African government to 2030, conceptualises universities as follows:

> Universities are key to developing a nation. They play three main functions in society. Firstly, they educate and train people with high-level skills for the employment needs of the public and private sector. Secondly, universities are the dominant producers of new knowledge, and they critique information and find new local and global applications for existing knowledge. Universities also set norms and standards, determine the curriculum, languages, and knowledge, ethics and philosophy underpinning a nation's knowledge-capital. South Africa needs knowledge that equips people for a society in constant social change. Thirdly, given the country's apartheid history, higher education provides opportunities for social mobility and simultaneously strengthens equity, social justice and democracy. In today's knowledge society, higher education underpinned by a strong science and technology innovation system is increasingly important in opening up people's opportunities (National Planning Commission, 2012: 318).

The roles ascribed to universities are numerous: high-level skills development for employment needs, producing and defining new knowledge development, and strengthening equity, both by supporting social mobility for individuals, and producing knowledge that contributes to developing South African society. As Cloete et al. argue, the National Development Plan signalled a shift in approach towards

higher education, moving away from a focus on equity and development and placing higher education as central to the development of a knowledge economy (Cloete et al., 2015). They also link the quality of the higher education system to the qualifications of staff – hence the emphasis on the target for staff with PhDs, and the target for more than 100 doctoral graduates per one million of the population, a target that would require an approximate doubling of current annual PhD output rates.

This framing of higher education is consistent with earlier policy documents in ascribing a wide range of responsibilities to universities. Some of these are inherent in the traditional work of universities in teaching students and producing research. These are strongly linked to a 'skills' discourse in the context of a growing economy - that universities are important to producing high-level skilled graduates necessary to meet national skills needs. Furthermore, there is a growing 'innovation' discourse, which places research at the centre of a knowledge economy. Innovation is presented as essential to growing South Africa's own knowledge for development, but also to build the country's global competitiveness. These are global ideas about universities. However, there is also a strong theme of the role of universities in creating a more socially just society. This is conceptualised as both about addressing social equity through providing qualitative access to higher education and about producing the kind of knowledge that can contribute to greater social justice. In this view of universities, economic instrumentalism is transcended by a focus on the broader social and public good that can come from a university education (Badat, 2009; Leibowitz, 2012; Walker and Dison, 2008; Singh, 2001). These ideas are broadly supported in policy:

> Education, training and innovation are not a solution to all problems, but society's ability to solve problems, develop competitively, eliminate poverty and reduce inequality is severely hampered without them (National Planning Commission, 2012: 262).

These wide-ranging expectations of universities show how complex the work of academics in this context can be. A university's responsibility to provide opportunities to young people, teach high-level skills, produce relevant, responsive knowledge for social and economic growth and shift social inequities is articulated above. Though the concept of community engagement is much debated and differently interpreted by institutions, academic staff working in universities are expected to engage beyond the corridors of the academy with the outside world, in a way that is consciously socially responsive, both in how students are taught and in the way research is conducted.

In analysing change in higher education in the first ten years of democracy, Jansen et al. (2007) acknowledge five major changes of which one is the "changing nature of the academic workplace". Though the collegial workings of traditional universities have been changing for some time in other parts of the world, the moves towards 'managerialism' and corporate university cultures, well documented internationally, have taken place in South Africa, as the country became exposed to the global higher education environment in the early 1990s (Bundy, 2006; Jansen et al., 2007) and in response to the demands of new policy and legislation.

Harvey argues that there has been an "emphatic turn towards neoliberalism in political-economic practices and thinking since the 1970s" (Harvey, 2005: 2). He defines neoliberalism as being:

> in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.... Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture (Harvey, 2005: 2).

Neoliberalism is seen as being a political ideology that directly contrasts with concerns about social justice (who accesses university and who succeeds), and the social role of universities in providing education for the public good (Deem and McCowan, 2018). As an ideology, it also provides little space for thinking about human well-being, which is key to any study of inequity in the workplace.

According to Saleem Badat, "neoliberal thinking and ideas have become hegemonic" in higher education (Badat, 2009: 458) and ideas about development have been reduced to economic terms. This shapes academic working lives and career building by early career academics. Public financing has been influenced by ideas about university education as a private good, primarily benefiting individuals, and the influence of markets have been considerable on what is taught and researched (Bundy, 2006; Badat, 2009). Badat describes several "trade-offs" between equity and redress and economic development on the one hand, and global competitiveness and national development on the other hand. He proposes that a recognition of these "paradoxes" is necessary to pursue different goals simultaneously (Badat, 2009).

It is true that post-apartheid policy development may have coincided with factors attributed to neoliberalism, which include: marketization and commodification of higher education, greater auditing and reporting requirements to meet performance requirements and concerns about quality, academic staff increasingly viewed as human resources or capital in a competitive economy, a growth in managerialist cultures within institutions and growing numbers of administrative and management staff, a focus on cost drivers in higher education, the rise of competition relating to global university rankings, and many other factors (Bundy, 2006; Badat, 2009).

However, not all these changes can be attributed to neoliberalism. New policy and the demand for transformation and social justice in higher education has required greater accountability on the part of universities and academics. The debates about balancing university autonomy with public accountability still loom large in South African higher education (Council on Higher Education, 2016).

The shift to academic staffing conceptualised as human resources required for posts within 'cost centres' of a corporatized university are:

> Consistent with the growth of managerialism in academia experienced globally, which arguably changed the nature of academic work through greater levels of reporting, accountability and administration. They were at the same time, however, motivated by concerns for equity and redress, which are forces that are somewhat contradictory to the logic of efficiency that generally underlies that trend towards managerialism (Council on Higher Education, 2016; 282).

Ultimately, the tension between social justice and the instrumentalist goals of education, and public accountability and institutional autonomy continue to be debated in South African higher education. The Council on Higher Education proposes that as academics are the "agents" of policy drivers in universities, that this may require both recognition in policy and attention to the size and capacity of the academic profession:

> Not only will the size of the complement need to grow but the attractiveness, desirability and appeal of the academic profession will need to be enhanced (Council on Higher Education, 2016: 306).

It is certainly the case that descriptions of the academic workplace in contemporary South Africa tend to be quite negative. Academics feel over-worked and under pressure to graduate more students and publish more in resource-constrained environments with high staff to student ratios. They claim to have high administrative workloads and are paid less than high-level academic administrators, with whom they are arguably developing an increasingly antagonistic relationship (Webster and Mosoetsa, 2001; Gibbon and Kabaki, 2002; Jansen, 2004). Thus, Webster and Mosoetsa (2001: 19) describe academics in South African universities as facing a "demand overload" as a result of many of the pressures described above. Gibbon and Kabaki comment:

> What was now demanded was expertise in a whole range of areas such as academic development, quality assurance, assessment, strategic planning, recruitment and marketing, areas that were previously seen to fall outside the domain of academic work (Gibbon and Kabaki, 2002: 224).

Webster and Mosoetsa (2001) describe universities as "workplaces of a special kind", in that although academics are employees, their work necessitates a certain amount of autonomy. This tension between autonomy and accountability is a fundamental issue facing South African academics. According to Jansen et al., a "gradual erosion" of professional autonomy has been a major consequence of changes in South Africa over the last twenty years:

> Under the banner of autonomy, universities argued that the right to decide on academic policy matters was sacred; under accountability, the State argued that it had a vested interest in how the heavily funded public universities used public funds (Jansen et al., 2007: 163).

In the South African context, the importance of accountability as part of the move towards a more responsive system is, however, a recognised necessity. Tensions between appropriate levels of autonomy and accountability are likely to continue to play out in individual academic lives.

Neoliberalism, managerialism, and marketization are often described as the primary drivers of changes in academic work and identities in research from other parts of the world (particularly the UK and Australia). Whole new sets of terminologies about academia have developed. 'Whackademia' is a description of a market-driven and over-regulated academic environment that regulates academic work (McKay and Monk, 2017), while 'academic capitalism' (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997) describes the

global trend of "entrepreneurial" universities, taking on "market-like behaviours" and academics seen as the "human capital" of universities (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997: 8-9).

Nonetheless, in the context of low levels of research into academic working lives, it cannot be assumed that Western neoliberalism has been transplanted into South African universities with the same effects. Rather, South African research should focus on what about the South African academy is and is not neoliberal (Lange, 2006). Certainly, there are a combination of factors having an effect:

> Reforms seeking change are not simply 'implemented'; they are interpreted by real actors in real institutions, so that even with the same planning script...academic departments within the same university understand and respond differently to planned change...Change in an interconnected world is as much an adoption of transnational discourses and technologies as it is an accommodation of national policy demands (Jansen et al., 2007: 182).

Webster and Mosoetsa (2001) document very different kinds of responses from academics: some pessimistic and compliant and some adaptive or entrepreneurial or both. However, their study points to a definite concern amongst academics about shifting ways of work, a loss of shared identity amongst academics and feelings of powerlessness. Despite some level of co-operative governance built into the governance of universities in South Africa, academics are poorly unionised and weakly represented.

For its part, the Ministerial Stakeholder summit on higher education held in 2010 acknowledged in its Declaration the need to "revitalize the academic profession including the development of a coordinated plan to increase the number of younger researchers" and "address the decent work requirements of academics and support staff" (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2010: 24):

> Any revitalisation should be multi-pronged in its approach and attempt to deal with a number of issues, namely, the decline in the image of the academic profession, rising workload pressures due to increasing teaching loads, a diminishing academic voice within the higher education sector associated with a loss of agency, the corporatisation and massification of the sector, an ageing academic population, feelings of alienation particularly amongst black academics and, tensions between academic freedom and country-specific needs (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2010: 20).

This is an important shift, because despite the importance of academics to the overall changes in universities, there has been relatively little focus on the need for supporting changes to the profession. The focus has been on how academic profiles must change, and on what academics need to do, but perhaps not enough of a concomitant focus on what support is required to make this happen. The next section turns to a discussion of some of the international literature relating to academic careers.

The structure and context of academic careers

Disruption and stability are common themes in the writing on academic careers and their professionalization. As already noted, internationally, it is widely documented that the academic profession has undergone significant change, in particular in the last thirty years, in response to global economic and social shifts which have affected the policy regimes impacting on universities and fundamentally changing the social and institutional contexts in which academics work (Archer, 2008a; Webster and Mosoetsa, 2001). Even though many of these changes are now established and entrenched, the shifts appear as a major opening theme of all recent writing on the topic of the academic profession. Equally though, the literatures commonly reference ways in which aspects of the academic profession have remained stable, in the face of significant contextual change, as will be shown below.

The academic profession is no longer the elite, internal, self-referential world that it used to be. It is now also externally focused and publicly driven. Still, the broad context of massification, where access to higher education has increased significantly in all contexts, including in South Africa (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013), brings new pressures on university teaching, and new groups of students (Boughey, 2007). There are new activities that occupy academics, including higher levels of administration, brought about through more intensive accountability and audit mechanisms (Webster and Mosoetsa, 2001, Archer 2008a and b), and the pressure to publish and be research-productive are more intense (Lucas and Turner, 2007; Henkel, 2000). The competition for research funds has also become more intense in some contexts (Henkel, 2000). Different communities and disciplines have developed as new fields of study develop which has increased the complexity of academic structures (Becher and Trowler, 2001) and the growth of technology has changed how academics work and develop (Debowski, 2012).

New expectations of universities have placed different kinds of pressures on academic work, including the need to be more responsive: to increased globalisation in academia, to industry, to the market, to

economic and developmental needs, and to the broader social good. The growth of knowledge economies has brought universities into the centre of discourses about social and developmental change (Cloete, 2014).

Mobility within academia has grown considerably, in line with the growth of internationalisation in higher education, and to some extent, the increasing instability of, and competition for, academic jobs (McAlpine, 2012). Universities now operate differently, with increasing emphasis on how institutions and those that work within them must be managed, manage resources, and be accountable for all their activities. Academics are subject to new employment regimes and performance management systems (Webster and Mosoetsa, 2001; Johnson, 2006; Council on Higher Education, 2016).

These changes are widely documented, though they differ in scope and intensity across countries and institutions. Much research on early career academics, however, references some or all of the changes mentioned above as the context in which new academics must make their careers (Archer, 2008a & b). For example, in Louise Archer's study of the development of professional identity of younger academics in the UK she argues that:

> the current 'new times' are disrupting notions of professionalism, what constitutes academic work and what it means (or what it should mean) to be an academic (Archer, 2008a: 386).

Understanding how academic careers and identities in the early stages are constructed and how policy, gender and other factors impact on the trajectories of academic careers, must therefore be framed within a set of deeper questions about academic work and universities.

A dominant theme in the UK and Australian literatures is the difficulty that these changes have placed on all academics and therefore of relevance to how new academics become inducted to the profession. Much of this provides the structural and cultural background into which new academics enter academia. Sue Clegg has described academic identities as being "under threat" (Clegg, 2008a) and Mary Henkel describes academics as operating within a more "hostile culture" than they used to (Henkel, 2000). Johnson describes the changed South African context as one of "contrived collegial managerialism" in which the growth of corporate management cultures within universities have reduced collaboration and collegial behaviours, associated with the traditional academy (Johnson, 2006).

Changing higher education work: context and gender

The Council on Higher Education report on the state of higher education notes that the nature of academic work has changed in South Africa (Council on Higher Education, 2009). As many writers point out, today's academic institutions are neoliberal, competitive, corporatist, commercialised and performative, and this changes academic cultures and the nature of academic work. Many argue that these changes have also had an impact on gender equity in the academy, restricting meaningful change (Davies, 2006; Morley, 2011; 2016; Acker and Wagner, 2017; Harris, Myers and Ravenswood, 2019). Morley has described the relationship of the academy to neoliberalism as one of 'entanglement':

> It would be erroneous to suggest that neo-liberalism is an external, material entity or a seamless monolithic apparatus that can be easily identified and resisted. It may be inhumane, but it is far from being non-human. The neo-liberal project is not just about injury or subjectification, but also about how the academic profession is complicit in promoting, or intra-acting with the indices and indicators that regulate the profession. It is a relationship of entanglement, with affect lubricating financialisation, marketization and audit policy processes. Income generation, as an indicators of research success, has been absorbed into and intra-acts with academic identities to reconfigure professional goals in performance management (Morley, 2016: 31).

Changes to the managerialist cultures of institutions have created greater levels of reporting and administration for all academics. Nonetheless, these changes may affect women disproportionately, because they remain at the lower levels of the academy where these changes tend to have the greatest effect, with women taking on greater teaching and administrative workloads. This is not a problem specific to South Africa and has also been a focus of gender in higher education literature from the developed world (Brooks and MacKinnon, 2001; Wilson et al., 2010; Leonard, 2001; Mama, 2003; Davies, 2006).

The changes to academic work have brought with them greater levels of stress and insecurity:

> The academy today is characterised by a mixture of hyper-modernisation via the development of global, entrepreneurial, corporate, commercialised universities and speeded up public intellectuals on the move. However, this is underpinned by the archaism of casual research labour, poor quality employment environments and conditions, and widespread gender inequalities (Morley, 2011: 224).

The changes have also put new pressures on academics to perform to diverse and multiple targets. Given the gendered structures of institutions, these requirements often have gendered effects:

> With or perhaps because of chronic reductions in funding, academics are nevertheless expected to display an ever-rising record of grant-getting, project-managing, output-publishing and impact-demonstrating, often while also taking on a full complement of teaching and administration (Acker and Wagner, 2017: 65).

An increase in performing to measurable targets can also continue to devalue the kind of work that is not easily visible and not subject to reward, such as mentoring (Acker and Wagner, 2017):

> Results are prioritised over processes, numbers over experiences, procedures over ideas, productivity over creativity (Ball and Olmedo (2012:91) in Morley, 2016: 29).

No doubt there has been a growth of focus on managing performance of academics, measuring outputs (for example, research outputs) and other aspects of corporate culture, and this is perceived to be at odds with traditional academic ways of working linked to academic freedom and autonomy and self-regulation. However, the international literature indicates that this has happened in diverse ways.

Key aspects of being and becoming an academic: academic identities

While the dominant theme above is change and disruption, the policy and institutional contexts of academic work are not the sole influence on academic careers, as opportunities exist for different kinds of responses by academics themselves. Studies show that responses to these changes vary enormously (Henkel, 2000; Archer, 2008a). It has also been shown that despite widespread change, certain aspects of academic work and environment remain relatively stable. This includes pervasive beliefs in and support for traditional academic values amongst academics themselves, at all stages of their careers.

Henkel describes the academic profession as having become overall a "more professional profession" (Henkel, 2000: 234). This is in the context of changes that her study describes, such as the professionalization of university teaching, greater emphasis on time management, increased regulation and monitoring of professional activities, and the growing instrumentalism in research and teaching. As Louise Archer notes in her study of young academics in the UK:

the capacity to be seen as an authentic, successful academic is tightly constrained and dependent upon the extent to which the academic can keep delivering (producing the 'right' goods as a neoliberal subject) (Archer, 2008a: 392).

Yet despite the effects of market-related changes, economic determinism, and neoliberal ideologies on the academy, values seen as core or traditional academic values remain pervasive as shown in qualitative studies of academic work. Though academic practice has increasingly come under new forms of regulation and audit, requiring a certain level of external accountability, academic work is still perceived to include a relative amount of independence and autonomy, seen to be essential to academic practice. Indeed, though some are critical of the restrictions that may be imposed by audit cultures, many academics accept that accountability can still exist with levels of freedom to pursue independent research, and others argue that this relative independence is a privilege (Nixon et al., 1998).

There is also considerable evidence that many academics place value on the intellectual challenge of being an academic, pursuing research interests and exploring new knowledge, key aspects of an academic profession (Lindholm, 2004; Subbaye and Dhunpath, 2016). Several studies also report high levels of interest amongst academics in teaching, and a commitment to imparting knowledge. Both an intrinsic interest in developing knowledge and imparting it are key aspects of academic identity (Simmons, 2011). Other aspects of the profession that are identified in research on academic identity include ideal behaviours of an academic: strong ethics, intellectual honesty, reflexivity, the ability to work collaboratively, collegiality, and being critical and independent (Nixon et al., 1998).

The fact that values seen as being traditionally related to academia still have prominence despite the dominance of market, skills and corporate discourses, is also noted by Archer who shows that the identities of young academics are constructed around a core set of professional values – "intellectual endeavour, criticality, ethics, professionalism" (Archer, 2008a: 397):

> Equally the finding that they are attempting to adopt critical and reflexive positions in relation to dominant practices and are trying to resist the drive for performativity through the taking up of more 'traditional' academic discourses (e.g. around notions of collegiality), might be interpreted as reflecting the ongoing power and resilience of 'traditional' constructions of academic identity or culture that, rather than being under threat and on the brink of

disappearance, continue to be taken up and reworked by the next generation of academics (Archer, 2008a, 430).

A significant focus of the literature on early academic careers is the process of becoming an academic, and how new academics are inducted into their roles as teachers, researchers and administrators. Ideas about what a 'professional' academic is are complex and multi-layered and indeed there are well-documented tensions between the different professional roles of academics, most notably teaching and research, and to a certain extent, administrative roles (Henkel, 2000). Teaching, research and administration are accepted core aspects of being an academic in most contexts, though there are institutional differences depending on the ways in which institutions are constructed and often, on their relative status. In some contexts, for example, there has been a growing distinction between largely teaching and research-focused institutions (Lucas and Turner, 2007; Henkel, 2000; Sutherland and Petersen, 2009). This is arguably similar to the distinction in South Africa between traditional research-intensive universities and universities of technology, and though there may be many institutional differences, they are not explored in depth in this section. This study focuses on a research-intensive institution where academic staff are expected to teach and produce research.

Regardless of institution, however, teaching and research are generally treated as isolated or separate aspects of academic work (McAlpine and Akerlind, 2010) and integrating these different "fragmented" roles is therefore one of the major challenges of becoming an academic (Lucas and Turner, 2007). Indeed, there are academics whose primary and sometimes sole identity is teaching (Gale, 2011), and those for whom research is their sole or primary work and academic identity. As Rosewell and Ashwin have noted, attributing single meanings to academic roles provides a simplistic understanding of how elements of academic work might be different for different people:

> Consequently, other elements of academic work, such as freedom, intellectual stimulation and ideas around making a difference, tend to be seen as the same and central to all academics' roles. This ignores the complexity and the different roles that these particular elements might play in the various notions of being an academic (Rosewell and Ashwin, 2018: 1)

Teaching and research are increasingly differentiated through policy (Lucas and Turner, 2007), and teaching is still less important to promotion in an academic career, which is primarily linked to research output and establishing a strong research profile (Jawitz, 2007; Archer, 2008a). There are, however, signs of change, as South African universities are increasingly incorporating teaching

competence into promotion systems (Subbaye and Dhunpath, 2016; Lewin and Mawoyo, 2014; Council on Higher Education, 2016). Integrating teaching and research into a professional identity, however, is a strong theme in the literature about early career academics. Mary Henkel's (2000) study of academic identities and policy change in the UK shows that many factors impact on academic identity, including institution, discipline, and type of post. Yet in all disciplines, research identity is key to a sense of self-esteem and achievement, given how important research production, recognition and obtaining funding for research are to progression in an academic career (Henkel, 2000).

Academic identities are constructed individually and socially (McAlpine and Akerlind, 2010; Archer, 2008a; Nixon et al., 1998; Henkel, 2000). Referring again to Mary Henkel's classic study:

> it is possible to see academics as both distinctive individuals and embedded in the communities of primary importance to them, that is first the discipline and second the university (Henkel, 2000: 251).

Identities are also not fixed and unchanging and are constantly being renegotiated (Ylijoki and Ursin, 2013; Wilkinson, 2018). However, recognising the agency of individual academics, which is an important theme of the literatures on early career academics (Mathieson, 2011), means that identities will change over time. As Sue Clegg notes, being an academic is a "moving goal" (Clegg, 2008a: 336). Gale argues that there are no homogenous "socialisation processes" into academic identity (Gale, 2011: 217):

> ...in this sprawling and diverse system there is more than one way to construct an academic professional self, more than one set of choices...How we come to make these choices and identifications are then crucial, shaped by our personal biographies, our institutional locations and disciplinary allegiances, and by the wider effects of social and historical formations and relations of power (Walker in Nixon et al., 1998: 292).

From the discussions above and given that early career academics are "located at the nexus of competing discourses around what it means (or might mean) to be an academic." (Archer, 2008a: 387) the context in which early career academics develop their identity could be confusing and overwhelming. Stress and anxiety are a common theme in the international literatures (Menges 1996; Simmons, 2011). This derives from the complexity of the roles as well as from anxiety about survival, finding work in academia and getting permanent employment:

The essential learning for early career academics is to find a way to work within these ambiguities and tensions of the academic environment, and accept that an academic role might require them to balance multiple and seemingly incompatible academic duties (Kligyte, 2011: 202).

In establishing their careers, new academics must gain independence and authenticity (Archer, 2008a); join communities of practice, and integrate different roles. They must develop their teaching practice, often balancing high teaching loads, while producing research. This can produce significant time allocation dilemmas (Menges, 1996; Simmons, 2011):

ECAs [early career academics] all around the world find the first few years of their academic appointment confusing, anxiety-inducing, and full of conflicting messages (Sutherland and Taylor, 2011: 183).

Another common theme in the studies of early career academics is uncertainty about expectations and the struggle to make meaning of the complexity of roles, in a context where rules and norms are implicit and opaque, rather than explicit (Menges, 1996; McAlpine and Akerlind, 2010) Thomas et al. (2011) refer to these as 'ghost rules'. Isolation is also often experienced by new academics. This says something about how the social aspects of becoming an academic are not necessarily straightforward or easy to negotiate. Becoming part of a community of practice depends on performing certain roles. Archer's work has shown that age, class, race and gender affects the ways in which young academics are able to feel authentic and successful (Archer, 2008a). Vandeyar's (2010) exploration of the work of three academics in South Africa at a former 'historically-white' South African university, focusing on race as a point of difference, shows that experiences of discrimination, exclusion and isolation can be devastating, and equally, how being socially included in academic communities can be deeply rewarding.

Like Simmons (2011), Vandeyar's work shows that survival in the academy depends very much on individual coping mechanisms as well as the type and level of support received (Vandeyar, 2010). Louise Archer's research into the identity development of younger academics in the UK shows the serious effects of performativity on academics who do not fit the dominant norm (particularly women, people with working class origins and ethnic minorities), describing a what she calls "schizophrenia" and "psychic disengagement" (Archer, 2008b). Performativity here refers to the need for early career academics to present themselves in certain ways to meet the demands and

expectations of the workplace, and what is considered correct, even when they do not feel authentic in doing so (Wilkinson, 2018; Archer, 2008b). These efforts to perform while denying personal identities have serious effects on the stress of new academics. This is discussed further in chapter three which focuses on the gendered nature of academic identities.

Areas of importance for considering professional development of early career academics

Academic disciplines are widely acknowledged as having importance in the formation and development of academic identities and academic practice. Although Becher and Trowler's classic (2001) study on the world of academic disciplines focused only on elite research institutions in the UK, the importance of academic discipline as a structure for inducting new academics is acknowledged by others (Trowler and Knight, 2000; Henkel, 2000; Kogan, 2000). Despite the disruption and change in higher education, what remains constant is that the discipline or "academic tribe" is still a dominant influence on the development of academics and their academic identity. Disciplines have both a social and epistemological influence on academic identities, that is, academics are socialised primarily within disciplines, and their beliefs about knowledge are gained through their disciplines (Henkel, 2000; Kogan, 2000). Nonetheless, some research has shown that although the discipline remains an important structure into which academics are professionally inducted, policy changes have meant that institutions have also developed as increasingly influential on academic careers, as they are the primary mediators of government policy (Henkel, 2000). Becher and Trowler agree:

> Paradoxically, the more it becomes necessary to recognize the academic scene as disjointed and compartmentalized, the more essential it becomes to turn towards an apprehension of that scene in its entirety. The tribes, after all, share the same ethnicity; the territories they occupy are part of the same land mass (Becher and Trowler, 2001: 205).

Henkel's later research has focused on how traditional disciplinary tribes have begun to change. She refers to this change as:

> the breakdown of longstanding conditions for strong, stable academic identities, sustained internally by the structures and cultures of academic systems (Henkel, 2012: 7 quoted in Ylijoki and Ursin, 2013: 1136).

Also, Fanghanel (2009) argues that a sole focus on discipline tends to ignore that internal differences exist within disciplines and that broader context and individual agency and ideology are important to academic practice. A growing focus on recognising teaching and its purposes is evident in the literature on becoming academics. In Helen Gale's (2011) work with early career academics she disputes the importance of disciplines, arguing that the teaching arena and relationships with students through teaching are more central to the group studied than research or the discipline, (also shown in Fanghanel, 2009), and this emphasizes the need to recognise the importance of context in defining academic identity.

A distinctive feature of academic institutions is the existence of 'communities of practice' into which new academics are inducted. These include disciplinary and quite often sub-disciplinary structures, but increasingly also transcend them, with the growing inter-disciplinary nature of university work (Becher and Trowler, 2001). Jawitz explores communities of practice within one academic department at the University of Cape Town. Using Wenger, Jawitz identifies three core characteristics of communities of practice: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire of "routines, words, tools, ways of doing things which have become part of its practice" (Wenger, 1998: 83, quoted in Jawitz, 2007: 186). Communities of practice are central to situated cognition theory, which sees learning as:

> a process of understanding through participation with others in ongoing activity, and knowledge as being distributed amongst the participants in an activity (Jawitz, drawn from Lave, 2007: 186).

Jawitz also draws on the work of Trowler and Knight (2000), who identify that new academics become part of "activity systems" which can develop into communities of practice "when activities get repeated so often that they become a natural part of institutional life" (Jawitz, 2007: 186). He argues that power needs to be considered in exploring these different analyses. Trowler and Knight (2000) propose that activity systems and communities of practice can be used together to better understand the complexity of networks and power relations that new academics are inducted into.

Jawitz (2007) uncovers two distinct communities of practice in one department: one that is engaged almost exclusively with undergraduate teaching and the other, more focused on research production. He argues that these are distinct groupings and early career academics tend to start in the undergraduate teaching group, moving, sometimes with difficulty or not at all, into the research

group, if the right conditions exist. Because promotion depends on research, it is necessary to move from one community of practice to another (Jawitz, 2007). Sutherland and Taylor observe:

> Across, disciplines, institutions, and national boundaries, the formation of an academic identity, and the sense of agency that motivates academics to live and develop that identity were mediated by the departmental and institutional cultures in which they pursued their work (Sutherland and Taylor, 2011: 185).

Professional development programmes

Many South African universities have developed targeted support programmes for new academics, including developing postgraduate students and members of staff who need to obtain their PhDs, developing research skills, as well as support for teaching and other aspects of professional development. These programmes often group cohorts of postgraduate students and/or academic staff through which to intervene. (McKenna, 2012, Quinn and Vorster, 2012). They are driven by a belief that specific support and intervention is necessary for success in the academy, and this has shown to be useful (Cloete and Galant, 2005; Quinn and Vorster, 2012; Sutherland and Petersen, 2009). Nonetheless, Quinn and Vorster (2012) raise challenges about the success of these programmes related to the type of institutional support required, including specific mentors, and the institutional conditions that will avoid creating stigma for academics in such programmes, as well as the planning needed to ensure staff are retained once their 'apprenticeship' period is over. However, access to these kinds of support programmes is not universal and many academics enter their careers without any formal structured support (Simmons, 2011). This work suggests that the process of becoming an academic can be made easier and clearer by social and structured support for new academics, and by making more explicit the context and meanings of academic practice in particular departments (Simmons, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011; Osman and Hornsby, 2016; Subbaye and Dhunpath, 2016).

Increasing agency and independence in university teaching, which has been shown to be a major responsibility of early career academics is a key feature of developing identity and it is argued that reflective space and time is necessary for early career academics to develop this (McKenna, 2012; Remmik et al., 2011; Thomas et al., 2011). This includes support from formal courses, as well as informal interaction and mentoring within academic departments. Simmons' research shows that new academics are "caught with their constructs down" with very few tools in the early career to make sense of their roles as teachers. This is compounded by a lack of support or guidance (Simmons, 2011: 239). However, she shows how involvement in teaching, and reflection on this role, allows a more

complex understanding of the role to develop, and with this, confidence. She argues that "role integration" takes place over time (Simmons, 2011: 235).

Once again, despite the complexity and ambiguities involved in becoming an academic, a fair amount of idealism emerges from the stories of young, new and early career academics (Akerlind and McAlpine, 2010; Simmons, 2011). Despite overall pessimism about the ways in which academia has become fragmented, there is consistent reference to the rewards of an academic career and many different stories about how early career academics adapt to the challenges of the situation through their own agency. In a study of younger academics in the UK, Archer explored the concept of authenticity - what it means to be an authentic and successful academic and how young academics experience feeling inauthentic:

> questions of authenticity and legitimacy are central to the formation of social relations within the academy-with individuals and groups competing to ensure that their particular interests, characteristics and identities are accorded recognition and value (Archer, 2008a: 386).

The young academics in her study felt huge pressure to perform as authentic academics to meet certain expected outcomes (particularly around the right kind and amount of publications) without necessarily receiving support to meet these expectations. Class, race and gender interacted with expectations to exacerbate feelings of inauthenticity:

> the 'authentic' academic subject is expected to be the archetypal self-sufficient 'independent learner', who already contains and embodied the required competencies and motivation....the discourse of the 'independent learner' (as the archetypal subject within higher education policy discourse) is premised upon a raft of assumptions reflecting middle class values and capitals (Archer, 2008a: 391).

This is linked to ideas of the ideal worker or academic, disembodied from the real people who inhabit academic jobs, and must prove their academic authenticity by meeting supposedly neutral sets of goals, in what is described as a competitive and masculinist academy (Archer, 2008a).

Feeling authentic, which is critical to achieving a successful academic identity, is about 'being' or feeling academic, which requires possessing "insider knowledge"; "having" the right credentials; and "doing" the right things, such as performing the expected research activities (Archer, 2008a). While

engaging with these processes, younger academics in Archer's study were also challenging established discourses, "they were engaged in discursive struggles over what an academic is, might and should be" (Archer, 2008a: 398), constructing alternative identity positions that were not necessarily about the right performances to obtain prestige and recognition but about "intellectualism, personal qualities/values ('being'), possessing appropriate knowledge ('having') and 'doing'" (Archer, 2008a: 398). In one case this also meant defining success in "personal, intrinsic terms – as achieving a good 'work-life balance' and 'being happy' in her personal life" (Archer, 2008a: 400).

Summary of literatures on early career academics

It has been noted that there is a dearth of research on early academic careers and academic working lives in South Africa. However, academic identity research is growing in other parts of the world. It is essential though, that local analyses are developed as it is not possible to simply transplant global ideas of change to South African higher education without interpreting their effects. Change is a complex interaction between local and global pressures. As policy pressures and expectations relating to universities grow, these place increasing pressures on academic work. However, academic staffing and gender equity issues remain vague in policy in South Africa.

The extensive literature on academic careers in the global academy places considerable emphasis on the disruptions to academic careers and work as a result of political pressures on universities, financial considerations and widening access. Change is rapid and academic work is therefore changing all the time. Themes include an erosion of the traditional collegiality of the academy and of the autonomy of academics within it. These changes are argued to have had specific effects on gender equity and on the participation of marginalised groups in the academy. At the same time, there is evidence that established values of academic work and professional identities persist. The diverse nature of academic careers and their development also opens opportunities for new academics. The challenge is to recognise the broader and more multi-dimensional aspects of academic work and jobs.

Academic disciplines are still important for the development of academic careers, and despite corporatisation, many universities still operate with devolved structures. However, disciplines are not the dominating force they used to be and operate alongside the broader accountability required by institutions. This means that early career academics are working across different sets of affiliations, with communities within disciplines and with external and internal communities of practice. Thus, early career academics require specific support as aspects of academic work are opaque and require

space, time and support to be adopted and understood. This is also challenging in a context in which the meaning of academic work is undergoing change.

There is evidence of fractured identities amongst academics. Academic identities are best understood as shifting and socially developed. As roles become more complex because of rapid change and competing demands, this requires more sustained thinking about how to provide the best kind of support for early career academics. It is also important to think about what these conditions mean for well-being, as understanding what is valued and what allows different groups of academics to flourish is important to understanding why people choose or do not choose academic careers or decide on specific academic career pathways.

The next section focuses more closely on gender in higher education and its overlap with academic careers and professional development.

Women's academic careers

This review takes as its starting point the numerical under-representation of women in the academic professional hierarchy in South Africa to interrogate why, despite progressive policy, "universities are sites of some of the most intractable and covert forms of resistance to women's advancement" (Walker, 1998: 353). The extensive research in this area shows that even long after demographic changes have taken place, cultures and practices lag behind, and insidious forms of discrimination continue, embedded in supposedly neutral policies and implicated in informal cultures and processes. The increase in the participation of women as students in higher education worldwide has been described as part of a "feminisation" discourse, which Morley describes as an "equity paradox" (Morley, 2011: 227).

Those who have continued to raise concerns about gender equity in the academy after policy change accommodated gender concerns, Acker and Armenti argue, have been labelled "whingeing feminists" (Acker and Armenti, 2004: 6). It has also been suggested that equity discourses have lost ground in competition with the dominant discourses in modern higher education of efficiency and excellence (Blackmore in Wagner et al., 2008). Elsewhere, it has been noted that equity discourses have subsumed gender equity considerations, and sometimes even subverted them (Morley, 1999; Bacchi, 2001). Mama notes that much of the research on gender in organisational life has shown how:

ostensibly neutral formal procedures for selection, recruitment, and promotion often have gendered outcomes that are seldom acknowledged, because of the hegemonic assumption that institutions are essentially rational and egalitarian in their functioning (Mama, 2003: 116).

Recent research in the US drawing on national survey data and work within a large public university showed that women spend more time and on average do more work in the area of internal service, which includes serving on institutional committees, providing direct support for students, what they term "taking care of the academic family" (Guarino and Borden, 2017: 690). They relate this to the possibility that there is less structural pressure on men to serve on committees, and that women say "no" less often. This relates directly to reward, as time spent on service commitments is not as valuable as that spent on teaching and research, which generates greater value and reward. As the statistics show very clearly (see chapter one) women academics are clustered in more junior positions, with less security and reward, and often with significant teaching and administrative responsibilities. Within university systems that almost universally reward and prioritise research over teaching this can have a negative effect on women's career progression in the academy. The "regrettable dichotomising of teaching and research" (Scott, 2012: 18) makes it difficult for academics to focus more on teaching without a shift taking place in the broader academic culture (Scott, 2012). This is an aspect of university cultures, therefore, that may be a major link to discrimination against women in the academy.

Mabokela (2002) points out the relatively new demands of acquiring a PhD and producing research for publication. This has effects on women, who are located in the lower academic positions, often in contract positions, and with generally higher teaching loads than their male counterparts. There is perceived to be a lack of support to improve qualifications and produce research, in part because of junior status and high teaching loads. Plus, women often have significant administrative workloads. Women are also less research productive than men (Prozesky, 2006; 2008; Brooks, 1997). Brooks notes:

> There was a high level of agreement among academic women regarding the issue of workload/responsibilities carried by academic women and the lack of translation of these responsibilities into something more tangible, such as promotion or extra pay (Brooks, 197: 45).

Research and Publication

Research and publication carry greater prestige and are more obviously linked to academic advancement. Yet studies have shown that women have a lower publication record than men in South Africa. Heidi Prozesky (2008) demonstrates through bibliometric analysis of peer-reviewed journals that between 1990 and 2001, men in higher education institutions produced almost twice as much as women. Her research explores the reasons why male academics in South Africa publish almost twice as much as their female counterparts and, like research in other parts of the world, shows that women consistently publish less (Howie and Tauchert, 2002; Brooks, 1997). As Prozesky's work shows, there are no straightforward explanations for this, and the theory about why this is the case requires detailed reflection. For example, while there is no evidence that family responsibilities and motherhood influence the productivity of women researchers, there are many factors that impact on what for women is often a less linear academic career. Women start their PhDs at a later age, spend more time on teaching responsibilities, face social expectations in terms of their families, face institutional support factors and many others. Prozesky thus explores three sets of explanations for the gender gap in publication productivity: the difference model which presumes differences in the "behaviour, outlook and goals of the sexes" as a result of gender-role socialisation (Prozesky, 2008: 48); the deficit model, relating to workplace-linked structural problems within organisations that exclude women from male-dominated networks and resources and external explanations related to women's greater role in family responsibilities (Prozesky, 2008: 48). Through an extensive review of worldwide literature on this topic, she challenges the 'motherhood myth', while recognising that there may be significant variations between different countries and shows that there is little evidence that family responsibilities on their own contribute to differences in publication productivity (Prozesky, 2008). She acknowledges however, that South Africa's particular socio-cultural circumstances which assign strong feminine and masculine roles to men and women have affected academic environments and women's participation in academia but believes that this area requires deeper exploration through research.

In Acker and Wagner's research with feminist academics, there is evidence that researchers learn to play the game of research performance, but at the same time find ways of doing their own research. They term this a 'workaround' which is 'finding a different way to do something when the conventional one does not work' (Acker and Wagner, 2017: 75).

Family responsibilities and motherhood

Family responsibilities and motherhood have been presented as significant to women's experiences in universities (Morley et al., 2005; Pillay, 2007; Bhana and Pillay, 2012; Orr, Rorich and Dowling, 2006; Mason, 2013). Research in the United States has shown that universities do not offer more flexible career paths for women or provide family responsive programmes to help women balance the demands of career and family (Mason, 2013). In fact, the 'baby penalty' includes lower levels of income over the career lifetime, high drop out from academic positions in the sciences, and pre-tenure drop out for women who have children before the age of forty (Mason, 2013). This phenomenon has worsened with the growth in part-time and contract labour in the US academy (Mason, 2013). Women have also noted discrimination in the workplace as a result of having children, arising from a lack of understanding of family roles (Brooks, 1997) and the perception that a tenured academic job is incompatible with having children (Mason, 2013). One study showed that women with babies were 29% less likely than those without to become tenured, and another that women in academia were less likely than those in other professions to have children at all (Reisz, 2013). In contrast, having families has been shown to affect men's careers positively, as high numbers of men in tenured positions have families, compared to low numbers of women (Mason, 2013). As De la Rey found in her South African study:

> the analysis has drawn attention to how the structuring of universities assumes that academics can adhere to organisational rules and arrangements as if they all had wives to attend to obligations of family and household (De la Rey, 1999: 213).

Morley et al. (2005) note that many of the developing country texts they examined on women and gender in higher education reproduced "normative constructions of women" when discussing marriage and motherhood. While they showed how family responsibilities continue to be a barrier for many women in the academy, they tend to "build upon domestic and private domains utilising norm-related discourses of heterosexuality and nuclear family structure…" (Morley et al., 2005: 10). They argue that the assumptions that all women live in such circumstances and will continue to take responsibility for domestic arrangements, are problematic because "they ignore differences between women and changing relations between women and men" (Morley et al., 2005: 10). Maternity is a state of being that confuses the public/private dichotomy in an academic life (Morley, 1999).

Venitha Pillay's (2007) book on academic mothers focuses on the lives of three academic mothers in South Africa. She argues for a breaking down of the boundaries or dichotomies of workplace and motherhood. These separate existences have caused great difficulty for many women working in academia who are also mothers, as they create a kind of fracturing of self or schizophrenia:

> ...in order to have a career in the academia, you need to publish...what then happens, to squeeze more productivity out of you, your forty hours are filled up with admin and teaching...your publishing actually, you take it from your private time...and if you do not want to sacrifice your kids...you start stealing it from sleep...from all sorts of self-care issues...(interview participant quoted in Bhana and Pillay, 2012: 82).

Leadership

Louise Morley investigates ways in which gender is constructed in the academy in relation to leadership, at a point which she describes as the 'leaderist turn' in higher education and a focus on 'leaderism', which she describes as a cultural ideology and social and organisational technology produced within neoliberal academic institutions:

> the cultural ideology of leaderism suggests that certain subjectivities, values, behaviours, dispositions and characteristics can strategically overcome institutional inertia, outflank resistance and recalcitrance and provide direction for new university futures (Morley, 2013b: 117).

What 'leaderism' thus does is shift attention to individual leaders and their qualities as crucial determinants of what happens within organisations. Leaders must exhibit authority as well as possess "excellent interpersonal and communication skills" while negotiating other identities, "and it is in these co-existing identifications where some dissonance may occur, with cultural scripts for leaders coalescing or colliding with normative gender performances." (Morley, 2013b: 117). She argues, for example, that women in leadership can often be subject to 'misrecognition':

> the incongruity between what it means to be female and what is seen to be managerial can produce at least two forms of prejudice: (1) less favourable evaluation of the potential for women to take on leadership roles compared with men and (2) less favourable evaluations of the actual behaviour of female leaders (Morley, 2013b: 123).

Joan Eveline's (2005) article about a woman vice-chancellor in an Australian university shows how the complex process of gendering leadership can work in an institution. The Vice-Chancellor described was seen as a "feminised interloper" having to do "gender switching" work to maintain authority, while working with leadership characteristics seen as feminine. She was simultaneously a "feminist ground breaker" and a "monstrous usurper of masculine privilege" (Eveline, 2005; 653). These multiple identities imposed upon women leaders who must "oscillate between two binary gender poles" (Eveline, 2005: 651) within universities explain the challenges of performing leadership roles and explain why women often feel fractured or schizophrenic in such positions.

Sandra Acker (2012), in her account of her time as a departmental chair, addresses the complexities and difficult identity work required of women leaders in universities. In particular she notes her attempts to "work within all the discourses" (Acker, 2012: 418), to be all things to everyone, to be supportive while making decisions, the expectations of the "mother" leader as an older academic, and the many challenges of performing a leadership role, ultimately exploring what it means to "do gender" as an academic leader. She notes the complexity of reflecting on her own experience, its limits, but also the influences of other aspects of her identity, and therefore argues that these experiences should be looked at through a variety of lenses:

> The gendering of academic leadership is complicated by all the changing and conflicting intersectionalities and idiosyncrasies that make it difficult to know what is at issue when conflict ensues (Acker, 2012: 424).

It must be noted that the studies represented here are primarily Western, and it appears there is very little available reflecting on the South African context. Similarly, the gendering and leadership debates discussed here focus primarily on the experiences of Western women, and say little about what such shifts mean for men in leadership roles:

> whilst a small number of pro-feminist, collaborative leaders exist within organisations larger numbers of men who are seemingly committed to ensuring socially-just workplaces, are grappling with how they reconcile the dual discourses of patriarchy and pro-feminism (Keamy, 2008: 269).

It is of course important to point out, as does the feminist literature on leadership (Morley, 2013b; Acker, 2012) that increasing the numbers of women leaders, while necessary for social justice, does

not necessarily impact the gendered nature of institutions, as "gender sensitivity is more significant in leading change than the biological sex of post-holders" (Morley, 2013b: 124). Morley explores how women in senior positions must often meet "unrealistic demands of perception" (Morley, 1999: 78). Where performing masculine leadership characteristics that might be necessary to fit in as academic leaders, women also disappoint, because they are not embodying feminine and mothering characteristics.

In a South African context, Idahosa and Vincent (2014) have explored how first-generation women academics in South Africa experience marginality: "Marginality has most often been understood as a category of oppression, representing loss of status, income, efficacy and agency..." (Idahosa and Vincent, 2014: 63).

One of their participants described their experience of a competitive academy, in which she had made a choice not to compete in the publishing game, as being "split off into parts" (Idahosa and Vincent, 2014: 64) which is "to literally feel that one is expected to lose something about one's essential nature in order to be regarded as acceptable" (Idahosa and Vincent, 2014: 64). Similarly, Morley found that many women were in:

> disharmonious relationships with their institutions, a fact that raises questions about the high costs of attempting to negotiate and adapt to dominant organisational cultures (Morley, 1999: 83).

The idea of split or fractured women's identities in higher education as sites of struggle has been discussed frequently in literatures about women as academics (Archer, 2008b; Walker, 1998; Clegg, 2008b) and increasingly in relation to women in management and leadership positions, an area of growing focus, because of the dearth of women in university leadership around the world. There is also a complex link to ideas about women's roles being outside of public academic life. Pillay's study on academic mothers addresses this expectation of separation between the private (emotional) life and the public academic life connected to reason (Pillay, 2007). As Morley has shown:

> The Academy, by privileging propositional knowledge, de-emphasises the emotional world. An implicit aspect of organisational culture in the academy is the acceptance of disembodied knowledge. Failure to adhere to this rule is evidence of being insufficiently academic (Morley, 1999: 81).

This discussion on academic identities reveals the complex ways in which being and becoming an academic is influenced by gender as intersecting with other factors. It also describes some of the studies that have researched the ways in which women experience being in academic institutions as affecting their sense of personhood. Struggling with fractured identities appears from this literature to be a common condition for many women in the academy.

The next section discusses literature relating to institutional cultures in academic institutions, an important area relating to the experiences of women in higher education in South Africa.

Institutional cultures and the micro-politics of the academy

It is widely acknowledged internationally that the nature of academic institutions and gendered cultures within them impact on the achievement of gender equity in higher education (Morley, 1999; Pereira, 2007; Wagner et al., 2008; Shackleton, 2007). Institutional culture is a ubiquitous term in the South African literature on gender and race in the academy. It appears in policy documents, higher education literature, conference papers, institutional documents and even in the titles of university committees:

> universities are deeply imbued with the norms and values of a society structured through difference and hierarchies of gender, race, ethnicity and class, so that institutional cultures are marked by cumulative customs, rituals, symbols and practices, established over time by the dominant white male social group (Walker, 1997b: 41).

There are now numerous accounts of university cultures being hostile to women academics on which South African policy makers could draw, dating from the "chilly climate" reports of the 1980s in the United States (Hall and Sandler, 1984; 1986; Moses, 1989), through an extensive literature in the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Brooks, 1997; Morley, 1999; Morley and Walsh, 1996; Brooks and MacKinnon, 2001; Howie and Tauchert, 2002) and some more recent accounts from South Africa and Africa (Pereira, 2007; Mabokela, 2002; Bennett et al., 2007; Rabe and Rugunanan, 2012). In general, these studies focus on the multiple ways in which universities exclude women, through overt and subtle forms of discrimination, a lack of recognition of women's care responsibilities and its impact on their work, the under-representation of women in senior positions and a lack of recognition for aspects of academic work where women dominate.

Mabokela notes numerous incidents of exclusion, rudeness and direct discrimination against women faculty, including consistent mention of the need to work harder to show that they should be taken seriously as professionals and to achieve promotion. She suggests three manifestations of culture impacting on professional experiences – culture as broader social norms influencing male and female relationships, culture manifesting in organisational practices and policies that are male dominated and privilege male ways of doing things, and culture influencing interactions across racial and ethnic groups (Mabokela, 2002: 198). Potgieter's (2002) research also focused on the experiences of black academics, including women in South African universities, and documents layers of institutional racism across the sector having a significant effect on black academics, and in many cases, causing them to move institutions or leave the sector entirely.

The Gender Equity Task Team (GETT), set up by the South African Department of Education to explore gender equity in the entire education system, in its report published in 1997, set out several recommendations relating to "Structural constraints and conditions" for achieving gender equality in higher education. The recommendations fall into three main areas: measures for a more women-friendly environment (including evaluating classroom environments, reviewing conditions of service, selection procedures and promotion criteria and providing after school and crèche care for staff and students); sexual harassment and violence (including the careful implementation of policies addressing sexual harassment and violence with strong definitions in place and the proper establishment of structures to address such issues systematically); and content of knowledge (including the development of women's and gender studies, foundation studies addressing racism and sexism, addressing the low numbers of women in postgraduate studies, addressing gender differences in research) (Wolpe et al., 1997). Yet, very little of this kind of detail has made its way into national policy frameworks. Moreover, the qualitative nature of the proposals requires that gender is considered at the level of institutional policy and practice. Here there is great diversity, and it is difficult to provide a single answer about the status of such matters at all institutions.

The most comprehensive source of information about sexism and gendered university cultures currently available is the 2008 report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions, known as the Soudien Report after the Committee's chair, Professor Crain Soudien. The committee was established in response to concerns about discrimination in universities, particularly racial discrimination, following a disturbing racist incident in a men's residence at the University of the Free State (Department of Education, 2008). The committee found racism to be pervasive across the higher

education sector. It also found the impact of sexism to be considerable, though not articulated quite as often as racism. Sexual harassment was widely reported. Apart from sexual harassment and gender-based violence, the report also noted sexism and homophobia as widespread at universities. This discrimination was mostly articulated in individual comments given to the Committee, and the report does not provide a clear picture of the extent or detail of sexism at universities:

> It seems clear nevertheless that there is sufficient evidence presented in the Report to suggest that wide-ranging initiatives are needed to make women safer and to forge institutional cultures that are women-friendly rather than expecting women to thrive in conditions where the expectations, norms, values, traditions and ways of behaving derive from masculinised conceptions defining what is 'normal' or average (Department of Education, 2008: 18).

The scope of the Soudien report is considerable and too detailed to discuss in great depth here. However, a number of issues relevant to the retention of black and women staff were raised, including a lack of mechanisms to address the particular circumstance of female academics (similar to those raised by the GETT report); and though focusing primarily on race, significant issues were raised about the negative experiences of black and women students and staff in the system, including perceived bias towards women in recruitment and selection processes and a lack of understanding of women's key roles in families in the structure of the work environment. This is consistent with Mabokela's work, which found that black women were much more likely to have experienced racism, rather than sexism, or at least were more likely to experience exclusion or marginalisation as primarily about racism rather than sexism (Mabokela, 2002).

Sexual harassment was widely reported, and this is consistent with other studies in the sector (Bennett et al., 2007). Most universities in South Africa now have policies in place, helped by labour law reform which prohibits sexual harassment. However, it does appear that there are problems in successfully implementing sexual harassment policies, the quality of these policies, and in the understanding of senior managers of the nature of sexual harassment and how it manifests and should be handled (Gouws and Kritzinger, 2007). Though most sexual harassment cases are rarely open to public scrutiny, there have been some examples of how institutions have dealt with sexual harassment cases. However, given that sexual harassment is mentioned as widespread in universities (Bennett, 2002; Department of Education, 2008; Norton, Rose, Fulbright and Centre for Applied Legal Studies, 2013), the cases known to the public are a small piece of the overall picture. More recently, Wits University, based in Johannesburg, engaged in a much-publicised investigation of sexual

harassment on campus (Norton, Rose and Fulbright and Centre for Applied Legal Studies, 2013). The process followed a story about the harassment of students by a staff member in the Humanities faculty, which first broke in the Wits student newspaper in September 2012. A national newspaper followed up with public exposure of the story in early 2013 and the university put in place disciplinary processes as well as a formal inquiry into sexual harassment. The process led to four staff members being fired for sexual harassment, and a high-profile office being set up in 2014 to manage sexual harassment and gender-based harm. It may be that this is unprecedented action being taken by a university in South Africa relating to sexual harassment, though the lack of public information about what has happened at other universities makes it difficult to confirm.

The Ministerial Committee examining transformation and discrimination found that while institutions broadly accepted the vision of a transformed higher education sector as expressed in White Paper 3, serious problems remain as a "disjunction…between institutional policies and the real-life experiences of staff and students", in particular between "institutional culture and transformation policies" (Department of Education, 2008: 14). The report also proposed the need for guidelines for promotion, an area where discrimination is perceived to impact significantly on the ability of black and female academics to advance in the academy. It also noted a lack of understanding on the part of academic and professional staff of the importance of employment equity and proposed mechanisms to monitor institution-wide implementation of employment equity policies (Department of Education, 2008: Section 7.8).

In the end, in its recommendations the Soudien report reduces gender equity to a need for gender sensitisation campaigns and confidence-building programmes (Department of Education, 2008), which are approaches criticised in feminist literature on higher education as blaming women and requiring women to change, rather than understanding the need for institutional shifts. Indeed, in its response to the report, the Vice-Chancellor's representative body, Higher Education South Africa, takes issue with this as a deficit construction of women, meaning that the responsibility for change lies with women, and acknowledges the problems of "gendered institutional practices" and a culture "infused with patriarchal norms and assumptions" (Higher Education South Africa, 2010: 22). However, Higher Education South Africa's only concrete intervention outlined as a priority for women, was addressing the physical safety and security of women on campus (Higher Education South Africa, 2010). What this shows is not a limited understanding of the gender equity problems on campus (though this may be the case in many institutions), but rather, limited strategies to address the complexities of cultural norms and practices within institutions. There is little else available in the

public domain to show that institutions have truly addressed concerns about gender equity in their institutions beyond the legal requirements and the few, mainly donor-funded, initiatives to support a growth in women academics and women managers (Higher Education Resource Services-South Africa, 2008a).

In her study of UK academics, Brooks noted that women were reluctant to identify as having experienced direct gender discrimination, yet frequently recounted patronising, belittling and dismissive behaviour from male colleagues (Brooks, 1997: 50). This was similar in De la Rey's study of senior academic women in South African universities. Very few women in her study identified gender discrimination as having been a barrier to their academic careers yet expressed numerous accounts of "struggle" during their careers (De la Rey, 1999). Her study found frequent stories of loneliness and competitiveness, rather than solidarity amongst women. Despite acknowledging cases of gender discrimination, the women she interviewed predominantly distanced themselves from the significance of gender and she found no "singular gender-based collective narrative" perhaps because of racial, class and age differences amongst the women (De la Rey, 1999: 204).

Responses to gendered sub-cultures: fixing the women or fixing the university

Morley (2016) argues that academic identities are formed through complex intra-actions between the technologies and structures of the neoliberal knowledge economy and institutional structures and the realities of academic work and its gendered distribution:

> Individual academic identities materialise through intra-actions between research policy discourses, performance and productivity within the confines of key performance indicators. Insecurity, inequality, and individualisation are fostered as part of ensuring the conditions for power to exercise a hold over conduct (Morley, 2016: 40).

These intra-actions create layers of disadvantage which result in 'misrecognition': the location of women in less powerful positions, the difficulties of moving out of these positions through obtaining the right kinds of prestige opportunities and the effects of masculinity cultures on achieving the right kinds of 'winning' academic identities. She argues that this "represents a form of distributive and epistemic injustice" (Morley, 2016: 39).

A recent study (Nielsen, 2017) focusing on a large university in Denmark attempts to understand why a significant group of young women on academic career tracks chose not to apply for permanent

academic jobs or opted out of academia at an early stage. Nielsen shows how a complex set of interactions, including cumulative social and institutional disadvantages for women, impact on this phenomenon. Retention of young women scholars is as important as encouraging people to enter the academic profession. Nielsen describes these interactions in terms of three 'distinct feedback loops' (Nielsen, 2017: 149) which work together to impact on the choices that young women make. The first is the effect of complex gender dynamics described in the earlier sections which act upon some women academics, as they do not achieve a sense of belonging or job satisfaction. At the same time their positions and invisibility to institutional 'gatekeepers' often lowers their chance of promotion. The second feedback loop involves interactions between job insecurity and the performance demands of academic institutions, which affect the difficulty in achieving a work-life balance and 'accumulating social capital' which is necessary for getting ahead and deciding to compete. The third feedback loop involves the ways in which gendered symbols structured around the ideal worker norm work to create obstacles for women who do not match the "notion of the ideal employee as being highly competitive, individualistic and with few commitments outside the workplace" (Nielsen, 2017: 150).

Nielsen's research has also shown that within the policy discourse of Denmark, gender equity is already considered a reality, which makes discussions on gender discrimination 'trivial' (Nielsen, 2017). This links in with the policy analysis section earlier, in which gender parity in South African policy discourse has also led to a disappearing of gender equity and justice concerns. This also leads to a discussion about what can be done and about whether, in the dominant mode of thinking in academic institutions, interventions to solve gender inequalities should involve 'fixing the women' or 'fixing the institution'. As Burkinshaw and White (2017) have noted, the 'fixing the women' discourse dominates and avoids tackling the power dynamics within institutions that prevents tackling the many complex ways in which gendered institutional cultures may need to change to truly address gender inequality and injustice in the academy:

> Due to their allegedly non-egoistical and social behaviour, women are represented as unwilling or incapable of making the necessary sacrifices in their private life to succeed in an academic career. This interpretation tends to revolve around an idea of the academic career as a (religious) 'calling' secluded from any other aspect of social life (Nielsen, 2017: 145).

Women must fit in, adapt and decide to opt-in or opt-out, but cannot change the cultures of institutions (Morley, 2014; Burkinshaw and White, 2017). Academics with families must balance their personal lives to perform the right academic achievements, despite environments that do not support

them (Beddoes and Pawley, 2014; Harris et al., 2019). If they do not achieve this, it is then is a matter of individual choice rather than a question of structural discrimination (Nielsen, 2017).

Conclusion

This literature review has noted a dearth of research on academic working lives, particularly in the South African context, though it is possible to draw on a growing international literature in this area. The policy focus on the importance of high-level skills within a knowledge economy, combined with the social justice imperatives of a highly unequal society with a history of race and gender-based exclusion, has led to a complex set of expectations for academics. The academic workplace is changing in South Africa and in other parts of the world and has become more complex and multi-dimensional. The effects of massification, corporatisation of higher education, a growth in audit cultures and the encroachment of the market on public higher education are well documented globally. In South Africa global trends have interacted with local policy imperatives. Overall the academic profession requires greater agility and features expanded workloads, and there is a growing tension between institutional (and individual) autonomy and public accountability. Academic work has emerged as a key policy focus in South Africa.

Global changes to the academy and academic work have disrupted academic identities, often with gendered effects. However, there is also evidence of enduring academic discourses and values, despite external demands on academic work. Academic identity emerges from the literature as complex and sometimes fragmented, particularly for women, and identities are both socially and individually constituted, and subject to constant change. This creates a context that can be overwhelming for early career academics. The rules of academic work are often not explicit and there are institutional and disciplinary effects on academic work and identity. Areas of focus relating to early career academics include the importance of communities of practice and proper structured and targeted professional development support.

Universities are highly gendered in complex ways, both in ways in which institutions and the academy are structured and in terms of how social norms impact on the working lives of women academics. This, in turn, has an effect of how women's identities develop in their early careers in academia. There is a wide set of literature on how institutional cultures of universities are gendered, with the continued hegemony of patriarchal and masculinist cultures within institutions. It is often challenging to unearth aspects of these cultures as institutional cultures are so closely linked to discourses and gendered norms operating in broader society. Interventions tend to focus on women

themselves, rather than on making substantive changes to institutions, so that women must choose to fit in or opt out.

In conclusion, this chapter has reviewed a wide range of literatures relating to higher education policy, early career academics, academic identities and gendered institutional cultures. The literature identified provides the basis for the selection of the conceptual framework outlined in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Gendered organisations, intersectionality, and the capability approach.

Introduction

As detailed in previous chapters, this study was designed in response to my policy interest in the continuing inequities between men and women in the South African academy, and how South Africa can foster new generations of academic scholars within its university system. A gap was identified in empirical work about the working lives of early career academics in South Africa. The study was also designed to respond to a persistent question about how it is that, despite the importance of equity in framing policy change in higher education in South Africa and other parts of the world, change in the representation of women in the academy has been so slow. This phenomenon is described as both a 'glass ceiling' and a 'concrete floor' in terms of continued under-representation of women in senior academic positions, and despite an increasingly feminised academic staff. Equally, there is evidence that the qualitative experience of men and women in academic posts differs and that gender inequality is multi-dimensional.

The conceptual framework described in this chapter serves to bring together an understanding of the ways in which the university is gendered and how individual early career academic women experience one institution and engage with its gendered structures and cultures through their agency and choices. Ultimately, an analysis that brings together an understanding of gendered organisations viewed through the capability approach provides a frame for understanding the interaction between social constraints, institutional structures and policies and the career decisions and aspirations of a group of early career academic women. The ultimate aim is to understand how institutional policies and practices could change to accommodate early career academic women better and actively reduce barriers to the progression of women in the academy.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first is a set of conceptual tools drawn from feminist and gender theorists who have sought to explain how gender operates within institutional contexts, to understand the relevance and effect of gender within organisations, and within universities. Joan Acker's theory of gender in organisations (1990) is used as an organising framework to make sense of the wide range of conceptual work in this area. The second focuses on theorisation relating to intersectionality given its importance in any gender study, but particularly in the South African context. The third is the use of the capability approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000; 2011; Robeyns,

2017) to understand the effect of a gendered society and institutional culture on the working lives and professional identities of early career academic women. A feminist approach to understanding gender is combined with the normative social justice ideas inherent within the capability approach to analyse the interactions between organisational and social structure and individual identity and agency. The chapter links a feminist reading and application of the capability approach, and brings to bear the feminist literature reviewed earlier into conversation with the approach to present the capability approach through a feminist and gendered lens.

Feminist theorisations of gender in organisations

The first section turns to a discussion of concepts and theories that can be used to frame the deeper challenges in achieving more gender equality in universities. I have drawn on a wide range of literature on gender in organisations and universities but have selected those concepts which have been most helpful in engaging with the empirical findings of this study. The experiences of women in higher education have been the subject of numerous studies since the 1970s and 1980s (globally) and the 1990s in Africa and South Africa, with a focus on a range of issues, as shown in chapter two. Ultimately, they all try to understand what it is that allows for overt gender differences in the academy and the persistence of such gendered cultures.

Gender is complex and multi-layered (Robeyns, 2010), and contested (Haslanger, 2012). Ideas and ideologies about gender are constantly changing. This means that a study on gender could be theorised in many ways. Broadly expressed, "Gender is the social meaning of sex" is the "guiding idea" of gender (Haslanger, 2000: 37). The study of gender is a complex project of science and philosophy (Fausto-Sterling, 1992; Haslanger, 2012), and meanings of gender and sex are constantly changing and are contextually dependent (Haslanger, 2012). For the purposes of this study, however, gender is understood as a category of social analysis that looks at ways in which individual and social identities are organised according to sex. It covers experience, identity, social norms and expectations and organisational experiences. Haslanger analyses gender "as a social class" so that the:

> core phenomenon to be addressed is the pattern of social relations that constitute the social classes of men as dominant and women as subordinate; norms, symbols, and identities are gendered in relation to the social relations that constitute gender (Haslanger, 2000: 37).

Put differently:

The core of the definition rests on an integral connection between two propositions: gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power (Scott in Acker, 1990: 145).

Guided by this understanding of gender, there are two important ideas about gender that inform this study: the first is that gender is socially constructed, and the second, that as a result all organisations are implicitly gendered. Society, organisations and people are constituted by gender and adopt gendered identities and roles: "Gender is a relational or extrinsic property of individuals, and the relations in question are social" (Haslanger, 2012: 41). While society and organisations are structurally and culturally gendered, they also perform or 'do' gender (Morley, 1999) which means that gender is dynamic and changing, and contextually inflected.

Gender inequality is understood as something that is reproduced within and by institutions (Acker, 1990; Gouws and Hassim, 2014). Hierarchies of gender are evident in universities, there is evidence of gender-based discrimination in universities and institutional cultures are described as gendered, as the literature review has shown. Professional identities can also be gendered:

In so far as social existence requires an unambiguous gender affinity, it is not possible to exist in a socially meaningful sense outside of established gender norms...If human existence is always gendered existence, then to stray outside of established gender is in some sense to put one's very existence into question (Haslanger, 2012: 48).

The section started with the above explanation because, although it is well understood within feminist research that gender is conceptualised in multiple ways and that organisations are gendered, this is not necessarily a common-sense view within higher education in South Africa, where gender is one of many inequalities and can be faint in the face of more overt forms of racial discrimination.[13]

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[13] It should also be noted that in policy discussions, as outlined in chapter one, gender debates are often limited to understandings of binary sex and gender (i.e. man/woman; male/female; masculininity/femininity) rather than ideas of gender and gender identity that are non-binary, non-conforming and gender queer, which recognise that binary understandings of biological sex and social gender are also out of date (Fausto-Sterling, 2000). This is also the case with binary conceptualisations of sexuality (gay/straight). There is a growing awareness of multiple genders and sexualities (the growth of the intersex, trans-gender and queer and non-conforming/non-binary movements). However, it is also important to note that despite the progressive South African constitution which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, gender or sexual orientation, and the resulting protection and civil rights accorded to people identifying with non-normative genders and sexualities, categories of official representation have mostly not moved beyond binary categories. In the university context, a limited number of universities have started to allow students to identify "other" gender categories in official communication, there is a growing use of gender-neutral prefixes (Mx) and pronouns in

Conceptualising gendered organisations

While there are multiple theoretical possibilities for analysing gendered organisations in education (Weiler, 2008), Joan Acker's classic theory of gendered organisations (Acker, 1990) provides a comprehensive and multi-dimensional framework with which to think about gender inequality within universities. This is because gender operates in different realms: ideology, discourse, social structures and within group and individual identities, and recognising this multi-dimensionality allows for the analysis to be explored at multiple levels. How do individual academic women experience organisational cultures? How are aspects of their professional (personal) identities influenced by gender? How have they have been socialised in relation to gender and how does this influence their career development? How does the gendered nature of the organisation impact on their career development? How do the personal and the institutional interact? Acker's theory is used here as a loose organising frame for presenting a diverse set of concepts across these different realms. The multi-dimensionality and breadth of the theory has allowed me to include a range of writing and concepts under a feminist theoretical frame, and analyse gender in relation to ideology, identity, structure and institutional culture, all of which arise in gendered theorisations of universities and academia.

Acker's theory of gendered organisations argues that organisations are fundamentally gendered and that despite being presented as gender neutral, organisational policies, practices and structures are permeated by gendered ideas and ideologies. She argues that "gender is a constitutive element in organisational logic" (Acker, 1990: 147). Acker outlines five processes in which gendering of organisations takes place:

1. ...the construction of divisions along lines of gender;

2. ...the construction of symbols and images that explain, express, reinforce, or sometimes oppose those divisions;

3. ...interactions between women and men, women and women, men and men, including all those patterns that enact dominance and submission;

4. ...these processes help to produce gendered components of individual identity; and

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limited circles (News24, 2018), and some universities provide gender-neutral toilets. However, this is far from widespread.

5. ...gender is implicated in the fundamental, ongoing processes of creating and conceptualizing social structures (Acker, 1990: 147).

In Acker's five processes, the first are divisions constructed along lines of gender, which includes divisions of labour, space, behaviour, power, and the influence of broader social gender organisation on the institution (markets, family, state) (Acker, 1990: 146). In the case of universities, gendered divisions of labour are well documented and visible, with the proportions of women reducing up to leadership level, and women best represented in the lower academic ranks:

> Women might be entering the elite professions and social spaces, but the senior positions appear to remain resistant to feminisation...but it is...debatable as to whether quantitative change has allowed more discursive space for gender (Morley, 2011: 227).

Looking at gendered divisions however, requires looking beyond numbers at the subtle ways in which organisations are structured along gendered divisions of space, hierarchy and power. This overarching gender structure has several effects on women academics, who are often in precarious positions, doing more of the administrative work, having greater teaching loads and leaving the high status intellectual and knowledge generating work to those in higher positions, predominantly men.

Furthermore, in their investigations of successful senior women academics in South Africa, De la Rey (1999) and Prozesky (2006) have shown that women's career progression in higher education tends to be far less linear than that of men, frequently disrupted by moving in and out of work for periods of time, often because of family commitments (De la Rey, 1999; Prozesky, 2006). As chapter two demonstrated, the structure of academic workloads is also gendered. According to Williams, gender is a "force field of social power" (Williams, 2000: 256) and that "gender, like gravity, still pulls women down" (Williams, 2000: 254). This has implications for thinking about what a gender equitable and gender just university may look like, what kind of work may be necessary to shift seemingly intractable gender divisions and, indeed, what kind of individual and social agency can be employed to shift inequality. Overall 'gendered organisation' is a significant concept for this study.

Gendered ideologies

Acker's second set of processes are "the construction of symbols and images that explain, express, reinforce, or sometimes oppose those divisions" (Acker, 1990: 146). These gendered symbols often form part of a range of ideologies of gender, which are social norms and attitudes about the roles of

men and women. They are also a crucial part of maintaining divisions and relate to deeply held and longstanding social and cultural attitudes towards gender. Aisenberg and Harrington argue that two sets of norms co-exist in universities, with commitments to gender inequality and greater opportunities for women, but at the same time old ideas about the natural place of women "denying the power of their minds" (Aisenberg and Harrington, 1988: 5) and thus form stumbling blocks for women in all professions. Williams argues that 'domesticity' has two defining characteristics:

> ...its organisation of market work around the ideal of a worker who works full time and overtime and takes little or no time off for childbearing or child rearing. Though this ideal-worker norm does not define all jobs today, it defines the good ones: full-time blue-collar jobs in the working-class context, and high-level executive and professional jobs for the middle class and above (Williams, 2000: 1).

The second defining characteristic of 'domesticity' is the marginalisation of caregivers from 'social roles that offer responsibility and authority' (Williams, 2000: 1). Writers like Jayati Ghosh in India (2016) show how powerfully these ideologies are perpetuated by the structure of modern work in capitalist economies and how they sustain the class and gender nature of modern capitalist economics, with poor women who bear the responsibility for unpaid and low paid care work marginalised from the formal economy and professional jobs. This implicates men and - in particular - women, who rely on low or unpaid care workers to support their ability to work (Ghosh, 2013), as is the case in South Africa. Ideologies of capitalism and gender (and class) are therefore intricately connected and symbiotic and have a powerful effect on workplaces, including universities. This is discussed in the later section which focuses on how capitalist and neoliberal influences on university work may have further entrenched gender inequality in universities.

The ideal worker concept

Acker's theory is widely referenced in studies of gender and working lives because it built on feminist ideas about both effects of hegemonic masculinity and about women in the workplace to show how gender is structurally implicated in organisations through ideas of the 'ideal worker'. The ideal worker theory is that organisations structure jobs and job-related policy and technology based on an idea of a 'disembodied' worker, constructed as separate from real people who inhabit real jobs. This has the effect of constructing jobs as abstract when in fact a job does not exist without a person doing the job. The concept of a job, though presented as gender neutral, is in fact built upon gendered ideas of who should inhabit a job. This is a symbolism deeply embedded in capitalist work:

The closest the disembodied worker doing the abstract job comes to a real worker is the male worker whose life centers on his full-time, life-long job, while his wife or another woman takes care of his personal needs and his children (Acker, 1990: 149).

Gendered divisions of labour are built into these supposedly neutral jobs because they assume "a particular gendered organisation of domestic life and social production" (Acker, 1990: 149) based on the original ideas of gender and labour of 'economic man' where the public and private sphere are separate and men and women operate separately in those spheres. Concepts of jobs therefore separate work and home, and other real-life processes that are linked to real people. Women's bodies cannot fit into ideal jobs:

The maintenance of gendered hierarchy is achieved partly through such often-tacit controls based on arguments about women's reproduction, emotionality, and sexuality, helping to legitimate the organizational structures created through abstract, intellectualized techniques (Acker, 1990: 152).

Acker's exploration of how jobs, presented as neutral, disembodied structures, is useful for thinking about academic jobs and how these might be gendered in practice and in symbolic terms within universities. The supposed gender-neutral job is also a control technology over work processes and the organisation and hierarchy of work:

To say that an organisation, or any other analytic unit, is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine. Gender is not an addition to ongoing processes, conceived as gender neutral. Rather, it is an integral part of those processes, which cannot be properly understood without an analysis of gender (Acker, 1990: 146).

Having families has been shown to affect men's careers positively, as high numbers of men in tenured positions have families, compared to low numbers of women (Mason, 2013). In this frame, an 'academic' job is not and cannot be gender neutral. Ideas about careers and jobs conform to gender stereotypical views and are gendered in how they are structured. Indeed, the ideal worker who is assumed to inhabit a particular job or role is also often a heavily gendered concept. Acker illustrates this by unpacking how the gendered nature of particular jobs is important for understanding what

elements of gender (and other forms of) discrimination might affect individuals who are trying to develop in a particular career:

> The gender-neutral status of 'a job' and of the organisational theories of which it is a part depend upon the assumption that the worker is abstract, disembodied, although in actuality both the concept of 'a job' and real workers are deeply gendered and 'bodied' (Acker, 1990: 150).

Domesticity and women's knowledge

In an academic context, ideas about 'domesticity' influencing ideal worker norms must be considered. This is particularly the case when ideologies about women's knowledge are considered. Hierarchies in the workplace are and have always been gendered:

> An equal role for women in the organization of society has never been the norm. On the contrary, distinct and unequal roles are sanctioned by long custom and convention, which hold that the proper sphere for women is the private and domestic one (Aisenberg and Harrington, 1988: 3).

As Clegg has noted, "The intellectual life is still understood, largely, in masculine terms" (Clegg, 2008b: 213). This has implications for women as knowledge workers. These ideas linked to the ideology of the ideal (male) disembodied worker (Acker, 1990) have also influenced ideas about African women and knowledge:

> African women's knowledge production is not much discussed or well known in the dominant and contemporary traditions of African knowledge. Whenever we say 'women', the first thought that comes to most minds is children or cooking or satisfying men's sexual desires and other needs... Women's knowledge production is an area waiting to be further 'archaeologised...' (Ogundipe, 2002).

These ideologies of gender that permeate all areas of life including organisational life are often rooted in cultural traditions and ideas that have remain unchanged for long periods of time. As Mama notes, much of the research on gender in organisational life has shown how:

ostensibly neutral formal procedures for selection, recruitment, and promotion often have gendered outcomes that are seldom acknowledged, because of the hegemonic assumption that institutions are essentially rational and egalitarian in their functioning (Mama, 2003: 116).

However, these gendered ideas are continuously being disrupted as new ideas emerge and are asserted by both men and women. So, they are not presented here as if they are firmly established and uncontested and unchanging. The point of clarifying the origins of these ideas is that it provides a set of explanations for why gender is so embedded in cultural and behavioural norms. As Gherardi has explained "culture, gender and power are…intimately bound up with each other in organizations as well as in society" (Gherardi, 1995: 17), and the reasons that these are often difficult to conceptualize are because of:

> (a) the pervasiveness with which gender and culture permeate language, thought, social structures and organizational facts; (b) the elusiveness of their definition in relation/contrast to a difficult concept of 'nature'; (c) the ambiguity of a symbolic universe which resists being ordered according to a single criterion (Gherardi, 1995: 17).

Gendered interactions and institutional cultures

Acker's third set of processes that produce gender in organisations are interactions between people (men and women, men and men, women and women) "including all those patterns that enact dominance and submission" (Acker, 1990: 147). Though gender has been described as a social force field, and gendered ideologies have been shown to permeate organisations and ideas about academic work, there are 'gender negotiations': "People are involved in everyday negotiations both with and within their gender traditions" (Williams, 2000: 258).

This recognises that although gender norms are 'sticky' (Petesch, 2012), interactions between people also take place within institutions and can explain how gender is reproduced. Petesch advocates for an interactional approach to examining gender, because:

> …biasing against women is far more difficult to dislodge than race, class, or religious divides because social pairings between the sexes occur with much higher frequency and intimacy than between the other social group categories: 'gender goes home with you' in addition to permeating social relations in public spheres (Petesch (based on Ridgeway and Correll, 2004), 2012: 235).

In Philomena Essed's theory of everyday racism (relevant to everyday sexism), developed from detailed narrative research with black women in two countries, she proposes that distinguishing between individual and institutional racism [sexism] does not adequately explain how inequality is reproduced. Rather the concept of 'everyday' bridges the structural and interactional:

> The concept of 'everyday' was introduced to cross the boundaries between structural and interactional approaches to racism and to link details of micro experiences to the structural and ideological context in which they are shaped. The analysis of these experiences has shown that everyday racism does not exist as single events but as a complex of cumulative practices. Specific instances acquire meaning only in relation to the sum total of other experiences of everyday racism (Essed, 1991: 288).

While some stories may be unique, collectively they produce themes, which can be related as institutional and/or social patterns or norms, which are often experienced and interpreted as part of an institutional culture. Thus, Morley examined the micropolitics of power in institutions because "gender inequality in organisations is both overt and ambiguous, resulting in complex and contradictory experiences for many women" (Morley, 1999: 73). Exploring micropolitics is important because it can expose:

> the subterranean conflicts and minutiae of social relations. It describes how power is relayed through seemingly trivial incidents and transactions…It is about relationships rather than structures, knowledge rather than information, skills rather than positions, talk rather than paper (Morley, 1999: 73).

These ideas of how interactional and relational politics operate between individuals and within institutions are important for understanding the gendered social relations that impact on life in organisations. They also affirm the importance of understanding people's everyday working lives in making sense of how gender operates within institutions and what effects this has.

I have framed the next section around the concept of institutional culture because the concept is central to debates about the transformation of universities in South Africa, especially when the focus is on how to overcome the multiple inequities of discrimination. This includes gender. It is acknowledged that institutional culture is a difficult and contested concept (Higgins, 2013; Vincent, 2015) and there is growing scholarship about the institutional cultures of universities (Higgins, 2013;

Tabensky and Mathews, 2015; Booi et al., 2017). As Booi et al. have found, the norms, values and practices of universities (in relation to historically white universities in South Africa) as expressed through gender, race and class, are persistent and continue to be reproduced. Their research has shown that even individuals who are actively trying to shift normalised practices find it difficult to shift institutional cultures (Booi et al., 2017). Vincent describes institutional culture as "the lived experience of the university" (Vincent, 2015: 21). If gendered problems are not seen as institutionally constituted then it is assumed that dealing with individuals will solve discrimination.

Louise Vincent argues that one way of addressing the challenges of understanding and responding to institutional culture is to make "the normal strange" (Vincent, 2015):

> Making the normal strange means being able to see that practices that have become so familiar that they are naturalised and do not seem to require an explanation are in fact social productions serving particular interests and perpetuating particular value systems while excluding others. Making the normal strange is a deliberate attempt to see old and familiar things with new eyes (Vincent, 2015: 28).

She argues that the concept must be thought of in both material and discursive terms:

> Institutional culture...has seemed intangible because it operates at this nexus of intra-action (in) between discourse, subjectivity and materiality and has seemed complicated precisely because agency in this nexus is very complex (Vincent, 2015: 23).

Sexual harassment as a gendered phenomenon provides one way of looking at these issues. Tolerance for gender discrimination and sexual harassment can be shown in the way institutions manage sexual harassment. Experiences of sexual harassment are well documented in universities (Bennett et al., 2000; Gouws and Kritzinger, 2007) and have a material reality. However, if "behaviours such as sexual harassment are viewed as deviations of gendered actors, not as... components of organisational structure" (Acker, 1990: 142), then the discursive aspects of sexual harassment may not be addressed.

Acker also argues that "as a relational phenomenon, gender is difficult to see when only the masculine is present" (Acker, 1990: 142). Sara Ahmed has said the same about whiteness (Ahmed, 2012). Ahmed's work on diversity has also shown the logic of diversity which recognises people within institutions as individuals fails to recognise that racism can be institutional and that "all forms of power, inequality

and domination are systematic rather than individual" (Ahmed, 2012: 44). Paradoxically though, recognising institutional racism can allow individual actors to absolve themselves for responsibility for racism as individuals becoming "a technology of reproduction of the racism of individuals" (Ahmed, 2012: 46). This dilemma has significance for South African universities, where the intersection of race and gender is important and where attention needs to be paid to both individual instances of racism and the ways in which racism is institutionally sustained (Khunuo et al., 2019).

Another aspect of institutional culture that has relevance to gender, both in terms of how ideologies operate and in terms of interactions between people within organisations, relates to the idea of epistemic justice:

> If certain groups are persistently and structurally excluded, this represents a form of distributive and epistemic injustice. A question remains as to how to produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently (Morley, 2016: 39).

Miranda Fricker argues that there are two forms of epistemic injustice which are wrongs done to someone "specifically in their capacity as knower" (Fricker, 2007: 1). She describes two distinct types of epistemic injustice: testimonial and hermeneutical injustice. Testimonial injustice "…occurs when prejudice cause a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word" (Fricker, 2007: 1).

In a university there are multiple contexts within which this can take place and many opportunities for testimonial injustice to occur: in the classroom, in seminars, in interactions between colleagues, in curriculum development processes and many others. There could be individual instances, but also instances where groups of people are affected by testimonial injustice. Fricker says that testimonial injustice is caused by "prejudice in the economy of credibility" (Fricker, 2007: 1). Examples of these are explored in the later chapters. The second type of epistemic injustice is hermeneutical injustice, which:

> …occurs at a prior stage, when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences. An example…might be that you suffer sexual harassment in a culture that still lacks that critical concept (Fricker, 2007: 1).

In Fricker's analysis hermeneutical injustice is caused by "structural prejudice in the economy of collective hermeneutical resources" (Fricker, 2007: 1). The injustice in this form happens because it is not properly understood or unearthed as being part of ordinary behaviours and cultures, so sexual harassment in its many forms may not be recognised unless certain behaviours are explicitly known and described as being part of sexual harassment. Equally, practices that privilege whiteness may not be addressed because they may not be fully understood. However, though a phenomenon may not be known and understood, as "...both speaker and hearer are labouring with the same inadequate tools" (Fricker, 2007: 7), this does not mean that it does not cause harm:

> The nature of the primary harm caused by hermeneutical injustice is analysed as a matter of someone suffering from a situated hermeneutical inequality: their social situation is such that a collective hermeneutical gap prevents them in particular from making sense of an experience which it is strongly in their interests to render intelligible (Fricker, 2007: 7).

As Fricker notes, the root causes of epistemic injustice lie in unequal power structures and the prejudices that arise from these. Getting rid of these forms of injustice requires "collective social political change" (Fricker, 2007: 8). Examining aspects of institutional culture, such as epistemic injustices, offers ways of interpreting the data on the gendered experiences of the participants in this study. This part of Acker's framework acknowledges the importance of understanding the forms of entrenched institutional cultures, and how these can impact upon real experiences of academics. They can also add up to intangible and invisible forms of injustice, which may not be adequately recognised or understood.

Gender and Academic Identities

Acker's fourth set of processes relate to how all these gendered structures, interactions, ideologies and processes "help to produce gendered components of individual identity" (Acker, 1990: 147). Academic identity was also discussed in chapter two. Yuval –Davis describes identity as being transitional:

> always producing itself through the combined processes of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong. This duality is often reflected in narratives of identity (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 202).

This is important for understanding how different individuals may experience and express their identities. Academic identity is complex, contested and changing, as the contexts in which academic

work takes place are rapidly shifting, and ideas about what it means to be an academic are also fluctuating (Archer, 2008a&b; Clegg, 2008a). Professional identities are also inseparable from personal and political identities. Vice argues that for many academics the personal is professional:

> Professionally we are enabled and productive and, if we also take our work seriously as an expression of our identity and our deep value commitments, then both professionally and personally we flourish. An institution such as a university, in which academics, at least, often feel that work is also personally enriching and fundamental to their identity, is therefore ideally a place in which professional activity and personal growth meet. Being in one's element means one can both DO what one has to do and BE who one authentically is. For many academics, therefore, the personal is professional (Vice, 2015: 53).

Academic identities, when related to gendered ideologies and masculinist institutions are contested and often experienced as complex for both new academics and those on the margins. This discussion has provided an entry point for discussing how gender might impact on academic identities, which forms a key part of the data analysis for this study.

'Imposter syndrome' (Clance and Imes, 1978; Ramsey and Brown, 2018; Pedler, 2011) is a common phenomenon for many groups who have been traditionally excluded from academia, including women, black people and working-class people. Clance and Imes who originally wrote about the concept, were psychologists seeking to explain and address "an internal experience of intellectual phoniness which appears to be particularly prevalent and intense among a select sample of high achieving women" (Clance and Imes, 1978: 241). Imposter syndrome arises from a complex set of ideas about the self, rooted in socialisation, in this case, social ideas about women as not being competent in the professional world.

Given the complexities of identity and intersectionality, South African literature often focuses on race, given the dominant history of racial discrimination and exclusion in South Africa. However, there is a substantial literature in the UK on social class and higher education. Diane Reay, writing about experiences of working-class women academics in the UK suggests that working class women are unlikely to ever feel at home in academia, that "there is a sense of impossibility; the psychic refusal of becoming middle-class" (Reay, 1997: 26). Hey supports this, indicating that becoming educated breaks certain connections, that crossing class boundaries as one does by becoming academic, "involves a form of chosen self-alienation" (Hey, 2003: 327). The identification with a working-class background:

is set against an overwhelming recognition that a line of connection has irrevocably been broken by 'becoming educated'. The gain of the one means the loss of the other. There is no going back (Hey, 2003: 326).

According to Walkerdine:

> ...different classed locations demand different and often opposing things from subjects is perhaps easy to understand, but it is often rather overlooked when it comes to the transition to higher education. This is not a matter of aspiration at all, but a recognition that subjectivity is produced in complex ways within social locations and that movement across these locations in terms of status can be unsettling at best and terrifying at worst (Walkerdine, 2011: 258).

This is powerfully detailed in Motlalepule Nathane's (2019) narrative about her primarily "internal" struggle becoming an academic in a South African university, always feeling as though she was "sitting on one bum" (Nathane, 2019: 179) in academia, an expression that describes a profound feeling of exclusion (taken from a Sesotho expression).

The examples above also show that gender can intersect with class, though it is not highly visible in my study, where the participants, already privileged by their educational and employment status, did not reveal much about their social class backgrounds, and were not specifically requested to do so. The next section turns to the ways in which gendered sub-cultures are created and how the agency of individuals within organisations can challenge and sometimes disrupt these sub-structures.

Gendered sub-structures and organisational logic: working in academic contexts

Acker's fifth set of processes refer to how gender "is implicated in the fundamental, ongoing processes of creating and conceptualizing social structures" (Acker, 1990: 147). While it is accepted that gender structures families and private social life, it is less obvious how gender is implicated in organisations of work. However, this is critical to understanding why gender continues to be a workplace issue in academia:

> The abstract 'job' devoid of a human body, is a basic unit in such systems of control. The positing of a job as an abstract category, separate from the worker, is an essential move in creating jobs as mechanisms of compulsion and control over work processes. Rational-

technical, ostensibly gender-neutral, control systems are built upon and conceal a gendered substructure (Smith 1988) in which men's bodies fill the abstract jobs (Acker, 1990: 154).

Margaret Thornton (2013) argues that the neoliberal turn (features of which are academic capitalism and university corporatisation) in higher education has contributed to a "re-masculinisation of the academy" so that "the modernist hierarchical and gendered values associated with the academy are not easily sloughed off but remain powerful cultural sub-texts" (Thornton, 2013: 128).

In this context, it is assumed that transparency leads to equity. Some opportunities have opened, but also more anxiety and more performativity. In the context of changing academic work and economies of academia, the 'prestige economy' is a generative concept for thinking about how gendered institutions are sustained through gendered cultures and academic structures, and how prestige in academia may limit the choices and aspirations of women academics. According to Coate and Howson, the 'prestige economy' is "an anthropological term describing organised patterns of exchange that stand outside a conventional financial economy, but are related to it" (Coate and Howson, 2016: 572).

Prestige is a social concept, which can be reinforced by structural or institutional factors. They identify four areas from a study of mid-career academics in an Irish university, where the effect of "exchange rates" within a prestige economy "are exacerbated through institutional policies": homosociability (informal masculine networks within the academy which can disadvantage women), the non-transparency of promotion criteria, academic workload balance (the effect of different choices and expectations of work and how these relate to what is valued and rewarded) and self-promotion (the tendency for women to engage in less self-promoting behaviour than men such as putting themselves forward for promotion, self-citation etc.) (Coate and Howson, 2016: 574). From the above it is possible to conclude that the nature of academic work and the ways in which it is recognised within the multiple economies of higher education produces gendered effects.

This section has shown the complex and multi-layered ways in which gender exists and operates within academic institutions, using the frame of Acker's theory of gendered organisations. Women's careers in academia are very different from men's as a result of both social and institutional factors. Gendered ideologies and discourses are pervasive and deeply linked to ideas about domesticity and the role of women in intellectual life. Acker's framework explains how organisations and jobs cannot be gender neutral as they are built around ideas of the 'ideal worker'. Gender is deeply imbued in

aspects of institutional cultures, though the everyday is often difficult to see. Epistemic injustice exists in different forms in universities and solutions are often focused on the individual rather than the need to shift cultures and environments. Gendered institutions, in interplay with social and personal ideologies and belief systems, have a significant effect on the identity of academics. In addition, how institutions recognise work has gendered effects. Together these layered aspects of the theory of gendered organisations provide a rich framework for examining gendered universities.

Intersectionality

Research on gender inequity and gendered institutions has shown that gender intersects with many other categories of social analysis (Mabokela and Mawila, 2004). Some South African research on gender and higher education has highlighted that gender is not often identified as the primary concern of academics or acknowledged to be as significant as race (De la Rey, 1999: Mabokela, 2011; Ismail, 2011; Shackleton, 2007). Intersectionality then helpfully provides a conceptual lens, grounded in feminism and critical race studies (McCall, 2005), which can help to explain the complexity of gender and other forms of inequality, using "thick description" (Geertz, in McCall, 2005). It allows for exploring the ways in which gender may operate differently from other categories such as race (Christensen and Jensen, 2012) as well as showing how they might be "mutually constitutive" (Yuval-Davis, 2011):

> ...gender oppression does not typically occur in isolation from other forms of oppression; the social relations that constitute gender will be part of a system of social relations, and such systems also serve to ground other distinctions such as race and class (Haslanger, 2012: 42).

Understanding that gender needs to be conceptualised in conjunction with other forms of social oppression is particularly important in a society with such a complex history of institutionalised racism and a social class structure that continues to be linked to race. Intersectionality is important for gender studies both methodologically and analytically, so that in approaching discussions about gender there is space for other social experiences to be voiced. This is also recognised in the analysis that race and class and other factors may have as powerful an effect on participants' careers as gender does. Race is often given prominence in discussions of change in institutional culture in South African higher education. This makes sense given the country's extraordinary history of institutionalised racism and oppression, which infused every aspect of people's lives. Given this history, race is often used as a proxy for class, as socio-economic class and access to and success in higher education is still linked to racial inequality, even though race and class no longer correlate perfectly.

Steven Friedman (2017) explains why race is seen as more important than social class (and gender) in South Africa and why there has never been a sustained solidarity between those fighting income inequality and those opposing racial injustice. He traces a history in which white workers used their race privilege against any solidarity on economic injustice with black workers, and equally how the various organisations of the liberation movement "gave up early on the idea that race could take a back seat to the fight for economic change" (Friedman, 2017). Those on the left of the liberation movements (including the Communist Party):

> Instead of denouncing it for fixating on race rather than economic divisions, they argued that apartheid was a form of 'racial capitalism' in which racial and economic exploitation was so intertwined that one could not survive without the other. While this meant that they could fight against racism while claiming they were fighting for socialism, it made race the central issue (Friedman, 2017).

In arguing this, Steven Friedman is offering an explanation for why on the one hand "there has never been a strong lobby, or an influential body of opinion, stressing the interests of the poor" and on the other that race is still seen as more important to the transformation of universities in South Africa, including being a dominant focus of the recent #feesmustfall[14] protests. He points out:

> The reason why race has always mattered more than economic inequality is that it is more important: black scholars and activists who emphasise race do so because this squares with their experience not only under apartheid, but now (Friedman, 2017).

In that context, economic slogans are often used to represent race as #feesmustfall has come to represent the failure of universities in South Africa to properly accommodate black students (Friedman, 2017) (and, I would add, black staff).

Ismail's (2011) work on researching transformation at a South African university has explored the challenges of identifying research participants based on their overt racial and gender identities. The discomfort of many of the research participants at being identified based on the 'designated categories' (i.e. the racial categories used under apartheid which remain in use for purposes of measurement of progress in equity in formal employment, education, health etc.) raised a number of ethical, methodological and analytical issues for the researcher. She questions the use of "museums of

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[14] A student movement that started in South Africa in 2015 with nationwide protests calling for free higher education.

past categories" (Ismail, 2011: 284) in attempting to present experiences of transformation in universities. However she also concludes that race may need to continue as a category of analysis and redress, while paying greater attention to other issues such as class and family income, so that ultimately - as Neville Alexander hoped - we could "move away from a society in which race determines the worth and character of people" (Alexander, 2009, quoted in Ismail, 2011: 287).

Ultimately the challenge for researchers is how to integrate analysis of different forms of social division:

> the intersecting social divisions cannot be analysed as items that are added up but, rather as constituting each other. Although discourses of race, gender, class etc. have their own ontological bases that cannot be reduced to each other, there is no separate concrete meaning of any social division. To be a woman is different if you are middle-class or working-class, a member of the hegemonic majority or a racialized minority, living in the city or in the country, young or old, straight or gay (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 200).

Morley (2011) argues that a focus on the measurement of gender equity hides intersectionality, which is essential for understanding the different experiences of women. The importance of intersectionality is now widely recognised in gender and feminist literatures, combined with acknowledgements that qualitative studies are context specific and studies of women in particular institutional or departmental contexts produce different experiences and actions (Brooks, 1997; Walker, 1997a; De la Rey, 1999):

> Viewing gender as a stand-alone factor necessarily distorts reality. Gender never really operates independently from other aspects of political life, and so it is misleading to think of gender as an autonomous category of analysis. Instead, gender differences must always be understood within a particular context and in connection with other aspects of identity, both individual and collective (editors of Politics and Gender quoted in Wagner et al., 2008: 12).

It is this complexity that has been the subject of more recent studies on women in higher education which highlight the need to focus on structural and institutional factors that impact on gendered cultures in higher education. They also examine how these influence the trends discussed above, as well as how many women may experience and act in higher education very differently, depending on

their own identities and positions, and the complexity of their particular social conditions. As Cheryl De la Rey notes in her study of senior academic women in South African universities:

> The subjective experiences reveal that gender is not a single barrier or set of barriers, but that experiences of being gendered as woman are refracted through several other axes of difference that are always in process within and against particular historical and social conditions. The implications of recognising gender in this way are complex (De la Rey, 1999: 217).

It is important to recognise intersectionality, as there can be no universal experience of gender. In both understanding the complexity of gender within universities and developing strategies for change, "we cannot and should not pretend that we constitute homogeneous groupings, or some mythical sisterhood" (Walker, 1997a: 379).

The structure of the South African academy already shows that gender inequality must be viewed in relation to intersecting forms of injustice that relate to race and class. This section highlights ways of thinking about institutional processes that impact on the experiences and professional development of individual academics. Intersectional thinking is increasingly viewed as inseparable from gender analysis. Theories of intersectionality have worked together with feminist theorising to recognise that gender analysis must consider other related forms of inequality and oppression and how these impact on individual identities. This is particularly important in South Africa where race, class and gender are so closely implicated in forms of inequality (Segalo, 2015).

The Capability Approach

This section explains the capability approach, a multi-dimensional framework that offers a set of conceptual and analytical tools to link social and institutional factors to individual agency in understanding how academics understand and respond to gendered institutions. The capability approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011; Alkire, 2005; Robeyns, 2005; 2017) is used in this study in support of gender analysis but it adds value by providing a strong normative social justice framework which takes gender analysis in a gender-justice direction. The capability approach is used to understand the engagement of early career academics with their institutional environment and the ways in which gendered work environments may constrain or enable their professional well-being and other freedoms. It is also used to understand the decision-making and agency of this group in relation to their aspirations within the context of a university career. It allows for attention to be given to the micro-processes of decision-making of individual women in this context.

The capability approach is an evaluative framework for understanding people's well-being and functioning in various aspects of human life. It focuses on what it is that people (each person) are able to do and to be, and the freedom they have to achieve their professional and personal aspirations. It has developed from the work of Amartya Sen (1984; 1999) as a normative framework that understands human capabilities (what lives people are able to live) as the goal of 'good' development, as opposed to approaches that aggregate economic achievements of a group or country, and therefore may ignore social injustices and inequalities. While Sen does not advocate for a single fixed set of capabilities, Martha Nussbaum (2000; 2011) has developed a list of 'central human capabilities'[15] as a partial theory of justice (Robeyns, 2017), one which every nation should aspire to for every citizen.

While Sen and Nussbaum differ about the extent of the universal application of central capabilities, scholars working within the capability approach use it in a range of ways, and it is flexible enough to allow for different uses. Sen's approach is deliberately under-specified:

> The capability approach, strictly speaking, only advocates that the evaluative space should be that of capabilities. However, it does not stipulate which capabilities should be taken into account, or how different capabilities should be aggregated in an overall assessment. Applying the capability approach implies that we choose the relevant capabilities and indicate how important each will be in an overall judgment (Robeyns, 2003: 64).

As the earlier analysis of higher education policy (chapter one) and its consideration of gender equity issues for academic staff shows, social justice considerations exist in South African education policy alongside more instrumentalist views of higher education. However, as the literatures review indicates, academic working environments have become increasingly performative and neoliberal, with a focus on the bottom-line over more expansive ideas about the purpose of higher education and its possibility to expand human freedoms through knowledge and empowerment. This dominance of the economic over the social, in combination with the institutionalisation of transformation described earlier (which reduces social justice to quantifiable targets), has a profound effect on the role of universities, what it is that academic staff are expected to do, and what academic careers and working lives are like. This informs a discussion about what professional capabilities early career academics in South Africa need. How does policy, as refracted through institutional structures and cultures and interpreted by organisations and individuals, impact on the identity formation of academics?

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[15] The central capabilities are: 1. Life; 2. Bodily health; 3. Bodily integrity; 4. Senses, imagination and thought; 5. Emotions; 6. Practical Reason; 7. Affiliation; 8. Other species; 9. Play; and 10. Control over one's environment (Nussbaum, 2011: 34).

Universities are important to the development of societies, not just for their instrumental value in producing graduates with skills for a particular economy, but also for their role in creating knowledge for societies and fostering socially responsible graduates (Department of Education, 1997; National Planning Commission, 2012; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). In this context the role that academic staff play is important, as they both teach and produce research and they are critical to achieving the goals of higher education. Understanding the capabilities of academics is therefore important to social development considerations, to considerations of the purposes of higher education, as well as to their own wellbeing as academic professionals. Academic staff should be able to function effectively and flourish within their institutions and their professional capabilities are important to those who want to support decent universities and encourage young black South Africans and women to join the academy.

The importance of the capability approach in addressing these issues lies in the fact that it provides an alternative to the narrower human capital approach in understanding the role of education (Walker, 2012; Robeyns, 2006). The approach challenges the orthodoxies that reduce education to a commodity and describe education outcomes in instrumental terms (thereby reducing academics to agents of neoliberal academia – producers of knowledge and instruments in a chain of production of graduates). It is important to examine not only what it is that academics do and can achieve, but what they aspire to and what kind of professional lives they wish to achieve. They are more than units of human capital advancing economic growth through higher education. This raises questions about what forms a professional academic identity and what factors contribute to the development of that identity – taking gender and early career into account:

> …human beings are complex and plural in their valuable beings and doings; a one-dimensional human capital framing of what it means to be human does not capture this in education policy, nor adequately explain unequal political and social relations, nor support human rights…The capability approach is advanced as superior to a human capital model in its potential to address both economic demands and human flourishing, while always privileging dignified human beings as ends in themselves (Walker, 2012: 392).

The capability approach offers a broad framework and set of conceptual tools to address this. It is a 'flexible and multi-purpose framework' about "…wellbeing, freedom to achieve wellbeing, and all the public values in which either of these can play a role, such as development and social justice" (Robeyns, 2017: 24).

Robeyns admits that, although there are areas of disagreement amongst scholars about how best to describe the capability approach:

> ...it is generally understood as a conceptual framework for a range of evaluative exercises, including most prominently the following: (1) the assessment of individual levels of achieved wellbeing and wellbeing freedom; (2) the evaluation and assessment of social arrangements or institutions; and (3) the design of policies and other forms of social change in society (Robeyns, 2017: 24).

The research questions addressed in this study require engaging conceptually at all these three levels- individual, social arrangements and policy and change. First it is necessary to understand something of the experiences and achievements of the participants in relation to their career development, focussing on what they are able to achieve in relation to what they value. At the second level, the study attempts to understand the institutional arrangements that may impact on the gendered experiences of academic staff and might have an effect on how and whether changes can take place. The study also sets out to look at policy and how it can change to facilitate gender equity improvements and professional capabilities of early career academics in universities. The capability approach is thus appropriate as an analytical framework for this study.

Quality of working lives is a key focus of the study, as it is assumed that well-being at and through work is highly valued and that improving well-being (particularly amongst women and early career academics) will help retain staff, help with promotion in the academy, and also attract new recruits. In the capability approach human beings are the end of development and not just the means. This is important for understanding the purposes of education, but also to affirm the importance of understanding the empirical experiences of individuals and groups who may be targeted by particular policies or interventions.

The following section outlines the core concepts of the capability approach that are relevant for this study and explores how they are applied in the research.

Capabilities

People in a more just society (the aim is not perfect justice) (Sen, 2009), should have the freedom to enjoy the beings and doings (functionings) they value. This includes access to resources, conversion and structural factors which allow converting resources into capabilities, and the ability to make genuine and informed choices. This has reference to both basic capabilities (shelter, food, and so on)

which refer to a basic threshold for all, and other kinds of capabilities that people may value (such as higher education or professional careers). Though the focus of capability work is rightly most often focused on those who are poor, marginalised and disadvantaged, the evaluative space of capabilities allows a focus on all forms of inequality. So even with groups (such as the academics under focus here) for whom it is assumed basic capabilities have been achieved, forms of inequality persist, and the capability approach provides a framework and set of tools for describing and analysing those forms of inequality:

> Capability refers to a person or group's *freedom* to promote or achieve valuable functionings. 'It represents the various combinations of functionings (beings and doings) that the person can achieve. Capability is, thus, a set of vectors of functionings, reflecting the person's freedom to lead one type of life or another...'to choose from possible livings' (Sen, 1992, in Alkire, 2005: 121).

So, this study asks what capabilities are necessary for the professional success and development of women academics. In Nussbaum's definition, following Sen, capabilities are the answers to the questions about what people are actually able to be or to do, in the sense of 'substantial freedom':

> a person's 'capability' refers to the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for her to achieve. Capability is thus a kind of freedom: the substantive freedom to achieve alternative functioning combinations (Sen, in Nussbaum, 2011: 20).

Nussbaum's term 'combined capabilities' are all the opportunities together: the personal ('internal') capabilities as well as social and economic opportunities (external conditions) available to a person. Importantly, however, she indicates that these are not 'innate' - in the sense that internal capabilities are formed, enabled and constrained in social context:

> The distinction between internal and combined capabilities is not sharp, since one typically acquires an internal capability by some kind of functioning, and one may lose it in the absence of the opportunity to function (Nussbaum, 2011: 23).

It is important to note that freedoms are "real opportunities" and not just those that are theoretical or legal (Sen, 1992 in Alkire, 2005: 121). They are: "a person's substantive opportunities for valuable doings and beings" (Robeyns, 2010: 215).

Functionings

The capability approach requires looking at both what capabilities people may identify as important for living a dignified life and the functionings that they are able to achieve (that is what they are able to do and to be that they consider of value) (Alkire, 2005; Hart, 2009). Functionings are therefore diverse as they may represent very different valued experiences, depending on individuals, on what is being evaluated, and on their context. They are "multiple and diverse aspects of life that people value" (Alkire, 2005: 118).

In evaluating what it is that organisations can do to attract and retain members of a particular group (in this case early career academics who are women), understanding what valued functionings have been achieved (or are aspired to) and what factors have enabled and constrained the achievement of those functionings, is a key area of analysis and evaluation:

> The identification of what people value, the selection of which priority functionings a particular poverty reduction initiative should aim to expand, and the actual expansions that are to be evaluated (which may be wider than the priority functionings) are each separate questions. Sen does not identify one set of basic functionings (or basic capabilities) precisely because no one set will do for every evaluation (Alkire, 2005: 119).

According to Alkire, it is necessary to look at both capabilities and functionings to provide sufficient basis for social evaluation (Alkire, 2005: 120). One can analyse capabilities or functionings or both (Crocker and Robeyns, 2010). But as Ingrid Robeyns has argued:

> By conceptualizing gender inequality in the space of functionings and capabilities, there is more scope to account for human diversity, including the diversity stemming from people's gender (Robeyns, 2003: 67).

This means that examining the freedoms that individuals have to achieve well-being (capabilities) and the actual achievements of those freedoms (functionings) has value. The conceptual distinction between functionings and capabilities is important here: this is the difference between what people actually achieve and do and what their freedoms are to make decisions and negotiate valued functionings. This conceptual distinction is:

...the difference between what people actually do and the possibilities available to them for actualizing a different scenario. This conceptual distinction opens theoretical space for scrutinizing the influence of various external (e.g. organisational or structural) conditions on the actors' capacity to exercise agency (Nielsen, 2017: 137).

This study takes functionings as one of the starting points of analysis, to examine the valued professional functionings of the participants. This leads to possibilities for thinking about how capabilities, functioning and agency work together in a gendered academic context and to assess what early career academic women might need in order to achieve substantial professional wellbeing and wide choices.

Agency, well-being and freedoms

Capabilities are 'opportunity freedoms' (Sen, 1999). In evaluating and exploring capabilities, it is necessary to examine both the real opportunities that people have to achieve the outcomes they desire and not just to look at equity outcomes:

Sen argues that in evaluating an individual's well-being it is important to look at the capabilities or real opportunities an individual has to lead a valued life (Sen, 1985). Capabilities represent the freedoms an individual has to achieve beings and doings they have reason to value although only some of them will become realised as functionings (Hart, 2009: 392).

Sen emphasised the importance of agency freedom but always understood in relation to social arrangements:

...the freedom of agency that we have is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political, and economic opportunities that are available to us. There is a deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements. It is important to give simultaneous recognition to the centrality of individual freedom and to the force of social influences on the extent and reach of individual freedom (Sen, 1999: xii).

Freedoms or intentional choices are a key feature of capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011; Robeyns, 2017). People have agency and the ability to make their own choices. Those choices are often constrained, and it is important to understand why. Equally, if individuals have choices, then they should be able to choose the functionings that are of most value to them, in their personal and professional lives. Functionings are affected by individual preferences and by conversion factors, as explained by

Nussbaum's concept of 'combined capabilities' (internal plus social uptake conditions). This raises questions about what the conditions of possibility are for individuals to choose as they do. This is important in a study of this nature, as academic careers and working lives are diverse and multi-dimensional. This means that academics are constantly making decisions about what aspects of work to prioritise, how to balance the different elements of their work, what the trade-offs are, and these decisions relate to what might be institutional constraints or enablements, but also to choices that have career implications and consequences.

Alkire argues that one can examine individual advantage from four points of analysis: well-being achievement, well-being freedom, agency achievement, and agency freedom, arguing that quality of life is influenced by a wide range of factors. It also means that even in a situation where all the individuals in the study are middle class and have basic freedoms available to them, it is possible to evaluate well-being as a relational concept:

> So the capability approach, fully developed, could appreciate *all* changes in a person's quality of life: from knowledge to relationships to employment opportunities and inner peace, to self-confidence and the various valued activities made possible by the literacy classes. None of these changes are ruled out as irrelevant at all times and places. One can thus analyse the capabilities of a rich as well as a poor person or country, and analyse basic as well as complex capabilities (Alkire, 2005: 119).

The capability approach sees people as agents who have goals they value and who make choices, which are constrained or enabled by environment and social structure. Freedom is an essential aspect of capabilities as freedom of choice has an intrinsic value and not just a material one: that is, you can be materially poor or deprived, but freedom of choice is separately important: "The intrinsic value of freedom does, Sen argues, pertain across classes and cultures" (Alkire, 2005: 121). This means focusing not just on people's conditions, but on the choices that they make within the circumstances in which they live and work:

> A focus on functionings alone does not necessarily incorporate the freedom to decide which path to take, or the freedom to bring about achievements one considers to be valuable, whether or not these achievements are connected to one's own well-being or not (Alkire, 2005: 120).

In the context of this study then it is not enough only to address structural inequalities. It must be recognised that people have choices (albeit not free-floating) and they may seek to 'opt out', to 'play the game' or make a range of other choices. The importance of a capabilities analysis, however, is that it must take wellbeing and context into account, alongside people's own choices. This relates to the 'ethical individualism' of the capability approach (Robeyns, 2003), the argument that each person is of equal moral worth.

The capability approach has been criticised for being individualistic and prioritising individual liberties over social solidarity (Dean, 2009). It is argued that social structure is not only relevant in the way in which it constrains and enables people to achieve well-being, but also in the way identities and meaning are formed by society and social solidarity (Dean, 2009). Dean argues that the capability approach in Nussbaum's articulation of affiliation in the central capabilities denies relational approaches of social solidarity and connectedness, where a person and the 'other' (person) are "constituted as the abstract bearers of capabilities" and "interact in a metaphorical 'space of capabilities'" (Dean, 2009: 268). In contrast, relational approaches such as feminist ethic of care and Ubuntu in African philosophy, recognise that human beings exist in and through social networks (Dean, 2009). In the context of the growing appropriation of feminist ideas within neoliberal thinking, which include a denial of the structural power relations that reinforce social inequalities (Rottenberg, 2014) and a growing focus on individualism in feminism, it is important to note these critiques of the capability approach. Dean also argues that the capability approach is liberal-individualistic and "too easily inflected toward an accommodation with the imperatives the market economy" where the individual "is constructed as an abstract bearer of freedoms, rights and/or the capabilities that should ideally flow from these" (Dean, 2009: 273).

Robeyns (2017) however, argues that critiques about the individualism of the capability approach confuse its ethical or normative individualism with methodological individualism. Recognising that understanding individual lives has a purpose in research, does not mean that it is necessary to exclude methodological approaches that recognise the importance of structural constraints and those that also focus on group capabilities (Robeyns, 2017). In this study, the ethical individualism of the approach allows me to focus on the narratives of individual participants, to identify issues of commonality and difference in their working lives. Using the capability approach as a broad framework and set of conceptual tools also allows me to draw on other theoretical frames that expand the analysis to include structure and culture of organisations, so that I have been able to look at ideas about gender and gendered practices as having influence on the organisation and thereby on the

individuals. Many empirical studies have been able to take equal account of individual freedom while making sense of structural and power relations and their effect on both individuals and groups (Robeyns, 2017).

Conversion Factors

Conversion factors are an important concept in the capability approach used to explain how people's social and family backgrounds, preferences, social and working contexts influence how they are able to transform their opportunities and resources into actual achieved functionings. In Merridy Wilson-Strydom's work, focusing on students' access and transitions to higher education in South Africa she describes conversion factors as "the conceptual device used within the capabilities approach for bringing structure and agency together" (Wilson-Strydom, 2015: 151). In other words:

> It is the relationship between the available resources and the ability of each student to convert these into valued capabilities and then make choices which will inform their actual functionings (outcomes) that ought to be evaluated. (Wilson-Strydom, 2015: 152).

There are three types of conversion factors:

> personal conversion factors (e.g. metabolism, physical condition, sex, reading skills, intelligence); social conversion factors (e.g. public policies, social or religious norms, discriminating practices, gender roles, societal hierarchies, power relations), and environmental conversion factors (e.g. climate) (Robeyns, 2005: 99).

In the context of this section, it is important to examine the factors which influence how and in what ways the group of academics in my study have entered academic careers and to distinguish between those that relate to their own personal biographies (talents, hard work and so on) and those that are socially or structurally conditioned (even while understanding the connections between the two). This can help to identify areas of inequality and evaluate what conditions might work best to allow for more people to access academic jobs. That is, how can the potential capabilities of those who may want to enter academia be enhanced and converted into real opportunities to achieve a valued outcome (fulfilling an academic job in this case). This study focuses on personal and social conversion and institutional conversion factors. It examines the ways in which educational and social backgrounds (which are recognised as being socially determined) and personal choice and agency (informed by background and personal characteristics and institutional factors) intersect and impact upon the ways in which this group enter academic working lives. This is a tool for examining how

careers are influenced by a range of structural and social factors, but which also acknowledges the agency of individuals in determining their career trajectories:

> Thus, the capabilities approach emphasises the role of individual agency and choice, but reminds us that the agency freedom individuals have is qualified and constrained by social, political and economic factors and opportunities (Wilson-Strydom, 2015: 152).

Conversion factors are critical to explaining the opportunities that this group of women academics have to achieve professional ambitions and well-being. They are the link between explaining an ideal academic career as conceptualised by the academics themselves, the real opportunities they choose to access, as well as the personal and social influences that constrain (and enable) them. The earlier section of this chapter has shown how profoundly complex gendered influences are - from early life experiences to social and cultural expectations of women, to institutions that are structurally and culturally gendered - constraints are evident at every level. Understanding the factors that support academics to achieve professional wellbeing and valued professional goals may assist institutions to shift or disrupt practices and cultures that constrain women and early career academics, instead of expecting academics themselves to navigate complex environments and develop multiple strategies (sometimes impossible) to cope. Wolf and De Shalit note:

> your resources are what you have to play with; the structure provides the rules of the game. Understood this way, aspects of the social structure are just as important in determining your genuine opportunities for secure functionings as your internal and external resources (Wolff and De Shalit, 2007, in Walker, 2013: 12).

This study explores what conversion factors support the professional development and well-being of women academics and considers the personal and social nature of these factors.

Adaptive Preferences

Adaptive preference explains how people's choices are formed by "the interaction of social, psychological and environmental constraints on individuals" (Hart, 2012: 23) so that even those who appear to have agency and freedom may have their preferences shaped by constraints, which can make them adapt "pure" preferences (Hart, 2012). Expressed satisfaction may not equal advantage, as people in disadvantaged situations may evaluate their circumstances in relation to the lowered

expectations they deem feasible in their circumstances. They can do this consciously or unconsciously (Hart, 2012):

> ...in choosing what they will do, how they will spend their time or resources or what kind of life they will lead people are affected by or take into account, for example, what they can afford, the likely responses of others to their choices and the values and practices which shape them and the communities in which they live. (Bridges, 2006, in Hart, 2012: 24).

Adapted preferences are well documented as a gendered issue (Khader, 2011). They have been theorised within the capability approach, in particular by Martha Nussbaum who has written that "...women frequently exhibit 'adaptive preferences', preferences that have adjusted to their second-class status" (Nussbaum, 2004: 39). In the case of early career academic women, in the first instance, women are still a minority in senior positions, yet often the majority in junior positions, so the lack of a critical mass of women who have successfully moved up the academic hierarchy and the evidence that women may hit a 'glass ceiling' may be a key influencer of the adaptive preferences of this group. In the case of a clear policy goal to increase the numbers of women, and black women in particular, at senior levels, adapting preferences may restrict ambitions of younger or early career academics or indeed result in the 'opting out' phenomena mentioned earlier. In institutions that are structurally and socially gendered, as the previous section has argued, individual and collective adaptation may have several causes. Adapting preferences in this context may be a real restriction on the development of a more inclusive and representative academy. Adapted preferences are influenced by what is within the social context of the group. In the case of academics, role models may also be important.

Robeyns cites two studies that provide examples of adaptive preferences. The first a British cohort study (Buchardt, 2009) which showed that aspirations are conditioned by socio-economic background and found that social inequality influences the choices of young people who were able to undertake further study but did not necessarily do so:

> Burchardt rightly concludes that if the influence on people's choices is so systematically related to previous experiences of disadvantage, that this is a case of injustice. Hence the need, for capability theorists and not just for those endorsing the happiness approach or the desire-fulfilment theory of wellbeing, to take processes of adapted preferences and adapted aspirations seriously (Robeyns, 2017: 141).

Another study showed that despite being objectively worse-off than men in relation to paid work, British women had higher job satisfaction than men. The study concluded that "women's higher job-related utilities were caused by their lower expectations" (Robeyns, 2003, 63). However, Robeyns also cautions that when identifying adaptive preferences it is possible to misunderstand and over-state them by:

> psychologizing structural constraints...misidentifying possible trade-offs between various dimensions of wellbeing that a person makes, or we may be unable to recognise forms of flourishing in very different culture or class settings (Robeyns, 2017: 140).

While it is important to acknowledge the conceptual difficulties in analysing adaptive preferences for this study, it is important to understand that it is a real gendered phenomenon and that recognising it may provide partial explanations of the decisions and aspiration of academic women:

> We can only have an adequate theory of gender justice, and of social justice more generally, if we are willing to make claims about fundamental entitlements that are to some extent independent of the preferences that people happen to have, preferences shaped, often, by unjust background conditions (Nussbaum, 2004; 39).

In the context of structural and institutional inequality that impacts on professional identity and development, adaptive preferences must be considered as part of the analysis of academic working lives. Analysing adaptive preferences may also may provide a space for thinking about whether there might be other ways of recognising academic success. It may be that a wider acknowledgement of the multidimensional nature of academic careers and the ways in which they are rewarded may reduce the tendency of women to lower their aspirations and/or accept discriminatory environments, rather than challenge them.

Aspirations

Aspirations have an important place in the capability approach as a focus on what it is that individuals and groups hope to be and to do and the alternatives they imagine. Aspirations are a key element in evaluating people's real freedoms or opportunities. The aspirations of the participants in this study form part of the analysis of their hopes for their future careers, and what they value about the work that they want to do as academics. As is shown in the discussion on gender and adaptive preferences, aspirations can be influenced by social and institutional gender norms and the gendered structures

that provide the institutional and professional space within which early career academic women form their career aspirations.

Nussbaum (2016) indicates that aspirations play two different roles in relation to capabilities. On the one hand capabilities enrich people's opportunities to aspire to and strive for personal and social goals: they provide the "space for the pursuit of human flourishing" and motivating people "preventing the formation of pessimistic adaptive preferences" (Nussbaum, 2016: 301). Secondly capabilities, in the way in which they constitute partial theories of social justice, can be aspirational in themselves. Her list of central human capabilities for example, "not only creates a space for people to aspire, it is itself aspirational" (Nussbaum, 2016: 301). In the context of this study then, having the space to recognise adaptive preferences and be able to aspire to recognition and promotion as women could open possibilities for early career academics.

As Nussbaum indicates, no nation fully meets the demands of the central capabilities list or even their own aspirational constitutions, but aspiration is an important capability to practice, as it is through aspiration that the possibility for social change is created (Nussbaum, 2016). Change that may seem impossible to achieve in one era (such as same-sex marriage) has been achieved through constitutional aspiration, creating a "morally beautiful reality toward which people can aim" (Nussbaum, 2016: 302).

Ray explains how aspirations work through his concept of the 'aspirations window' which is formed:

> from an individual's cognitive world, her zone of 'similar', 'attainable' individuals. Our individual draws her aspirations from the lives, achievements, or ideals of those who exist in her aspirations window (Ray, 2002: 2).

However, he broadens this to explain that an aspirations window is multidimensional – it includes peer group assessments, economic factors, information availability or gaps, perceived mobility, and the nature or type of the aspirations under consideration. He argues that it is the "aspirations gap" which is "simply the difference between the standard of living that's aspired to and the standard of living that one already has" (Ray, 2002: 3) which affects behaviour. He argues that the aspirations window must be opened for people to strive for something better. There should also be individuals in "our immediate cognitive neighbourhood" who have done better than us, but not much better:

> There must be individuals in our immediate cognitive neighbourhood who do better than we do, yet if they do a lot better, there will be no investments made even if the cognitive neighbourhood to such individuals is unbroken. In short, the experiences of others may have little effect on us either because they lie outside our aspirations window, or even if they do, their living standards (which form our aspirations) are faraway from ours (Ray, 2002: 4).

Ray, an economist, suggests the idea of a "connected society" where there is economic diversity in each cognitive neighbourhood, so that each person is able to think of themselves as being on the "attainable fringes":

> Crudely put, a society in which there is a chain of observed, local steps between the poorest and the richest will be more vibrant, in the sense that individuals will not only have aspirations, but will have the sort of aspirations they can act upon (Ray, 2002: 4).

Ray also points to the need for visible aspirational pathways. Though the described context is quite different from an academic institution, it is possible to conceive of a university as a connected society, and the chain of steps (which may be a comfortable academic identity - a sense of feeling like an academic - or indeed a form of growing academic recognition - being promoted - or a combination of these and other aspirations) as a real possibility for early career women academics.

Also important in the concept of the aspirations window is the importance of shared experience. So, thinking about the collective of early career academics and how shared experience may also motivate aspirations may also be generative in an institutional context, and may suggest ways in which collectives or networks can widen the aspirations window. In the case of universities then, aspiration, which may be complex, but could include aspiring to a professorship and other forms of recognition, may be an important capability in itself. The capability to aspire is an important element of professional development, and actively building and supporting this capability may have a positive effect on the agency of individual academics. It has implications for individual and institutional practice, both in the ways in which recognising the need to develop individual freedom to aspire may help people identify appropriate support, but also that the right institutional conditions may need to be actively facilitated to support aspirational capacity.

Aspirations have a social dimension in that they are "always formed in interaction and in the thick of social life" (Appadurai, 2004, quoted in Walker, 2018a: 126). This means that they are dynamic and can change through achievement, which opens the possibility of new aspirations:

> Crucially, then, the capacity to aspire is a capacity that, the more it is successfully practised and repeated, the thicker it will become. For the less well-off it is not that they do not aspire towards a better future, but for iteratively connecting and navigating between the immediate context and the distant their real-world pathways offer thinner imaginative possibilities (Walker, 2018a: 128).

Walker (2018a) makes the point that aspiring is something that has to be learnt and practised. The capability to aspire may be essential for early career academics in planning for their professional careers and is an important capability to be nurtured in an environment where gender equity is far from being achieved. She argues that black women in South Africa who make it to university have already realised a significant aspiration – given the overall poor access and success rates. The same could be said for women who are making it in the academy, as the numbers of women diminish at the professorial levels. Thinking about aspirations could assist institutions to imagine what processes might be relevant for women academics in forging meaningful careers. This means that institutional factors may also be important in providing conditions that stimulate aspirational capability and institutions may consider how this can be incorporated into professional development and induction support. It may also show the importance of role models.

Aspirations are important within the capability approach in the way in which they are linked to agency, that is, converting aspirations into achievements requires agency and appropriate conditions and can work together to further unlock agency freedom: "the capability to aspire and agency freedoms constitute interlocking domains, in turn shaped by conditions to convert aspirations and agency into well-being" (Walker, 2018a: 128). In reflecting on their own aspirations, people deliberate on what is important to them, but at the same time this process "unlocks agency" which can motivate people to make changes and is therefore "capabilities-enhancing" (Walker, 2018a: 129). Thinking about how critical agency can work together with voice and institutional support mechanisms to push aspirations beyond an individual capability is important for this study. If early career academics aspire to career pathways that not many women have achieved and, at the same time, institutions identify ways of supporting aspirational pathways for early career academics, it may also be possible to think

about institutional or system-level aspirations to create more gender just universities. Aspirations may assist in opening our thinking for what kind of university could emerge.

Conclusion

This section has argued that the capability approach provides a valuable set of conceptual tools, grounded in a normative social justice approach, for making sense of the data generated in this study. The approach is strongly aligned to an aspiration for universities that are socially just and free of gender discrimination. In the context of an understanding of gendered organisations that recognises gender as being multi-dimensional, dynamic, complex and contested, the capability approach provides a framework for analysis that can take account of this complexity.

The capability approach provides conceptual tools for a multi-layered gender analysis, in combination with a body of feminist thinking about gender, organisations and universities in particular. It provides the space for evaluating the impact of policy, the structures and sub-structures of gendered institutions, recognising the influence of powerful and enduring social ideologies of gender, gendered interactions and institutional cultures, the intersectionality of gender in human lives, as well as the effects of gendered structure and culture on the development of individual identities. Ultimately, it allows for an exploration of how individual working lives and agency can be taken into account in responding to the many pressures and influences on academic life, professional development, academic identity development and career development and progression. This multi-dimensional and flexible set of conceptual frameworks is one that I have found appropriate for engaging the research questions in my study.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methods selected for this study. It provides a justification for the methods and approaches chosen, explores the positioning of myself as the researcher and outlines the data analysis process.

As a manager in government working in higher education policy development and implementation, I have an interest in questions that are relevant at national policy level. At the time I embarked on a PhD, there was an emerging (and continuing) policy concern about the academic profession, both its demographics (in terms of race, gender and age) and the attractiveness of the academic profession to young people. I have also worked on gender equity issues and other transformation matters in higher education and have an interest in the persistence of gender inequities in higher education and a policy context that aims for gender equality.

Given my work interests and professional background I wanted to explore, through empirical research, the reality of gender equity issues in relation to early career academics in South Africa. Gender inequity in the academy is a global phenomenon and is still a major focus of researchers in different contexts as the literature review demonstrates. There is, however, very little empirically based knowledge about the working lives of academics in South Africa and I wanted to add to the research in this area. I was interested in the gap between policy objectives in South Africa and the slow pace of change in areas such as the staffing of universities, as detailed in chapter one. As the previous chapters have shown, I have a particular interest in thinking about how universities could be organised to reduce gender inequity in academic staffing as part of wider moves to improve gender equity.

These areas of interest combined to form the following research questions set out in the introduction and reiterated here for clarity:

- How does gender impact on academic working lives, career development choices and professional identities of early career women academics?
- How do early career academic women understand, experience and mediate gendered institutional environments with what effects for their professional functioning and agency?
- What does this reveal about why gender inequalities persist in universities?

Research Design and paradigms

As the focus of the research was to develop a deeper understanding of the working lives and choices of a selected group of women academics, a qualitative design was necessary. This study is also an explicitly feminist project:

> Feminist theoretical frameworks address, above all, the question of women's subordination to men: how this arose, how and why it is perpetuated, how it might be changed and (sometimes) what life would be like without it (Acker, 1987: 421).

This feminist positioning is not only from a feminist standpoint perspective (Hartsock, 1987; Harding, 1987) in that it focuses on the working lives of a group of women academics. It is also because it took as a starting point that gender has an inescapable effect on every aspect of our social world, including organisations within which people work (Acker, 1990), as described in the previous chapter. In Leonard's words, feminist research "seeks to understand the world in order to change it" (Leonard, 2001: 191). In engaging with empirical data about the working lives of a group of early career academic women the study is feminist in its explicit interest in organisational power relations and gendered individual identities (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002), while acknowledging that there is no single feminist approach or method. Indeed, there are many approaches and paradigms within feminist research, many "feminisms" (Harding, 1987; Leonard, 2001; Nnaemeka, 2003; Nadar, 2014):

> ...we should talk about our 'feminisms' only in the plural, since there is no one set of feminist principles or understandings beyond the very, very general ones to which feminists in every race, class and culture will assent (Harding, 1987: 7).

Indeed, in Africa and South Africa, this is a critical issue, as black feminists have argued for the importance of separating out different feminisms in a society that is deeply divided along racial lines (Collins, 2000; Nnaemeka, 2003; Chilisa and Ntseane, 2010; Mama, 2011).

At the start of the study I took a relatively open approach to the research design, as I did not have a fixed view of the theoretical frameworks I wanted to use for data analysis. Given too that there is no one conceptual approach to a feminist research project design (Harding, 1987; Leonard, 2001), the research design was informed by the research questions, and a reading of the literature on gender equity in higher education. In this way, I needed a design that would be flexible, open to different paradigms and multi-disciplinary. Qualitative research was most appropriate:

as a set of interpretive activities, [it] privileges no single methodological practice over another... It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own. Multiple theoretical paradigms claim use of qualitative research methods and strategies (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013: 11).

I chose to use semi-structured face-to-face interviews as the primary data collection method, given the need to obtain in-depth information from people about their experiences and their reflections on their working lives as academics (Kvale, 2007; Rubin and Rubin, 1995), and the 'scripts' available to them. I did also consider the possibility of conducting focus groups. However, this would have been difficult from a practical point of view (academics are extremely busy and finding time for a 90-minute one-to-one discussion was difficult in itself). Moreover, from an ethical point of view (the nature of the discussions was intensely personal and at times awkward, and it is unlikely that a diverse group of academics would open up about some of the experiences in a group context) and given the difficulties in researching 'up' - as an inexperienced researcher interviewing more experienced researchers, it may have been difficult to conduct a focus group as a non-academic outsider. It is easier to speak about complex matters of identity and experience in a confidential interview setting, if the "conversational partnership" (Rubin and Rubin, 1995) can be effectively built. However, even though in some respects I was researching 'up', ultimately the researcher determines the course and tone of the interview, and it is not an equal relationship: "there is a definite asymmetry of power" (Kvale, 2007: 126).

A qualitative approach to the research using individual interviews allowed for exploration of questions in the appropriate complexity, allowing for in-depth engagement about experiences, working lives, views and aspirations of a group of individuals. The interviews had both a life history and narrative element, exploring a wide range of themes that had arisen from the literature on gender equity in higher education. I wanted to understand how particular individuals experience the everyday realities of working in a university context and how individuals interpret and respond to their work context, both the structural and cultural constraints and enablers.

Added to this, interviews are a common method in feminist research (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002; Denscombe, 2007). As a method, interviews acknowledge the importance of individual stories, as a way of understanding particular lives (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002). Narrative research has played an important part in feminist research, by focusing on the micro level of individual working lives and the everyday experiences of women. I took the view that an understanding of how gender

operates in an institution and how the working life of an early career academic may be gendered, could best be made sense of through individual narratives. Christensen and Jensen (2012) advocate the use of life-history narratives, as well as the study of everyday life, in understanding individual identity and social structures. Narrative approaches have been used to describe structural and institutional power relations in other studies of gender and race, such as Philomena Essed's study of 'everyday racism' (Essed, 1991) and Louise Morley's study of 'micropolitics' in the academy (Morley, 1999).

Walker and Unterhalter argue that "it is partly through accounts of individual lives that we might understand wider society" (Walker and Unterhalter, 2004: 3). In making sense of the role of narratives in education research through reflections on stories from the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, they propose four ways in which narrative research can produce knowledge about subjectivity and identity within a social world. The first relates to acknowledging and recognising the importance of experience, where narrative texts "transform silence into dialogue, open out the ambiguities of the everyday, tease out the seamless labelling of the oppressed and capture the unruliness of human action" (Walker and Unterhalter, 2004: 4). The second is how narrative can open space to empathise with different lives: "Narrative destabilises comfortable worlds and offers the possibility of empathetically understanding other lives" (Walker and Unterhalter, 2004: 4). The third way in which narrative research can be generative is that it enables identity work, to create new ways of seeing the world:

> The exchange of stories challenges our complacency as interpreters 'outside' the story, and makes us aware that our own place in the world plays a part in our interpretation and shapes the meanings we derive from them...even as our peripheral vision obscures how dominant discourses fashion us (Walker and Unterhalter, 2004: 5).

Finally, while acknowledging that narratives tell a partial 'truth', this does not necessarily make them "less trustworthy", as "through partial stories larger moral truths can be told" (Walker and Unterhalter, 2004: 5). Steph Lawler describes how experience told through narratives is "necessarily entwined" with the interpretation of those narratives (Lawler, 2002). Narrative is about how "social actors interpret the social world, and their place within it" (Lawler, 2002: 244) and shows how narrative interprets and reinterprets experience:

> ...we all tell stories about our lives, both to ourselves and to others; and it is through such stories that we make sense of the world, of our relationship to that world, and of the

relationship between ourselves and other selves. Further, it is through such stories that we produce identities (Lawler, 2002: 249).

While narratives are not positivist 'truths' they do produce an understanding of "people's (socially located) lives and identities" (Lawler, 2002: 254):

> If we want to find out how people make identities, make sense of the world and of their place within it- if we want to find out how they interpret the world and themselves- we will have to attend to the stories they tell (Lawler, 2002: 255).

The importance of recognising the value of narrative research in this study is strongly related to the research question about how early career women academics understand, experience and make sense of the gendered institutional cultures within which they work, and through which their professional identities are (partially) developed. The narrative approach is therefore strongly grounded in a feminist approach that recognises the importance of life histories and narratives in understanding people's everyday lives, but also the relevance of locating people's individual experiences, as told through narratives, within a broader social context - in this case, the working environment of a particular university. Equally it is through the telling of stories of the 'everyday' and micro-level experiences of working lives that a broader analysis of the social environment of the university can emerge.

Drawing on the 'ethical individualism' of the capability approach within a framework that is also explicitly feminist (see Robeyns, 2003), the phenomenon of a 'gendered institutional culture' was explored through engagement with individual case studies of academic women. Rather than set out to describe the phenomenon of a gendered organisation, I was aware that the results would be subjective, contextual and open to many different interpretations. Rather than set out to describe a particular institutional culture, I would be exploring the participants' "perceptions or meanings; attitudes and beliefs; feelings and emotions" (Denscombe, 2007: 75). Each person has an experience which is of value. In this way each individual could be seen as a case study and as a group, as a collective case study. However, I did not set out to generalise about the experiences of all women academics in one faculty at one university. This would have been impossible because of the sample size. I did however, intend to draw links across the interviews, to find common data on the experiences and understandings of the gendered institutional culture, to identify common experiences and to understand how gender impacts on diverse women's academic careers. This is a

form of "human sense making" (Denscombe, 2007: 43). The benefit of the broad approach to the study design was to allow the research "to deal with the subtleties and intricacies of complex social situations." (Denscombe, 2007: 45).

The approach to this study is therefore partly phenomenological (with a focus on gendered institutional cultures, as seen through the experiences of a group of early career academic women), and primarily narrative (as described through the interview-based narratives of the participants). This approach allowed me to test my own assumptions about gendered institutional cultures (Denscombe, 2007: 82), and to foreground the narratives of the participants in the data analysis.

Even though my own epistemological approach to gender (that gender is implicit in every aspect of university working life) was firmly implicated in the design of the study, I tried to suspend my own assumptions from experience and literature to understand the possibly multiple different experiences of the group that I was interviewing (Denscombe, 2007). Following Louise Vincent's view of narrative in the context of a study of institutional culture as "tell us a new story" (Vincent, 2015: 31) and as a "mechanism both for understanding and interrupting the reproduction of dominance, injustice and inequality" (Vincent, 2015: 38):

> The narrative understanding of institutional culture points us in the direction of collecting narratives and taking narrative seriously as a mechanism both for understanding and interrupting the reproduction of dominance, injustice and inequality (Vincent, 2015: 38).

A broadly qualitative design with a narrative approach allowed for an exploration of empirical data, understanding that there could be "no single interpretive truth" (Denscombe, 2007: 30). I was aware at the outset that the research findings would be contextual, subjective and representing an interpreted truth, and that the interpretation would be strongly influenced by my own positioning, as a feminist and as a policy researcher. The ways in which I searched for meaning were linked to my own professional interests and personal subjectivities (Kvale, 2007; Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Pillow, 2003). In the design, it is inevitable that my own search for gendered experiences dominated the flow of the interviews and may have both closed down and opened up different directions of enquiry. Wanda Pillow talks of living with a "reflexivity of discomfort" (Pillow, 2003) which is about acknowledging reflexivity "while at the same time interrogating reflexivity's complicit relationship with ethnocentric power and knowledge in qualitative research" (Pillow, 2003: 192).

I was also explicitly looking to unearth the subjective experiences of the participants. My own reflexivity thus had to be central in the study. A narrative design was also a way of mapping local knowledge, in relation to the experiences of a group of participants in a faculty:

> Narrative research thus converges across its differences, not so much in its political interests, but in the possibility of having microsocial and micropolitical effects through the local knowledges that it produces. These knowledges may be particular, but they can enter into dialogue with each other and produce...larger and more general, though still situated, narrative knowledges (Denscombe, 2007: 12).

Narrative research is also important for unearthing the 'everyday' nature of experiences, which provides an opportunity to look at how the normal can be made strange in the analysis process (Vincent, 2015). As discussed in chapter three it is often difficult to see gender when only the masculine is present. A further argument for the use of narrative research is that it can illuminate "silences" in organisations (Gabriel, 2000; Boje, 2008):

> Stories enable us to study organisational politics, culture, and change in uniquely illuminating ways, revealing how wide organizational issues are viewed, commented upon and worked upon by their members (Gabriel, 2000: 2).

Data collection Method and Process

I used a purposive approach to sampling, that is, I approached potential interview participants directly, using an email introduction to the research study (see Appendix A for information provided to participants). Potential participants were provided with details of the ethical clearance from their university, an information sheet about the study, including my supervisor contact details, and some information about me as the researcher. I targeted individuals whose names had been provided to me through my own contacts at the university, and who others had indicated may be defined as 'early career academics'. I also looked at the website of the university and faculty to find individuals that might fall into the category of early career academic and emailed them directly. I kept one faculty as the broad parameter, as a smaller unit of school or department may not have generated adequate participation. The faculty concerned has a full academic staff complement of approximately 350 academic staff out of a total academic staff of approximately 1500 in the university.

The choice of university was a pragmatic one as I preferred face-to-face interviews and therefore needed to select a university accessible to where I live and work. From the seven universities within the metropolitan areas where I live and work, I chose a university that would allow me easy access to campus, where I would be able to interview individuals in their place of work and where I would also be able to interview people over a period of time, and if necessary, at short notice. The interviews took place over a period of about six months in late 2015 and early 2016.

Metro University can be described as a traditional university, with a strong research culture and high numbers of postgraduate students and situated in a large metropolitan area. It is an historically white university, which means that prior to 1994 it admitted very few black students. This has impacted on its student and staff profiles and its academic and working cultures. However, the student body is now predominantly black and the staff profile is changing. It is a medium-sized university in the South African context with approximately 35 000 students. Further detail about the institution is not provided in order to maintain the commitment that the institution remains anonymous, as far as possible. In a small public university system, further detail may make it easy to identify the institution.

The choice of one faculty was taken in the context of the number of interviews that I would be conducting. From a reading of the literature and my own knowledge of South African research on universities, I knew that the bigger the sample frame, the greater the range of factors would influence the outcomes. Humanities faculties tend to have larger proportions of women academics (in contrast with science and engineering faculties) and I hoped that by eliminating the factor of quantitative under-representation of women, I would be able to focus more explicitly on the gendered structural and cultural factors at play in the faculty, rather than focus on women as a minority. The Humanities Faculty at the selected University has 58% of women academics, as compared with 50% in the university overall. I also had easier access to the humanities faculty, as I had more personal contacts there than in any other, so the choice was partly pragmatic.

The findings of this study are drawn from interviews with a group of nine women academics in the Humanities Faculty at Metro University. Each in-depth interview lasted around ninety minutes. I also interviewed four other staff, two in the central administration of the university - with responsibility for equity and transformation work across the university, and two senior academic staff in management positions within the faculty. I did this because I wanted to understand the specific policy context of the institution, and any initiatives that may have impacted on the working lives of the

participants in the study and to enrich my understanding of the institution itself. An understanding of the context was developed from institutional documents available to me and these administrator interviews. However, as explained, very little specific information is provided about the institution itself. It must be noted that the sample of women is not claimed as representative as I did not set out to obtain a typical sample of academics. I interviewed as many people as I could that responded positively to the request within the time frame that I had set to conduct interviews. I tried to interview twelve to fifteen academics, however, I did not manage to access that many participants in the timeframe for conducting the fieldwork.

This study defined 'early career academic' as a university staff member within their first three to six years of academic appointment, defined as either a teaching or research appointment, but with some experience of academic teaching and some involvement in research. Involvement in research included doctoral study, post-doctoral work, and possibly involved the achievement of publishing. Participants self-identified as early career after I had provided them with criteria and they decided whether to participate. I did not request information from potential participants to decide about whether they fit my criteria. In hindsight this could be seen as a weakness, given the breadth of age and experience of the group. A more direct approach may have resulted in a less diverse group. However, it did also allow for some exploration of differences between those with prior work experience and those without.

The definition of early career academic was interpreted widely (I requested participants who had been in an academic job for between three and six years) and perhaps more loosely than I had originally anticipated, but the group also captured the varied routes people (perhaps especially women) take into academia. Not everyone follows the traditional path of degree, then full-time doctorate, followed by first academic job. Thus, it is understandable that the range was wider, depending on the participants' own understanding of what it means to be in an academic job. Of the nine women, three (Abby, Amanda and Anna) were still in the process of completing their PhDs (one was waiting for confirmation); one had been in a permanent post for a while but had been doing academic work for a long time, and had published widely and even edited books (Irene); one was new at the university, but had done prior academic (and other) work (Maria); two were post-doctoral researchers who had worked at other institutions and outside of the country (May and Emma); and two had had senior careers as school principals before becoming academics (Harriet and Madea). This is not uncommon in professional academic fields and for women in the education field, who have often started out as teachers.

As the table below shows, those who could be defined as early career in the terms of the study (and who defined themselves as early career) represent a relatively heterogeneous group, in terms of age, prior experience and years of academic experience. The participants range from their early thirties to their fifties and have had a diversity of prior work experience. The table below provides basic information about the participants.

Name (pseudonym)	Irene	Amanda	Abby	Harriet	Anna	Emma	May	Maria	Madea
Age	39	35	39	50	37	32	33	37	43
Racial classification*	Black African	Coloured	Black African	White	White	Not SA	White	Not SA	Coloured
Family	Partnership with no children	Married with 2-year old daughter	Partnership with 2-year old son	Married with 3 grown-up children	Partnership status not mentioned. No children.	Married with no children.	Partnership with no children	Married – no children	Married – two children
School*	Human and Community Development	Social Sciences	Arts	Education	Social Sciences	Social Sciences	Social Sciences	Education	Education
PhD obtained (year)	2014	2016 (just completed)	Still completing	2006	Still completing	2012	2010	2010	2007
Appointment status	Permanent	3-year contract	Permanent (probation)	Permanent	3-year contract	Contract- post-doc	Contract-post-doc	Permanent	Permanent
Year of appointment at this university	2012	2014	2014	2012	2015	2012	2014	2012	2012
Level of appointment	Senior Lecturer	Associate Lecturer	Lecturer	Senior Lecturer	Associate Lecturer	Post-doctoral fellow	Researcher/Post-doctoral fellow	Lecturer	Lecturer
Previous Work	Mostly temporary academic posts and studying,	Mostly part-time teaching and tutoring and some full-time study.	Some NGO work, performance work, and	School principal and teacher for many years	Some NGO and editing work before taking on full-time PhD study.	Mostly temporary academic posts and studying.	Range of NGO, writing and temporary academic positions.	Mostly temporary academic positions and studying.	School principal and teacher for many years

Name (pseudonym)	Irene	Amanda	Abby	Harriet	Anna	Emma	May	Maria	Madea
	with some NGO work.		temporary academic work.						

Nine interview participants form a relatively small sample. However, as indicated above, I had hoped for a slightly bigger group, which turned out to be difficult from a practical point of view. Still, there is no agreed ideal sample size in qualitative research (Baker and Edwards, 2012), and experienced researchers will respond that "it depends" when the question of size arises (Baker and Edwards, 2012). Successful qualitative studies have included samples from one person to many (Becker, 2012). This means that the sample size can be chosen as appropriate for a study, linked to its purpose and the pragmatic possibilities of the fieldwork and accessing participants. In this study the sample size was appropriate for the nature of the study as approaching individual lives within one faculty at a single university.

The purpose of this study was to conduct an in-depth empirical study of working lives. The data collection method, therefore, was aimed at gaining knowledge about the working lives of the participants and their subjective experiences and understandings of the gendered institution in which they work. It also sought to explore their views and decisions in their working context. The approach privileged the need for rich narrative data of a small group of individuals, to make sense of their narratives in a particular context. The purpose of the research was therefore not to provide a generalizable set of data, but rather to explore in-depth the experiences, career development trajectories and understandings of a small group using a broad range of themes that arose from the literature. My intention was to use the individual narratives to explore the broader phenomena being studied, "to consider each case as singular, and to learn as much as one possibly can from it in the hope of generating deeper insights" (Colley, 2010: 190). I took the sample size into account in the data analysis process (described below), focusing on the importance of individual lives.

The interview process

In designing the study, I knew that I wanted to take a semi-structured approach to the interviews, with enough scope within the interview schedule to explore areas of interest to each participant, but with a formal guide to ensure that I would gather enough data. In designing the interview schedule, I identified themes relating to the working lives and career development of academics and developed questions within these themes. These were drawn from two sources: the literature on early career academics, and the feminist literature on gender equity in higher education, which is extensive:

the initial questions or area for observation are based on concepts derived from literature or experience. Since these concepts...do not yet have proven theoretical relevance to the evolving theory, they must be considered provisional. Nevertheless, they provide a *beginning focus,* a place for the researcher to start." (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 180- in Denscombe, 2007: 94).

The draft interview schedule focused on the questions in the following areas: 1) working life as an academic; 2) professional development and networks; and 3) gendered institutional culture and impact. I conducted two pilot interviews, which gave me an opportunity to test the schedule and reflect on the interview process. One was a telephonic interview and the other was face-to-face. They were both with men. At the time, I had not narrowed down the study to only work with women and had intended to interview both men and women. I also knew that when asking questions about gender it is difficult for people to immediately identify experiences as being gendered, and I thought this would be an important way of testing the questions.

The initial interview schedule design turned out to be too broad - while I obtained interesting data about career thinking and working life of academics, I got very little insight into gender. This was partly because, as one pilot participant admitted, it is very difficult to see gender as a man in a context in which gendered power dynamics are broadly in favour of men. However, I also knew that given how deeply embedded and unconscious gendered cultures in organisations are, that it might be difficult for women to identify gendered experiences (Morley et al., 2006).

I took the decision to target women in the study because adding gender as another layer of complexity in a study with already diverse participants (race, age, field of study etc) would make identifying common themes within the sample more difficult. Although I believe that gendered institutional cultures affect both men and women, I did not want the study to be a comparative analysis of the experiences of men and women. Rather, I wanted a rich base of empirical data from which to make sense of gendered institutions from the standpoint of women's lives. I was therefore able to revise the schedule to produce more focused questions on gendered issues that had emerged from the literature. I also reduced the number of questions, so that I could ensure that data collection could be completed within a maximum

of ninety minutes. The revised questions were targeted at unearthing gendered institutional cultures, but through allowing participants to explore their entry into academia, the structure of their working lives, identifying specific gendered experiences, discrimination or harassment, and their understanding of the policy environment in the institution and how this could be gendered. The interview schedule is attached as Appendix B. After the first interview, I decided to include biographical information in a written questionnaire, to allow participants to provide personal information, as I discovered that asking these questions could be awkward. I also requested participants to fill in a questionnaire about their jobs, to gather information about their major areas of work and to supplement the data from the interviews. The interview schedule and plan were not designed with a specific theoretical framework in mind. This had both negative and positive effects on the study, discussed below. At the time of the data collection, I was not ready to make a commitment to a particular framework for data analysis.

An interview is a form of conversation, but one that is controlled by the researcher (Denscombe, 2007: 174). The power lies with the researcher to determine the scope and focus of the interview, and to guide the quality of the interaction (Kvale, 2007). Interviews were chosen as the approach best suited to addressing the complex phenomena of gendered institutional culture as well as the most efficient way of reaching an in-depth understanding of the career decision-making and professional identities of the study participants and their emotions and understandings of their professional environment (Denscombe, 2007; Kvale, 2007). The interviews, as noted earlier, were semi-structured, with a clear list of issues to be addressed, but at the same time allowing some flexibility (Kvale, 2007), in order "to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher." (Denscombe, 2007: 176).

In using semi-structured interviews as a method, it is important to be aware of the 'interviewer effect'. The characteristics of the interviewer inevitably have an effect on the interview itself and how the participant responds, how much they reveal, the timing of the interview in the person's life (see for example Walker, 1997a) and can be targeted at what the interviewee expects the interviewer wants to hear (Denscombe, 2007: 184):

> meaningfulness is located in interviewer-interviewee interaction as well as the
> interviewees' words…intersections of the life-worlds of speaker and hearer, or writer

and reader, (are) an inevitable, constitutive characteristic of narrative (Denscombe, 2007: 43).

Interviews are inevitably partial but this is not to say they are untrustworthy (Walker and Unterhalter, 2004).

Participants selected the venue of the interviews, which was generally in their university offices - a place where they clearly felt most comfortable. It was also possible to easily record the interviews in this environment. My intention in the interview process was to 'unearth' experiences and actions in the everyday professional lives of the academics that may be gendered. The interview schedule was used as a broad frame to guide the discussion. In this way, although I was able to direct participants to themes for discussion, there was also some flexibility in the topics that participants wished to focus on. The value of qualitative interview research and a focus on narratives was that it allowed for the subjective experiences and agency of each individual to emerge. This was an explicit aim of the project.

There were inevitably some areas of sensitivity and awkwardness in the interview process, relating to the nature of the research. Questions about gender can be deeply personal, especially when asking someone to describe incidents of discrimination or harassment. While I was determined to direct the interviews to unearth gendered issues, I was aware that it would sometimes be difficult for participants to identify certain experiences as gendered. This was why an interview as a conversation was important, as it was often at a different point in an interview that a participant would return to a point they had made or an experience they had related and reflect back on its gendered nature. However, much of the gendered meaning-making took place in the data analysis phase, as I moved between the interview transcripts (data) and theory.

I was also aware of my reluctance to ask questions that I anticipated to be awkward. In one area this proved to be difficult in the analysis phase. I did not ask participants about their domestic support arrangements, committing a classic methodological limitation in research by assuming that domestic arrangements are irrelevant to women's experiences of the workplace. Questions about domestic arrangements are awkward because one is asking people to reveal details about how they organise their personal life, and because in South Africa, though most middle class people have some form of domestic support, domestic work is

unregulated and domestic workers are often exploited. Thus asking people about these arrangements could be sensitive. This was an error in the questionnaire design. In the data analysis phase I realised how important it was to obtain this information, and designed a short further questionnaire, which was emailed to the participants. The majority of participants responded and I was able to fill a gap in my data. There were other gaps in my data that I was not able to fill. I also did not probe other types of personal questions, such as those relating to sexuality and gender identities. This was a limitation in the design and interview processes that constrained the type of intersectional data that emerged, and therefore restricted the analysis in relation to intersectional issues of gender itself.

Intersectionality was discussed in chapter three as a theoretical frame for the study. It was also an important methodological frame and was built into the design of the questionnaire, to allow for participants to relate gendered experiences to other forms of inequality or disadvantage. There is some evidence from research that black South African women often interpret negative or discriminatory experiences within the academy as being primarily about race rather than gender, as they may well be (Mabokela and Mawila, 2004; De la Rey, 1999). On the other hand, they may be about gender, but are obscured by race. I wanted the approach of the interviews to allow for the individual views and experiences to come through in the analysis phase. As Ismail's (2011) research on university staff and employment equity has shown, South Africans are often concerned about being assigned demographic categories in research. However, as McCall has noted:

> ...it is impossible to fully escape the normalizing confines of language because new relations of power/knowledge are continuously reinscribed in new systems of classification, and yet it is impossible to avoid using categories strategically for political purposes (McCall, 2005: 1777)

I wanted to be open to participants bringing up their own identity positioning. This is also the reason why the biographical information was requested in a questionnaire format, separate from the interview. However, I was also aware that the perceptions of the participants of me as an interviewer affected the ways in which they responded to questions. Individuals may have answered differently depending on their perceptions of me, as a representative of a government department, as a white, middle-class South African, as someone who is not an academic herself, and as a PhD student. One interview is not enough to build a relationship

with participants but while there may have been areas in which individuals held back information that may have been of value to the study, the interviews did generate rich, detailed and often 'messy' information about working lives.

Intersectionality is an important theoretical frame given the prevalence of inequalities and discrimination on the basis of race (in particular) and class in higher education in South Africa, which is clearly described in the introduction. Both these concepts are explored as far as possible in the interviews. However, there are many aspects of intersectionality that were not adequately incorporated into the research design, particularly in respect of intersectional aspects of gender (issues of sexuality for example). This limited the extent to which they arose in the data, and therefore explains in part their absence in the analysis.

There were moments where I had to grapple with my own reactions to questions about gender. For example, two of the participants who do not have children made comments about the difficulty of being women without children in the academy, and how they are often made to take on responsibilities that women with children could not, which they resented and expressed as resentment towards women with children. As a working individual with children myself, who often has to fight for others to recognise the effect that certain expectations cannot be met (travel, meetings outside of working hours, the emotional and financial costs of having to work at times when one should be with children etc), I had to suspend my assumptions that all women will express the same feminist views. I also had to hide my own emotional reaction to these statements. These examples, however, helped me to think more carefully about the importance of these statements in reflecting the culture of the institution. While this resentment is expressed towards other women, it is in fact a consequence of an institutional culture that makes unfair demands on all individuals and where tasks are often displaced onto women. This leads to individual conflict instead of a focus on how institutions might design work environments differently to the benefit of all.

Each interview was recorded, with the permission of the participant. The recording of each interview was professionally transcribed as I did not have time to do it myself. I read through each transcription and corrected any mistakes, before using the transcripts – which were read several times - to begin data analysis. The transcript was the primary basis for my data analysis process. Following each interview, however, I did a short summary of my impressions of the

major areas of discussion, and my thinking about the interview and the interview process. I also made use of these summaries in conducting the analysis.

Ethical issues in the research project

Ethics approval was obtained from the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State (UFS) following the standard process of ethical review for a PhD study. Permission was also sought from the institution from which I selected participants. I was granted permission to approach potential participants for interviews based on the ethical approval received from the UFS. Participants who agreed to be interviewed signed a consent form indicating their willingness to participate in the research and acknowledging that they understood the purpose of the interview. The letter of introduction to the participants indicated that their participation was voluntary, outlined the purpose of the study, the research questions, and provided some information about myself as the researcher. Informed consent is a critical part of a research process involving human participants, to ensure that the dignity of participants is respected, and that they are protected from harm (Denscombe, 2007).

It was critical to the study that I indicate to the participants that I would do everything I could to ensure both confidentiality and anonymity. This is particularly important in a study involving a small number of participants which may reveal sensitive information (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). I committed to participants that I intended to anonymise the university itself, so that to the best of my ability, I would make it difficult to recognise the university from which I recruited participants. The South African higher education system is small, with twenty-six public universities. Once the historical background of an institution is revealed, it narrows down the possible universities to about five or six possibilities. However, I have been cautious about including specific information that would make it possible for the institution to be identified. In fact, it has been necessary to exclude information that may have been significant to the study, to maintain the anonymity of the institution. I chose to prioritise this to maintain anonymity.

A second commitment was to maintain the anonymity of the participants themselves. Each participant is provided a pseudonym in the narrative. I have provided some general information about the participants in the table above and the broad area of their work within the humanities faculty (social sciences, arts, education or human and community development). I have deliberately, however, excluded the specific department or field of study

of the participants, to provide a further barrier to possible identification. This also required changes to exclude quotes with any specific reference to a department or field of study. To the best of my ability, therefore, I have ensured that the confidentiality of the participants is respected, even if this meant sacrificing elements of the analysis.

Data analysis

As a part-time student, the data analysis process took place over about a two-year timeframe. This constrained the project in some ways, as it made it difficult to carry a clear thread through the thesis, but it also had a positive effect on some aspects of the analysis, allowing meaning to be constituted and re-constituted over time, recognising the "complex interpretive practices" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013: 13) of a qualitative research project.

The broad approach to data analysis was "interpretivist" where "the task is to understand how people see, think, and feel about the world, seeking to grasp diverse perspectives in their own terms" (Hammersley, 2012: 3). In an interpretive approach it is necessary to engage with individuals' perspectives and actions and how they relate to the structural and social context within which they are operating. This is a "critical" approach to interpretivism (Hammersley, 2012) and one that I built into the data analysis process.

In order to address the challenge of dealing with narrative data, which can often seem overwhelming (Denscombe, 2007) I approached the data analysis in different phases. This allowed for an exploration of the data in some depth, although it was also a result of my status as a part time student in a demanding job in a national policy department, as I had to work on the thesis in short blocks of time over a period of about two years. In the initial phase, I read through the interview transcripts with a view to identifying themes that emerged. This was a first process of coding. I approached this in a way that a researcher working within the grounded theory paradigm might, with a view to identifying the themes from the interviews. As Colley describes her own research, she approached the data generation drawing on the "ethos" of the grounded approach, "trying to ensure that the analysis emerged from the data" (Colley, 2010: 187). As I did not use a fixed theoretical framework at the outset, in this first phase I approached the data in a descriptive way, coding into broad themes which allowed for an initial structuring of the data. These were broadly organised into three phases from the narratives: 1) entering academia and the personal histories and decisions that led to an

academic career; 2) accounts of the working lives of the participants and their gendered experiences of academia; and 3) their accounts of professional aspirations for future careers.

The next phases of data analysis involved a more in-depth engagement with the theoretical frameworks identified in chapter three. The second phase involved engagement with the analytical framework outlined in the capability approach (see chapter three). In this phase I wanted to identify the core valued capabilities themes that cut across the narratives, highlighting the major constraints and enablements that arose from the different accounts and provided a set of common or general conversion factors (personal, social and institutional) which worked out in the specificity of each life. I wanted to understand the structural, personal and agency-based factors that both supported and constrained the participants in their career development and professional well-being. The valued functionings (as proxies for capabilities) of the group also emerged as common themes in this study. This phase involved analysing the transcripts while focusing on the capabilities literature and bringing the data into dialogue with the relevant research.

The final phase of analysis involved integrating the capabilities-based themes arising from the data using a feminist lens on gender, and in particular the theoretical frame of gendered organisations, broadly expressed in Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organisations outlined in chapter three. In this phase I reorganised the data into a less chronological narrative, more aligned to the research questions of the study, bringing feminist theory into engagement with the capabilities analysis and using a case-study based approach that focused on aspects of individual narratives in dialogue with the theoretical frameworks. In this phase, I also brought intersectionality into the analysis as far as possible. However, this was primarily limited to the ways in which gender intersects with race and class, and to a certain extent, age and prior professional experience. Gender did not arise as an intersectional issue in relation to sexuality or non-binary gender identity in the data analysis. This was primarily because of the research design, which did not specifically probe broader and more contemporary understandings of gender. These were perhaps "neglected points of intersection" (McCall, 2005: 1780) and this is a recognised limitation of the study.

Throughout the analysis I struggled with my positioning as a policy developer and implementer, wanting to impose a recommendations-focused analysis on the data, which would surface suggestions for policy development and areas where institutions could focus on

changing practice in support of attracting and retaining early career academic women. As I looked at the data through a more theoretical lens, using a feminist lens and a capabilities-based analytical framework, I was able to develop a more theoretically-driven approach to the data analysis. In this way, a layered and phased approach to the analysis allowed for a more in-depth and varied set of findings. Further, the dialogue between the interview data and the theoretical frameworks provided a way of validating the findings (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and engaging with other explanations in comparative research on women in higher education (Denscombe, 2007). The rich data about individual working lives and institutional culture worked with the capability approach, which provided a structured language and framework for understanding agency and structure, while allowing for a gendered and feminist viewpoint to be applied to the analysis.

In this study I was interested in the development of professional identities, and how individual agency within an institutional context could produce different career outcomes for individuals in the study. In this way, the narratives were an external expression of commonly experienced phenomena, and an expression of identity:

> Researchers who are interested in narratives as individualised accounts of experience tend to be the most convinced of the significance of stories as ways of expressing and building personal identity and agency (Denscombe, 2007: 6).

Through the "small stories" of people's experiences (Denscombe, 2007), I wanted to build a fuller picture of how gendered organisations and contexts impact on academic careers and professional well-being, recognising that "experience and subjectivity cannot fully make their way into language" (Denscombe, 2007: 9). As Denscombe outlines:

> the analysis of data should involve an iterative process. The development of theory, hypotheses, concepts, or generalizations should be based on a process that constantly moves back and forth comparing the empirical data with the codes, categories and concepts that are being used (Denscombe, 2007: 288).

Constraints

Pragmatism and time placed constraints on the research methods. Interviews had to be fitted in around my schedule, with a full-time job and family commitments, and I was interviewing a

busy group of people. I wanted to conduct the interviews within a six-month period to ensure some contextual consistency. All nine were interviewed between June 2015 and early 2016. The context in higher education changes fast, and late 2015 saw the beginning of the national fees protests (#feesmustfall) which had a significant effect on all universities, and it is likely that a year later, the narratives of the participants would have included reflection on the fees protest effects. I had to make sure that the reflections took place at roughly the same period of time. This is also the case with contemporary activist movements relating to sexual harassment and violence, such as the #metoo movement, which became globally prominent in 2017, and have impacted on gender debates within South African higher education in recent years, and arose during the period in which I was writing up.

Data analysis processes do not follow a linear route (Mertens, 2008; Colley, 2010). In this study the approach was to produce an initial description of data, followed by a clear outline of a theoretical framework and then return to do more in-depth analyses by engaging back and forth between the theoretical frame and the interview transcripts. This was a messy process but allowed me to engage with the data from different perspectives at different points. As Colley (2010: 186) notes: "in one sense it is of course artificial to separate out entirely any one stage of research from another."

Conducting this research has felt like putting together a patchwork quilt, adding pieces of different periods of work and thought into a whole thesis. I had to take a non-linear approach to the research project and analysis, coming back to the data and the study with long gaps in between, as I continued with my day-to-day life. The part-time nature of the study meant that I only drew the narrative thread into a coherent thesis towards the end. This took a lot of time, as is the nature of a part-time project, but was ultimately productive. Also given the part-time nature of the study, I developed the research design, questions and methods based on a broad understanding of the literature, rather than on having selected specific theoretical frameworks. These were only applied in the analysis phase. This could be seen as a disadvantage, as a more focused conceptual approach at the outset may have resulted in a different research design, including for example, more categories of intersectional analysis. However the relatively open approach had a positive effect on the study, allowing for a broad approach to data collection. This is one of the realities of part-time research.

The sample size of nine could be viewed as a limitation. However, the approach to thick description and the focus on narratives justifies the sample. The time available for data gathering and the difficulties in accessing participants also had to be a factor (Flick, 2012; Mason, 2012). Every study produces a "uniquely adequate sample size" (Denzin, 2012: 23), and I have endeavoured to "build a convincing analytical narrative based on the argument that you (I) have explored the process in its richness, complexity and detail..." (Mason, 2012: 29).

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methods of this study, making explicit the rationale for choosing the particular methodology. I also described the data collection process and reflected on the process of interviewing. Finally, I reflected on the data analysis process.

This is a feminist project in its focus on women's lives and gender inequalities with an explicit interest in gendered organisations - how they are understood and experienced and how they impact on professional well-being and the formation of academic professional identities of a small sample of early career academic women in one university. The rationale for choosing a narrative approach to the research design was discussed here, the aim being to illuminate individual working lives and identities within a university context.

The importance of the approach for understanding the subjective experiences and the 'everyday' working context is that it can bring about an understanding of the social context itself. No single 'truth' is possible in such a study, but rather the interpretive processes worked with the narrative data, as viewed through the conceptual framework of feminist theory of gendered organisations and the capability approach. The data analysis process was not linear, and took place over many months, as this research was done part-time. This had both advantages and disadvantages. The rich narrative data produced was analysed through a gender and capabilities lens.

The next chapters present the data analysis and findings of the study.

Chapter 5: the career development choices and professional identities of early career academic women

Introduction

This chapter explores the career pathways of the study participants through the viewpoint of the capability approach and a range of perspectives on gendered institutions. It explores starting out in an academic career and entering academic life, looking at how and under what circumstances the participants have chosen to pursue academic careers and enter academic jobs. It explores their reasons for choosing academic careers and what they like and value about academic work. This provides some insight into their personal career motivations and the different routes to becoming academics, as well as the influences and support that have allowed them to take advantage of opportunities along the way. It also gives some idea of what the differences are amongst an elite group of high-achieving academic women, how their aspirations differ and what they have had to overcome to become academics. It also provides some insight into the conversion factors, both personal and social, impacting on women who enter academia. At the same time the chapter explores the gender dimensions of these conversion factors.

The chapter also looks at the participants' descriptions and interpretations of their own development as academics, analysing the ways in which their professional identities have developed and are developing. Of interest is how they navigate and learn to navigate the academic work environment, how they learn, how they gain knowledge about how things work and how they reach a point where they are comfortable as academics, if they do indeed do so. This section therefore focuses specifically on the participants' interpretations of some of the professional capabilities of academics, by examining their achieved and valued functionings. The chapter also looks at what kinds of conversion factors enable or constrain early career academic women in this study in developing as academics and taking on professional identities.

Starting out as an academic

As the definition of early career academic was interpreted fairly widely by participants themselves, there were considerable differences amongst participants in the ways they started

out as academics, some completing PhDs while working in other jobs and others doing full time PhD work combined with other academic work. Of the nine women, three (Abby, Amanda and Anna) were still in the process of completing their PhDs at the time of being interviewed (one was just waiting for confirmation); one had been in a permanent post for a while but had been doing academic work for a long time, and had published widely and even edited books (Irene); one was new at the university, but had done prior academic (and other) work (Maria); two were post-doctoral researchers who had worked at other institutions and outside of the country (May and Emma); and two already mentioned had senior careers as school principals before becoming academics (Harriet and Madea). This is not uncommon in professional academic fields. Indeed, studies about doctoral education in South Africa show that the average age of PhD completion (increasingly a pre-requisite for an academic career) is over the age of 40, particularly in the fields of social sciences and humanities (Academy of Science of South Africa, 2010).

From the discussions with the interviewees it would seem that there is really no one clear career pathway to becoming an academic. Every career trajectory is different. Those who have always known that they wanted an academic career, especially to research and write, have been more focused about their path into academia. This has not, however, been a smooth, one-directional career path for most. In general, women's pathways in academia tend to be less linear than those of men, for a range of reasons, but most commonly because of child-bearing and the career gaps (or slow-downs) as a result of childbirth and caring for young children (De la Rey, 1999; Prozesky, 2006). However, there are many other reasons for the differences in career pathways taken by women and men. Understanding how people enter academia and at what age is important for institutions to think through the programmes that institutions develop to both recruit new staff and the kind of support they need to provide to new personnel.

The one person who has been most directed has been on a clear trajectory to academia, aided by having a father who was an academic. For others, however, including one who also has an academic father, this has not been a clear pathway, even though she was exposed to academic environments at an early stage.

Irene knew early on that she wanted to be an academic. Her father was an academic, so it seemed a straighforward trajectory for her. In her honours[16] year she came across a branch of her discipline that really interested her and was exposed to key thinkers in the discipline, through an academic who came to her university to teach for a year. She had direct mentorship from him, and exposure to a community of scholars in the field. She built these networks early, and was co-writing with this group from her honours year onward. She says that it was a "given" that she would be an academic. When she applied for her masters degree she researched who she wanted as a supervisor and worked on her masters proposal while still completing her honours degree. She therefore had a strategy from an early stage. Though she had a brief period of working outside the academy, she has mostly been on a direct pathway to becoming a senior lecturer, which is her current position.

Anna's father is also an academic and so she was "familiar and comfortable" with university environments. It was not an automatic route however. After her undergraduate studies, she tried a few other jobs and worked in an art gallery and as an editor, before eventually deciding on a PhD. Though she is comfortable with academic environments, it has not been a smooth transition: "and I mean the downside is that I always feel inadequate or always feel I've not, haven't read enough and know enough, can't quite do it" (Anna). Anna expresses considerable uncertainty and anxiety about her academic identity, something which comes through in several of the life stories. It also reflects her relatively junior status, as she has not yet finished her PhD. Anna and Irene are at different points in their careers, as Anna is yet to complete her PhD and is in a more junior position but the difference between the two shows it is possible for two people with similar family backgrounds to have different abilities to convert their resources into functioning. So, although family background could be an important conversion factor for entering an academic career, it is only one possible factor that works in combination with others.

May's parents were in publishing and journalism and she recognises the start of her academic career in the fact that her family saw value in writing and being curious about the world. A family interest in knowledge and going to what she calls a "relatively progressive" girls high school laid the foundation for her interest in writing and academic work: "these were all things that I loved doing and I was lucky enough to be raised and educated in contexts where it

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[16] In the South African context this is a one-year programme that preceeds entry to a masters degree and follows a three-year bachelors degree programme.

seemed possible to turn those things into a career" (May). She also had an amazing teacher, who interested her in her discipline. She was always interested in writing and researching, as in her family "all these things that were seen as incredibly worthwhile things to do for their own sake." In fact, she indicates that she'd "never really thought very seriously about not doing something that didn't involve writing and reading and thinking and researching" (May).

She thought initially that she wanted to be a journalist or a writer. When she got to university, her department had a new head who was making changes, and she thought "actually I don't want to leave. I like this…" So, for May, an academic career was a possibility from early on, based on her interest in writing and growing up in an environment that supported these interests: "being the person who produced the knowledge, who wrote the books that we read seemed like an incredibly attractive thing to be" (May). In addition to her family background she had positive schooling and university experiences that included teachers and lecturers that supported her interest in research and writing. As she worked through her PhD she realised that she also liked producing research that is "socially useful and illuminating" so that she might make a difference in the world in that way.

Harriet had a 20-year career as a teacher and school principal before becoming an academic. After completing her undergraduate studies she had to teach, as she had a loan to pay off, and her family was not wealthy. Once she had taught for some years and was in leadership positions she "began to think more strategically about getting more qualifications in order to move into academics." She indicated that she had always wanted to continue and do postgraduate work but had not been able to at the time of completing her teaching degree. She then completed her honours and masters degrees while working. She also completed her PhD in this way before applying for an academic post. Once she had completed the PhD she started applying for academic jobs and eventually started out as a part-time contract lecturer at the university. As Harriet progressed into her postgraduate studies she became more attracted to an academic career: "I thought - this is something I don't…I don't just want to consume this knowledge, I want to produce my own" (Harriet).

Emma grew up in a rural community outside South Africa, and studied at a small rural institution, alongside her mother, who had decided to study late in life. She did her undergraduate studies at the small campus of a university and discovered that she really enjoyed her discipline. She was encouraged to do graduate study at a larger and more

prestigious university. She was told by her supervisor that if she was interested in an academic career she would need to go all the way to a PhD and therefore should only do graduate studies if serious about finishing. She finished her PhD in Europe and then moved to South Africa with her husband (also an academic) in 2012, taking a post-doctoral position. Emma does not speak specifically about whether she chose to become an academic, although it became a real possibility for her when she started her postgraduate studies. For her, the ability to come up with new ideas and tell stories that have not been told is a key motivation as an academic:

> I get the opportunity to tell a story that hasn't been told before…and in the area that I look at there's no longer a political motive to tell the story because the people have been dispersed. So there's not a whole lot of memory of what's happened there on the ground and I find that quite exciting to come up with a new written story (Emma).

Madea was a school principal and teacher for many years before entering academia, but like Harriet, completed her PhD while she was a teacher. The purpose of doing the PhD was not to become an academic, but rather to achieve something personally:

> It was the one goal I set for myself. It was a personal achievement. It was for nothing else. When I got my first degree I sat in the auditorium and I watched the PhDs, and that was the day I said, it's me…I visualised it so well that I even visualised what I would wear on that day. That is…I was obsessed with it, and it was for nothing else but for me (Madea).

When she left teaching, she intended to stay at home for a while with her children, but then got drawn into tutoring in the education faculties at two universities. She was later encouraged by the daughter of a fellow principal who worked in the education faculty at the university to apply for an academic post. Though becoming an academic was accidental, Madea had shown both aptitude for and interest in academic work. She also had a very supportive husband, who encouraged her to study.

Maria comes from a working-class family whose parents did not finish high school. She is the only one of her siblings to do postgraduate work. She is not South African but is married to a South African (also an academic). She has masters and PhD degrees from a North American

university. She says that she never made active plans to become an academic, nor had she any particular interest in becoming one:

> I mean, it's a lofty occupation, and it's nothing that I ever said, well that's what I want to do, or anything that ever interested me....after I did my undergrad I never really found good study work that I liked and after I did a masters and I still didn't find good study work that I liked, so I just kept going and going and thinking, well things will get better, maybe I'll find what I want to do...and so I got a masters, and a second masters, still didn't know really...so I suppose I never really had any plans and fell into it because I kept going...if you stay at the university long enough you eventually become an academic (Maria).

Maria's husband was in a PhD programme before her and he pushed her to do her PhD while she was doing a second masters: "I think he definitely pushed me to do it...I don't really think I thought I was PhD material, but sometimes it takes other people to give you a push" (Maria). They came to South Africa in 2009 as her husband had to return and it was difficult to get academic jobs in the US, where they were studying. Maria raises an important conversion factor in her own career, the support of her husband. In a context where she thought of academic work as a "lofty" profession and therefore not something she pictured herself ever doing, the support and encouragement of her husband was clearly critical in her achievements.

Abby became an academic "by accident" and describes herself as always "having one foot in and one out". Her PhD has taken so long (she has stopped and started the PhD over several years) because "it feels like a commitment to academia that I have never been prepared to make...". She has had a professional life outside of academia, as a performer, and working in an NGO. After she completed a masters degree at another South African university she was targeted by a woman professor in her field who encouraged her to join the department as a lecturer. She indicates that this professor had "a heavy hand" in her appointment. After being at this university, she left for other temporary academic posts, where she was not happy, and then ended up in contract teaching at Metro University and then in a permanent appointment.

Amanda also describes her entry into academia as "accidental", as she has a learning difficulty which made academic work challenging:

> I never thought academia was a career...my dad was the only person in our very large extended family who ever went to university. So it's not a culture of university attendance. Rather it was that you finish school and you work, because we need the money (Amanda).

In her second year she had a lecturer who understood her because she herself had two children with learning difficulties. She had a lot of support from this person and became interested in the field. After finishing her honours degree, she did some teaching on the foundation [17] programme for a year, using her own experiences of support in becoming a good writer through this lecturer:

> and that for me was an incredible experience. Because it was putting my own struggles to learn into action, even though I didn't have an educational background. And that's when I decided all right, this is what I want to do. Because I could see how it made a difference to me, and how it made a difference to people who could barely write in English, let alone write an essay (Amanda).

She then did a masters degree in the UK, registered for another masters in teaching at university level, and taught for five years at another university in South Africa. The department she was in was 'tiny', and there was not much support or mentorship available, so it was not an ideal place to do her PhD. She then registered for a PhD at the age of thirty and got married at the same time. It took her six years to complete her PhD (which she has just finished) and during that period "life happened" and she also had a child. For part of the time she worked on her PhD she and her husband lived in Europe (where she was registered for her doctoral studies), but they had to return to South Africa as they both had family to support. She then obtained a contract position which helped her to finish the PhD.

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[17] Foundation programmes are programmes offered by South African universities which are used to facilitate widening access to students from a range of educational backgrounds. Though they have taken different forms over the years, and are continuing to develop, the most common current design of foundation programmes is the "extended curriculum programmes" which incorporate foundation support into a degree that builds in an additional teaching year. Foundation programming has been incentivised by state funding through an earmarked grant to universities since 2006.

The career narratives described above are all unique, and each person has been influenced by a range of personal and social factors in becoming academics: family background, support of partners, teachers and lecturers, and their own varied motivations. Apart from three participants who are clear about their academic careers being accidental (Maria, Amanda and Abby - which means that they may have ended up in any number of professions) most found their way into postgraduate work for different reasons. From there a range of personal and structural conversion factors influenced their trajectory to becoming academics. For two of them there is evidence of the strong influence of a female mentor who helped them into academic work.

This small group of women come from a diverse set of educational and class backgrounds and only one started out her working life with a clear vision of an academic career. Most of them have "ended up" as academics, after doing a range of different kinds of jobs, some on the edges of academia (writing, research, postgraduate study and tutoring, for example). This diversity is gendered, as women seldom enter academia through a single or linear career path. Many people must also work while doing postgraduate study because they cannot afford to study full-time. This was the case for several participants. Permanent employment as an academic is not easy to find early on in an academic career and early career academics are often required to work in other jobs before achieving permanency.

The fact that only one of the participants was able to identify making an early choice of an academic career may say something about whether academic careers are seen as desirable, particularly by postgraduate students. For the majority, their career decision-making is described as accidental, or as having been part of a range of possible options, rather than something that was actively chosen at an early age. This may be a gendered phenomenon as it links to deeply held cultural beliefs about the role of women in the academy and in knowledge jobs. It is also clearly linked to class, as class position influences a person's ability to undertake postgraduate studies or enter the workplace, and academia is viewed as a profession beyond access for working class people. A lack of female role models or even a perception that women do not get ahead in university work may also influence the ambivalence expressed about entering academia.

Harriet, whose only access to university was through a bursary to study teaching, describes her route into academic work as "accidental", but this appears to be a reference to a personal

belief that she was an unlikely candidate for an academic job. However, she narrates a focused effort on her part to develop her intellectual work, completing a PhD while in full-time employment and eventually becoming a lecturer and scholar. This does not appear as accidental, given the level of effort required to change professional pathways and complete a PhD while working and having a family.

Another working-class student, Maria, whose parents did not finish high school, never believed that she was academic material, but continued to study and push herself until she finally found an area of research and teaching interest that she could achieve in. She describes academia as a "lofty" profession. For her, becoming an academic has been a long journey of personal growth. A third participant from a working-class background never considered an academic career, as she was happy in school management. However, for her, achieving a PhD was a personal goal. Becoming an academic has been part of a long journey while working in another career out of necessity, and slowly progressing towards an academic job. For two of the participants who have working class backgrounds, academia is something that was never actively considered, but happened over time, with support from family and partners.

In fact, of the three working class academics (Amanda, Maria and Harriet) there are clear descriptions of feelings of exclusion and being an outsider – Maria talks of academia as a "lofty" profession; Amanda describes how academia was never considered a serious option for a career as she knew she would have to leave university once graduating and earn money; and Harriet continues to describe feelings of being an imposter – she fears "oh I wonder if they're going to find out that all I am is a glorified high school teacher". This is strong evidence of 'imposter syndrome', which is highly gendered, and often linked to other social categories of exclusion such as race and class. Despite the different class backgrounds of the group however, academia does not appear to be a clearly formed career path for eight of the women in the group, including those from more affluent backgrounds.

All participants are influenced by a range of motivations that support entry into an academic career. Several of the group have a personal desire to produce and create knowledge, to write, research and impact on a field of study. At least two of the participants also have a desire to teach and make a difference to students by providing access to knowledge. There are also those who believe that they can produce research that is socially useful - that producing knowledge can have an impact on the world.

A number of participants have partners who have been instrumental in supporting their academic careers. Three of the group (Emma, May and Maria) have academic husbands or boyfriends who have been supportive both in encouraging them to do academic work, and in helping them to navigate academic environments. Others mention support from partners in supporting PhD work and academic careers. Madea indicates that she and her husband have "taken turns" to further their studies, and that when she worked on her PhD her husband supported her as it was "her turn" to develop her career and herself personally. The support of partners and husbands comes across as a clear personal conversion factor supporting women in academic careers as several of the participants talk about the assistance of their partners as critical for their career development.

Many factors impact on their different moments of arrival in an academic job, and for several there are complex reasons for entering and staying in academic life. Those who have completed their PhDs are more comfortable in having arrived at a point of certainty in their careers, while the three who are in various phases of completion still express uncertainty about being academics. What also arises is that doing academic work or having an academic job does not necessarily lead to feeling like an academic. Becoming an academic, adopting and inhabiting academic identities, is a process rather than an event. This has implications for how institutions think about the kind of support provided, and working environments fostered, that may best encourage young people - and women in particular - to enter and remain in academic careers.

This discussion has identified that academic careers are entered in a variety of ways, sometimes as second careers and after having children, and are stimulated by a range of personal and social conversion factors that provide support and motivation for entering academia. There is evidence from these narratives that ideas about knowledge and women's role in knowledge do influence women in their trajectories and self-belief and that academia is not really a career option considered by many women. This shows that social ideologies about jobs and careers may still have strong influence, even as women are exposed to postgraduate study, and universities are supposed to be attracting more women into academic positions and can act as constraints for women in academia.

An intrinsic motivation to produce knowledge, write, research and influence others by teaching appears as a personal conversion factor that impacts on entering an academic career.

Intrinsic motivation is both a personal and a social factor, as the desire to write and research, for example, is often influenced by both family background and schooling, where individuals' skills in these areas have been developed and enhanced, and a strong interest in teaching develops over time and with experience.

Similarly, a push for academic achievement from early on (schooling) or during undergraduate and postgraduate studies from mentors or teachers who recognise the academic potential of a candidate is also an important conversion factor enabling an academic career. PhD completion emerges as an important conversion factor, as it is an achievement that marks the possibility of becoming an academic and one which opens up a range of opportunities for academic women. Equally, not having a PhD is a barrier to entering academia and can prevent achieving stability in an academic job.

Several of the participants have had to overcome feelings of inadequacy, not belonging, and not being good enough. These personal factors can prevent people from succeeding but overcoming them appears to be an important factor in entering academic working lives. In some cases strong personal motivation can overcome prior disadvantage, such as educational difficulties, or lack of early access to postgraduate studies and not being able to study full-time.

Understanding conversion factors that enable and constrain early career academic women is important to make sense of the complexities of women's choices to take on academic jobs and whether or not to remain in them. The next section explores the nature of academic work and careers as interpreted through the narratives of the participants in this study and starts to identify the elements of functioning as an academic that the participants value.

Narratives about the nature of academic work

Most of those interviewed acknowledge that they have a great deal of flexibility in how they arrange their working hours, being able to fit these around personal needs. This comes through as being important for all of them.

Anna has a "development[18]" post designed specifically for early career academics, which allows her to focus on her PhD, and includes a light teaching load and clear blocks of time off for completion. Her previous experience was at a North American university, where she started her PhD work, and had a much higher teaching load. So the flexibility and space she has been provided now are important to her and she recognises these as a luxury that early career academics in other parts of the world may not have. Emma expresses the same view:

> The flexibility of being an academic is absolutely awesome, particularly being a researcher. I don't work in a department that's highly regulated in terms of number of hours spent in my office. So if I'm finding it easier to write at home or at a coffee shop, I just do that, and as long as I show up to staff meetings, nobody's terribly worried about where I am. So long as I hit those research targets (Emma).

Both Abby and Amanda, who have young children, like the flexibility, which allows them to fit in time with their children and to work around their family commitments. Abby describes the work culture as quite "laid-back". The flexibility takes the form of allowing each academic the freedom to choose their own hours and pace of work, while meeting particular outcome or performance targets. These targets vary, depending on institutional environments and the teaching loads of the individual. Abby and Amanda, for example, have not had the time to focus on their PhDs that Anna has had. Amanda had a month to finish writing her PhD but has had to maintain a significant teaching load. Abby has a large teaching load, and recently requested a 6-month teaching buy-out so that she can work on her PhD. She was only granted three months, because the Department is under-staffed. So, although it may have been possible in terms of the rules for her to obtain a longer break, the circumstances of her department mean that she cannot. These reflect the conditions of their home departments, which differ even within the same faculty of one institution. Teaching loads depend on the availability of specialist staff, the size of the department and the way in which workload models are developed. In both cases teaching had to be prioritised over PhD completion. For those who have just completed or are about to complete their PhDs (Amanda, Abby and Anna), this has been their most important focus, and the primary target of their research

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[18] A development post is an academic post, usually filled for a three-year period, specifically targeted at people in "designated" groups – those who are black and women and under-represented in employment and in universities, with the intention of attracting more black and women staff into academic posts, and providing conditions that will allow them to produce work that can lead to a permanent appointment – i.e. to produce research, complete a PhD etc. These posts typically allow for lighter teaching commitments than is usual for early career academics, to ensure that this group are able to complete PhDs, start publishing etc

work, so they do not have other significant research projects underway. However they are all required to produce publications (at least one output annually). This is easier for Amanda, who has completed her PhD and is confident that she will be able to generate a few publications from it.

Other participants who are developing their personal areas of research say how much they enjoy their research work. Harriet has just produced a single-authored book based on her own research, which positions her as a leading scholar in her sub-field, and she really enjoys working with postgraduates. In fact, as mentioned earlier, being able to work on her own research was a key factor for Harriet in becoming an academic. Irene loves doing research and says that there isn't a day that goes by that she doesn't write something, even if it is just a few ideas or sentences. Emma enjoys the relative freedom of her focus area, which is something that not many South Africans are working on. For her this means that there is more latitude for her as people do not try to "inject themselves into my space." Maria was about to go on a six-month sabbatical when she was interviewed and was looking forward to the time to research, travel, and the break from administration, meetings, and teaching. She says that over time, research has become her priority, but she has very little time to write as she teaches courses with over 500 students:

> I do like the lifestyle. It comes with this illusion that you drive your hours and the commitments that you have. And to a certain extent that is true. I mean, you do…but it just ends up being that no matter what you do you end up working quite a lot…but it does mean that you can decide when you are going to fit in that doctor's appointment, or if there's something very important you can move around your schedule, with the exception of courses (Maria).

Inherent in the discourses is the idea that there may be different kinds of academic career. Not only have the women taken different routes to becoming academics but they bring different backgrounds and have interests in various aspects of being an academic.

Administrative work, predictably, comes through as least popular. This includes course coordination and development, supporting undergraduate students, and faculty or department-based meetings.

....in fact my first couple of years here were bliss, when I was simply a contract lecturer, and I just taught a few little courses, and I wrote some articles, did my own research. But now I'm part of the senior academic management team, and I'm doing curriculum proposals, and I'm dealing with badly behaved students and staff... (Harriet).

There is also a range of administrative work that academics sometimes have to do, depending on the support available and whether they can negotiate for a staff member to assist them. As few have access to full-time or exclusive administrative support they may have to spend time doing things like photocopying. The point here is that it is up to individual academics to ensure that they complete all the necessary tasks and access the necessary support. It is not automatically available and must be negotiated and shared within their context. While most do not describe the administrative work as a key focus of being an academic, they are aware that this is something that comes with the job. However, in most cases, the goal is to reduce administrative pressures as much as possible, achieve greater independence and autonomy over their work which, it is assumed, comes with greater seniority. That is, in order to progress you must do some administrative work. However this work, it seems, is not uniform across departments. In one department, a previous head introduced a system of openly allocating workloads – so that all workloads are made transparent. In this context, it is difficult to hold the perception that allocations are unfair. However, in most contexts, this is not the case, and therefore inequality can be perceived.

There was more than one mention of men making "meteoric" rises in their academic careers, because of research output or research grant money, and the perception is that they get away with doing little administrative work. Performance in other areas is not valued as much and therefore may work against some groups of academics, particularly those who have high teaching loads and who are more junior.

What comes across as a challenge for all those interviewed is the "relentless" nature of academic work. It is not a job that you can switch off from. Harriet describes the relentlessness in this way:

You know, just that sense that there's always stuff you ought to be doing, and I think that's where I find it tough, because there's always a sense, you know, you're wasting

> time or doing nothing...you know I'm reading a trashy novel and I really ought to be
> compiling a course pack (Harriet).

She relates this to the multi-dimensional nature of academic work, operating at a range of different conceptual levels at the same time, as well as dealing with current and future planning:

> and I think what also surprised me about academic work is the constant forward
> casting and throwing your rod into the water for something in the future that might or
> might not happen...you know a conference next year, when is the deadline for the
> abstracts? Or funding: there's a deadline now for money that would come...I think it's
> very multidimensional....not just the forward-looking nature of it - that you have to
> think ahead. It's also you have to think ahead in all these different levels and spaces,
> you know? (Harriet).

The relentlessness and multi-dimensionality described by Harriet resonates with the literature on 'greedy' institutions (Currie et al., 2000), where extra hours are necessary to be effective in an academic job, which means that time is borrowed from family, relaxation and sleep in order to keep up with demands. According to Acker, "like housework, academic work is never really done" (Acker, 1994: 126 quoted in Currie et al., 2000: 271). As Currie et al. (2000) show, this is highly gendered, as ideas about what makes successful academics are based on ideal structuring of jobs, which do not resonate with the lives of many academics, predominantly women. Acker and Feuerverger's work (1996) also showed how this leads to women academics "feeling bad" as they cannot meet the requirements of reward systems, despite working hard to meet expectations. It should be noted that these aspects of gendered institutional environments tend to be bad for women because of broader social pressures, but they can also be bad for men. Currie et al.'s study showed that both women and men had concerns about overwork and believed:

> that the combination of work demands and an increasingly competitive ethos
> produced an anti-family, anti-social environment which was injurious to their personal
> commitments and values (Currie et al., 2000: 275).

The whole group struggles with adapting to this multi-dimensional nature of academic work. The relative flexibility of working hours does not take away the personal responsibility for

getting a range of tasks done. So, while they value the independence and autonomy that academic working lives offer, this is also constrained by the need to perform both complex work and different kinds of work. Adding to the description of the "relentless" nature of academic work, Harriet comments:

> well, when can I take leave? Because it's never, it's never a good time. And I think it impacts on.... like I've had a hip replacement, I need another hip replacement, and instead of thinking, 'when do I need the hip replacement', I'm thinking 'well I can't do it in 2016 because...and maybe... but 2017, that's going to be a problem because of the new BA that's running'....but that's how I think, you know? (Harriet).

Madea describes something similar:

> I always work on the weekend. I don't know how you can do it without that...this is just perpetual...I think I am struggling with the fact that it doesn't end...my friends that are teachers, you can switch off and watch TV and not care. Here you can't switch off. You're always thinking there's five more articles that I can read or something...(Madea).

Maria struggles with her teaching workload, with large classes and very few people assisting in the marking of hundreds of exam papers. For her there is an ambiguity in the university about what kind of institution it is:

> I like that this university has made it clear that it is a research-led university. What I don't like is how this is discussed and promoted. The language used is that we're a research-led university, but my workload...we are told we have 20% research...that's not a research-led university (Maria).

For Maria the teaching workloads are high, and this makes it difficult to thrive doing research, so there is a clear tension for her between teaching demands and producing research outputs:

> ...I didn't come into the PhD or into academia thinking that I was going to love writing and love doing my research. But I have been lucky enough that I'm looking at issues right now within the university...with university students that are really exciting to me,

that I'm committed to and that I have partnerships with, and I am collaborating with people. So it has become my priority and I just find on an everyday basis it's really, really difficult to write. It's really difficult to look at your day, to gather data while you're in the middle of, well really massification (Maria).

Madea compares herself to a colleague who started at the university at the same time as her. This colleague has focused on her research:

She didn't take on any other roles and I just watched her career. It's just been totally different to mine...I mean, currently she's on six months sabbatical...if I look at her publication records, mine doesn't even come close to that (Madea).

The reasons for this may be complex, but from Madea's story it appeared that at the start of her job she was drawn into the administration of a course with large numbers of students, and spent considerable time in her first two years doing administrative work and working on the teaching programme of the faculty. This meant that she did not focus on developing her own research work. As Morley et al. have shown:

The gendered division of labour can mean that women can get tied to domestic, everyday responsibilities in the workplace, with limited opportunities to think strategically about their careers or develop their social capital (Morley et al., 2006: 112).

The challenge to negotiate workloads and tasks that allow each person to develop and grow towards her own career aspirations is a strong theme of the interviews. The institution appears to rely on the informal processes that allow some staff (mainly women) to take on teaching and administrative tasks, while allowing others (mainly men) to focus on their own professional development through research. This may result in a form of gendered discrimination at an institutional level but is difficult to identify as institutional practice from this small sample. It does show, however, that creating greater equity in the institution may require a clearer focus on how institutional policy is implemented at every level of the university. In Irene's department, where transparent workload models were introduced, this has been an important equaliser to avoid perceptions that some people are burdened with more teaching or administrative responsibilities than they should be. In Madea's view,

however, there is little space in the university for different career trajectories and recognising academic work other than research:

> I don't think there's any respect for administrative tasks and administrative work....I asked one senior academic, when I was pouring my heart out to him. 'How are you guys making this work?' And he actually just put it into such a nice perspective. He said to me, 'what is it that you want to be known for? Why are you unique?' He said 'if you're going to tell me you're great at lecturing, every university has someone like you lecturing, so that doesn't make you special. If you're going to tell me you're good at running this office', he says, 'every university has one of you. What makes you unique in that?'...it was gut-wrenching...He said 'if you leave here, what do you take with you?...it's your publications...because that', he said, 'you own. That is yours...your portfolio, your CV that will make you stand out and unique and employable should you want to go somewhere else, is your publications and what you contribute to the field' (Madea).

For Madea, it was a difficult thing to hear, as it felt like a rejection of all the hard administrative and teaching responsibilities she had taken on, and it emphasised the importance of reducing her administrative load. After all, someone must do the administrative work. She also feels that unless she learns to adopt the academic "vocabulary" as part of her everyday speech, then she will get left behind. Here she means that part of learning to fit in to an academic department is learning to speak in the language and style of academic life. For her the different aspects of academia are like different worlds:

> It's like I live in two different worlds...It's like we're on a different planet that way we speak, the way we do things, the way we function (Madea).

This may also be a result of her background as a school-teacher and principal. Academics who operate in more applied fields, which require workplace-based and industry-linked experience may also experience similar concerns. For Madea, becoming an academic is a second career and integrating a new research identity with an already-established teaching identity is a challenge. Despite this, she values the administrative work:

> But what I will tell you has been good with that administrative role is that it's given me a bird's eye view of this institution in the quickest way possible...what I understand about systems and how things work. It's also given me the platform to meet academics that would have never even taken note of me (Madea).

She also values her engagement work, working with school principals and interacting with people outside the university. Again, she feels that this work is not recognised:

> I think the only thing that'll be recognised is publications, how much funding I can get and how many conferences I've presented at. I'm so much more than that. I'll do it and I'll do it well, but I'm going to balance it. So instead of spending my energy to have hundreds of publications, I'll probably have fifty and still balance it doing my community work, doing my talks, doing my uplifting stuff, because that is what will keep me charged (Madea).

Her focus for the next academic year is to push her research outputs. She aspires to be a professor but thinks that she is far away from it. She finished her PhD long before she started working at university and feels that she has a "backlog". This feeling of always being one step behind where you should be is common for those who have not yet established their research expertise.

For Anna, there is a challenge in not only working out how to publish, but also where to publish. There are publications that you must target in order to progress. This makes it difficult to choose a different research trajectory, or show an interest in an alternative disciplinary course: "if you're interested in more silent things that don't have prestigious journals, you're not going to get much credit for it" (Anna).

Maria values her teaching, though she is keen to have more time to do her research. She finds value in helping students, particularly those from working class backgrounds:

> ...so I suppose it really does mean a lot to me when students consult with me and are serious about their work and want to get ahead, especially students that come from very humble backgrounds, and they come in, and they might be scared, they might not know what they are doing, but they are asking and they're being brave and they're

engaging with the work, so that's also very inspiring...And I understand. I think I've been there, especially if you come from a family where you haven't been prepared to do university. You don't have the background: your family members and your mum and dad haven't been to university...so, very few students are actually coming and engaging with me, but I think those that do just make it incredibly rewarding (Maria).

Madea has also struggled to develop a research identity, coming from a teaching background. She loves teaching:

I'll tell you what I really love...I love being in front of these students, with my entire being. I love those lectures, I love the tutorials, and I love interacting with them. In fact, no matter how crappy my day is, that is what I enjoy (Madea).

She describes her development as a researcher as "bittersweet". This is partly because she has had a heavy teaching load and had a position managing the teaching in the school, which brings a high administrative workload. Managing these competing interests and expectations has been difficult for her. However, she is growing into the research and writing:

...when I finally made the decision to say, look, I want to pursue this...and I saw writing and academia as a creative part of how to express myself creatively...I think it was that...just getting over and getting these things done and that constant pressure on you...which I didn't enjoy...I mean I'm actually quite enjoying supervising, you know, my post-grads, which I've picked up more and more now. I'm really getting into this whole writing thing. I've really struggled with it, but I'm starting to view it as a creative project...it's been an adjustment (Madea).

Madea also believes that she has a responsibility towards her students to prepare them for their professional roles. The professional practice of becoming a teacher is important and modelling good teaching to students is part of this. University teaching is demanding and time-intensive and paying attention to research only can neglect students:

I'll feel like I'm doing them an injustice, because I feel like I've come here to say let's improve education, and that's not the agenda currently...so the agenda to improve education by contributing to the body of literature or improve education by inputting

into teaching...those two agendas are two totally separate worlds. So I'll have to kind of, live in both (Madea).

In this context, the importance of the professional development of academics in respect to teaching and the importance of developing scholarship relating to teaching and learning comes to the fore, and Madea and Amanda's concerns about the value of teaching are elevated. Of course, teaching and research are two important elements of academic work and of the life of a university. In reality, the multi-dimensional and hierarchical nature of academic jobs makes it difficult to balance these and other demands. Listening to the frustration of early career academics coming through the narratives shows this is an area requiring further investigation.

Harriet is very clear that she has had to learn what it is that the institution values, which is clearly research output, not the support, emails, power-points and meeting attendance. This has made her think very carefully about putting time aside to write and protecting this time:

a student will say can I have a supervision appointment at a certain time, and I just say no, I've got research commitments off campus. I can't come in. Whereas previously I would be too scared that they would report me as being unavailable. You know so I've learned those kinds of things (Harriet).

This must be balanced carefully, as it is not possible to completely opt out of administrative responsibilities in favour of research writing. If the head of school calls a meeting, she will adjust her research times to come in for a meeting: "that's her prerogative. I won't assume that it's my right to stay home and write for a day" (Harriet).

She thinks that these are the kinds of adjustments that early career academics need to make, learning what to say yes and no to and how to juggle demands. You must publish, you must supervise, you must teach, you must attend meetings, you must do administrative work, you must meet with students:

And being a newcomer in the university, the terrain is complex, you're navigating a very complex political terrain. Finding your own place in this complexity...the disciplinary specialists will say, well, you have to excel in your discipline...the

transformation[19] imperative says, we need to focus on student success...the course coordinator says, I need some administration from you. So, it's being pulled in very many different directions. And that I think impeded identity formation of any kind (Senior Manager/administrator)

How you balance these demands is a learning curve that each academic has to work out for themselves:

I think the challenges for early career academics is kind of working out how to navigate the institutional demands (Harriet).

According to Harriet, you must learn to become more "assertive" - learning to be on leave without always responding to emails, and learning not to promise things that will be difficult to deliver, thereby prioritising her research and writing work. For Harriet this is linked to a clear career strategy. For her, becoming an academic required her to be:

ambitious and self-directed and also because becoming an academic was aspirational...I really went out of my way to pursue it as a second career (Harriet).

Emma also talks about the importance of learning to say "no" and as she elaborates, this is a particularly gendered conundrum:

Women often get overburdened with teaching and administrative responsibilities so they don't hit their publishing targets and then they don't get promoted. But there's got to be something coming from both ways. Women need to stop saying yes to everything put in front of them, and as a post-doc that is extraordinarily difficult because you want a post. So saying no is very unpopular. I still say no, but I mean it comes with cost...(Emma).

At a personal level there is a need to achieve some sort of balance by developing strategies to prioritise the multi-dimensional work expectations. This includes learning to cope with the

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[19] Transformation is a contested term in South African higher education, as described in chapter one, but in this context, the participant is referring to the imperative to improve student success, particularly for black students, in a context in which large numbers of students do not reach graduation, as linked to the articulation gap between school and university.

perceived individualistic cultures of academia by learning to make choices about what to agree to and what to refuse. These appear as complex daily choices for some of the participants who talk about "learning to say no" as a critical part of their career development.

All agree that promotion policies and probation might be fair on paper but may not be fairly implemented. The university management structure is largely devolved so that faculties and departments can follow different procedures and make decisions in different ways, with the effect that people can be treated very differently:

> And of course there should be variation with some flexibility, but not so wide as to where someone who's been here for twenty years versus someone who's been here for six years are treated so differently (Amanda).

May believes the promotion system may be open to abuse as it seems fairly "arbitrary". While publications and other aspects of the portfolio are considered for promotion, there are always exceptions:

> it feels fairly arbitrary. I know people my own age who have fewer publications than I have, who already occupy senior lecturer positions, which seems a little illogical to me. I also know some people who are assistant professors or associate professors, who don't have books but have been promoted…and I understand that there are politics around that…but it does seem to me that there is no specific set of guidelines…(May.)

The promotions policies do require a subjective element of assessment from other academics, and according to a university manager, this can create opportunities for abuse. When you have been "constructed as somebody who is not working well with people", then because of the way the process works, it:

> was designed particularly in such a way that the people themselves must approve you coming on board…and that approval would not only be on the basis of whether or not you can produce. They have other things, such as whether or not you work with them nicely (Senior Faculty Manager).

Academics need to conform to certain expectations. This is something that all participants talked about and all are grappling with how to come to terms with the range of expectations upon them, while also learning about what areas they should focus on in order to get ahead. For those completing PhDs, this is obviously the primary goal. None of the group identified specific discrimination in promotion policy and practice, though there are clear concerns about who appears to progress in academia, and who does not:

> Now that I'm not on probation anymore it really is about your own goals and your own trajectory in terms of wanting to get promoted. So there are guidelines in terms of how many you need to meet senior lecturer, to meet associate professor, to meet full professor. The problem with that is that the guidelines aren't…there's discrepancies. So I know some people who have been promoted with very few publications and others haven't been…and it varies by discipline and I suppose it also varies by impact factor, how much weight your publications hold (Maria).

Maria recently explored the possibility of putting herself forward for promotion. She was advised by her head of school to wait a few months:

> It's difficult knowing that you have a good case and you could do it now, but it's also important to be strategic and not piss people off or burn your bridges and say, no I'm doing it now. I mean, it's stupid to go up for promotion if you don't have the support of your head of school, even if you think you rightly should have it, even if you think you're being treated unfairly…(Maria).

This is a difficult issue for her: how to be "savvy" about promotion and planning. In her experience you must be "pro-active":

> …if you don't, no one's going to hold your hand and tell you look, you're at this point in your career. This is when you need to go upstairs and knock on someone's door and demand this…I think it's also a fine balance of, you know, knowing when it's OK, knowing when it's strategic to stand up for yourself and knowing when you just hold on and you wait (Maria).

She also describes the support for new researchers as "uneven". Professional development opportunities exist, but are not always easy to access, and participation is voluntary. She has, fortunately, benefited from a mentor who has been very supportive. She feels however, that there are often hidden factors, like a lack of funding, that place restrictions on the number of people being promoted. This means that merit is not the only criteria when people are put forward for promotion.

For Amanda, the anxiety about becoming rated by the National Research Foundation (NRF) affects her view of the possibility of success in her field:

> So it's like this immediate pressure of failure. Judgement and failure. Even though that is not the sum total of the experience of what you do on a daily basis. And you know, more and more faculty are pushing that you need to start applying to get rated. And so you take one year off from publishing, and you lose your rating. It's….so you know there are other things that even if you're on an academic kind of academic development angle, what does it mean for that kind of research profile, and ratings (Amanda).

A senior manager in the faculty outlines how the promotion process can be gendered. In her experience women respond differently to the promotion process:

> I find that women academics are much more doubtful about what they need to put down and how they position themselves, and in fact will find it very hard to say what needs to be said, what they're actually doing. They think that, I'm bragging (Senior Faculty Manager)

Her view is that men need less assurance that they are meeting the criteria, whereas women often must be persuaded that they meet the criteria. This means that a targeted approach to promotion may be necessary to support women who qualify for, or are close to qualifying for promotion:

> I identify people in each (employment) category and see who is on the cusp. Then I go to them and say, this is what you need to do, and this is how you meet the criteria, and you go out and do it. And even that still takes a year or two to persuade the person

they must do it...So you're not making the criteria easier...you're making the criteria explicit and you're saying, look, you match the criteria (Senior Faculty Manager).

She describes a range of projects within the faculty to support demographic change (both race and gender), which involve creating "the enabling conditions to accelerate the movement" at different levels of the academy, "looking at the full pipeline" from masters level to PhD to post-docs and from lecturer level up the academic ranks. Each school in the faculty must have a staffing plan. She indicates that the work is time consuming and requires commitment from several people as it requires "very, very delicate discussions on career development". There is sensitivity on a few fronts, including those who are targeted who may feel that they can do it alone, and that they are part of a transformation project.

This approach is about transforming the profile of the humanities faculty, so that there is a "multiplier effect" of movement of women, and not just one or two being promoted. The work she describes is an intentional approach to change the demographics of the academic staff in the faculty. It is not without its difficulties because of the devolved nature of the structure. She describes it as "complex terrain" because even with a targeted approach of working with individual academics, they must "go back to the department and negotiate it...he or she must not be seen as getting preferential treatment (Senior Faculty Manager):

> Because you can create as enabling an environment as you want to...the stumbling block is in the corridor...You can have wonderful initiatives and availability of research funding, and you'll talk about it at a faculty exec but it won't go anywhere further (Senior Faculty Manager).

The targeted process is also described as being complex, because it involves facilitating access to the necessary tools, time and funding, as well as facilitating agency of individual academics. She describes career pathing as "a delicate job" which involves "building identity" of individuals at the same time as developing an institution. It therefore also involves making the vision of the faculty "transparent".

Though they accept that there are many kinds of academic work, many in this group have indicated that they struggle with its multi-dimensional nature and the need to perform a wide range of tasks. The relative freedom is constrained by the complexity and volume of the work.

Although in theory academics have the autonomy to work flexibly and choose what they value, in reality the freedom to make these choices is constrained by many factors. These could be workloads and formal job expectations or the ability of individual academics to negotiate the space to take on the work they value, while meeting the expectations of the job.

This section provided insight into the professional functionings that might be valued by early career academic women. The participants indicated the areas in which they have achieved professional functioning and also the areas in which they would like to achieve functioning and stability, and therefore the kinds of professional attributes and skills that might be necessary for being recognised as a successful academic and indeed "feeling" like a successful academic. On the one hand, participants relate the need to overcome a range of personal anxieties and insecurities before they can function successfully as academics. This is different for everyone, but includes feelings of not belonging as academics, not feeling confident as researchers, and not understanding the expectations of academic work. For several participants, there is evidence that they start out feeling like "imposters", and some never lose this sense of being an outsider, even as they achieve more seniority. A range of conversion factors support the identity development/acquisition process, and some negatively impact on the esteem of individuals, delaying their progress.

Achieving a sense of belonging as a researcher, academic or lecturer is both a matter of personal identity and about feeling recognised by the institution. Within the institutional environment there is a need to learn to "play the game" which involves developing an understanding of the multiple expectations on academics and adopting strategies to do the things that will gain recognition and acceptance within the institution. This includes understanding and performing as a teacher, knowing how to be a good researcher, academic writing for publishing, learning how to apply for research funding (and other funding such as teaching buy-outs) and learning to say "no" to things that may take time but deliver little reward. This is a common concern for all the participants.

So, both understanding the complexities of academic work and the expectations on them - that is, what they must do to get ahead, and what they can say no to, is an important part of achieving professional balance. This leads to a key valued functioning of early career academics, achieved by some in this group, and merely an aspiration for others: the autonomy to choose what you teach and to conduct research in your area of interest. Autonomy and

independence appear both as aspiration and as beginning-to-be-an-achieved functioning for a small number of the group. Achieving a clear identity as a researcher is also important for a sense of belonging of many in the group. This is because research achievement is the most important measure of success in the academy. It appears strongly in the interviews that even though teaching and community engagement and administrative/other institutional work may be expected of academics, they do not contribute to academic status in the same way. This is a strong theme in the interviews and is also informed by examples of women who have taught at the university without moving up the hierarchy because they have not published adequately. For some, learning to play the game is also about letting go of as many administrative and teaching responsibilities as possible, as there is a strong view that people who get ahead do so by limiting their responsibilities as much as possible to be able to focus on their own publishing.

For some, who achieve satisfaction from and who intrinsically value teaching, this is difficult to accept, and they have to develop different coping mechanisms. One is to recognise the enjoyment from teaching but acknowledge that one has to fulfil minimum publishing and research conditions in order to get ahead. In Madea's view, teaching and research are "separate worlds" but she is beginning to enjoy her research work. The other coping mechanism is Amanda's adaptive aspirations – she does not think that she will make it as a regular academic, but that she will end up working in the academic development and support field (which includes scholarship of teaching). She sees an interest in teaching and work as a researcher as incompatible. For most of the participants however, coping is about learning to successfully navigate the multi-dimensional expectations of academic work, and to find a balance between teaching, administrative work and making time to do your own research, which is the key to becoming more senior.

This in turn is the key to gaining more autonomy, which is the key valued functioning, and leads to a greater sense of belonging in a university and a developed academic identity. The autonomy to choose your own priorities within the range of possible academic trajectories and pursue this independently while also being recognised for it through achieving recognition and promotion is highly prized. This is more straightforward for those who wish to prioritise research achievements, because it is closer to how institutions recognise academic careers. Autonomy may be the most important capability for the well-being achievement of academics, as expressed through those who are navigating academic careers as early career academics.

Where such a capability is constrained, universities need to consider different departmental and university arrangements.

The next section addresses professional development and support available to early career academics.

Narratives of professional development experiences

According to one of the senior faculty administrators interviewed, there is a targeted approach to professional development in the faculty:

> We recognise that early career academics have a trajectory to build and that trajectory needs to be built in a targeted way, in a focused way, with particular kinds of interventions (Senior Faculty Manager).

This support involves those appointed in junior positions (associate lecturer or lecturer level) being placed on a probation or developmental career track, which exposes them to certain professional development opportunities in the areas in which will be expected to perform as academics. Mentoring is not an absolute requirement for this period, because mentoring is "contested" with some academics feeling "patronised" by mentorship being forced upon them. She also indicated that mentoring can be uneven and requires commitment from both sides. In addition, mentorship for different aspects of academic work can create competing messages.

Induction programmes are available but are not compulsory. It is necessary to do a "suite of courses" within your first three years, covering research expertise, supervision expertise, and teaching and learning. This includes both face-to-face and online courses. The faculty also offers support through writing "retreats":

> but young academics still have a hard time deciding which ones to take, which ones not to take. How to prioritise what's important. And I think that goes back to the complexity of the terrain- the hierarchies of what needs to be done, when, how, and so on... (Senior Faculty Manager).

Madea has been part of a formal group in her school for early career researchers, which has been a source of learning and development for her, and also opened her up to a community of practice that she had not yet found. She wishes that she could have had this support right from the beginning as it would have helped her career:

> What I've learned this year, if I learned this in my first year I probably would have sky-rocketed a long time ago. This insight she has given us has just made me think about things very, very differently. It's probably been the most amazing thing that's happened…we've done everything…from funding applications, writing… a targeted conference that we go to and we all had to write… and then we were talking about our research projects, research ideas. She's brought in extra speakers to talk about journals…what do they look for? But it was this community of practice we also knew was there. We could be open and honest and be ourselves…So, to me that was the best orientation I've ever received (Madea).

The community of practice has been important for Madea because it has exposed her to other researchers who are struggling and has also provided a comfortable space to seek support from those who are doing well in their research.

Not everyone has a formal mentor. In one case, the appointment was not made in her first year, but only after having been in a post for at least a year. However, it has been very useful for her in dealing with funding applications, addressing ethical questions in research, and a range of other complex issues. All the participants indicated that a mentor relationship would be useful to them. They have all had a range of academic mentors, senior researchers in their network, their PhD supervisors and others:

> And I think what worked for me was I had a sense of the other significant networks outside of the school. So, I had access to the Dean, to particular members of faculty in a way that (others) did not have (Irene).

Madea's view is that mentorship is critical for an academic career and can "make or break you":

I think if you've got the right mentor, you will go beyond what you can do. Because that person will take you under their wing, they'll take it seriously and they'll open doors for you...if you've got someone who is not the right person you will stagnate (Madea).

In particular, she would have done better to have a mentor who could support her in the areas where she is weak, i.e. publishing, attending conferences, writing etc. Early career academics often join the research projects of their mentors and are supported with information about which journals to publish in, and how to do this. She regrets that she has not had this support. What emerges is that there is no generic early career female academic, although there are areas of common experience. Different people need different kinds of support. Harriet does not need the writing groups or support but has needed help navigating the huge range of expectations upon her and working out the administrative processes. The "big challenge is navigating what you need to do in the future, together with what you need to know. And understanding what counts" (Harriet).

It appears that the best kind of support that can be provided in the early career is to target individuals "where they are at" and provide forms of tailored and self-directed support. This could include formal mentorship and providing clear advice to early career academics in the different aspects of their work. A recent set of studies across African universities looking at the induction of early career academics into teaching found that support for early career academics needs to be over time (as opposed to once off inductions) and tailored to the particular needs of individual academics. This requires continuous professional development and should include formal mentoring and communities of practice (Subbaye and Dhunpath, 2016; Cossa et al., 2016; Alabi and Abdulai, 2016). When first entering an academic job, a new academic is in "survival mode":

...in the first year it's survival mode. In the second year there's some identity formation. And then by third year you can see that they're establishing themselves (Senior Faculty Manager).

Mentorship is clearly an important enabler to becoming a successful academic, but in the case of the majority, most of their mentorship has been informal. This means that they might not

have had the right kind of support at the right time. For most, the professional development process is quite lonely and has required drawing on personal strategies to get ahead.

Emma indicates that she has been blocked from getting access to the work that would help her to meet criteria for promotion or obtaining a permanent job. Her first "host" (the person responsible for her post-doc position) blocked her from access to teaching and supervision. "he was happy to let me do the work but didn't want me to get the credit." She describes the "bottle-necking of supervision" as a broader problem in the Department, with senior male members of the Department blocking supervision opportunities for female members of staff. Her new host (in a new post-doctoral position) has been different and is more encouraging, drawing her into a workload review for the Department and providing more active mentorship. Madea talks a lot about the importance of mentorship, and that early career academics need to be properly inducted into academic work, with careful thought given to mentorship needs and to the kind of information that needs to be provided to new entrants:

> ...as a newbie when you're trying to get information, you can't get it from anyone. Because people are too afraid to actually admit that it's trial and error, sink or swim. There is no clear formula. That is what I've learned. People are too afraid to share their secrets because my opinion is that most times it was just by fluke or by luck. Those who are open and honest about it will admit to that...And so, again, if you're not going to get the good support, I think you're dead (Madea).

A formal programme might circumvent new academics having mixed experiences and might also commit mentors and senior academics to particular roles. Academic work is opaque and in Madea's view most people have learned in different ways and from working things out themselves:

> If you're initiated properly into this, a lot of heartache can be solved...I attended a course and I was asking her a lot of questions and the person said, well, if you don't know the answers to this, then maybe you shouldn't be in academia. And I was taken aback, because I thought well, am I supposed to know everything? ...and I think it's partly because people don't know either. They've just learned by default and they've kind of worked it out (Madea).

She believes there needs to be a more structured system that includes incentives to supervisors to support new entrants to academia:

> But it also needs to be written somewhere, you know. Firstly, I think there should be a list of people who have said, I volunteer to be a mentor…we hear a lot of talk about what incentives are there for people, you know, what work implications? Everyone's just worried about the work implications, you know? Mentorship needs to be incentivised. If you incentivise it, I think people take it seriously, and that should count for something…that I've actually mentored three newbies, and this is what they've achieved through my mentorship…and that counts, because that's an important role (Madea).

Anna is relatively new to her department, and has perhaps not yet found her feet, with her priority being the completion of the PhD. She appears to be somewhat isolated, and though she has been given six months to work only on her PhD and complete it, there appear to have been few attempts to actively draw her into the department. She also does not have a formal mentor. Her recent experience of entering the university has been mixed, with a warm welcome from the dean, and a series of faculty and university-wide inductions, but little engagement with her departmental colleagues. She only discovered that there was a school common room after several months of being in the department. As she came from a North American university, she tends to draw first on her international networks.

There is some evidence that adjusting to the nature of academic work can leave people feeling isolated. The participants had a range of experiences in entering academia, as described above, and entered with different kinds of personal resources and relationships that could help them adjust. There is no uniform approach to allocating mentors. All had informal mentorship relationships with a variety of people, including PhD supervisors, and departmental colleagues. Only a few had been allocated a formal "mentor" as part of their entry into a new post, and often this does not happen at the moment of entering a new post, but quite far into their careers. There is also no standard approach to induction.

Harriet was assigned a mentor in her second year "who's been great", as she has been able to talk through many things:

should I join the academic staff union, where to publish, ethical issues...the kind of things that you can't know...how to get things done...nothing gets done without an ask and then a reminder, and then another reminder, and then sometimes a reminder of the next person up, and...(Harriet).

She did not, however, get a formal induction and since she did not start out with a mentor, it has taken a while to learn how to operate. Of her first few months she says: "You know, I had no idea what I was doing half the time" (Harriet). Anna seems to be having a similar experience, working out what to do, and slowly discovering the things that she needs, sometimes by accident.

The faculty management team have identified that the induction process for new staff is relatively limited and varies enormously and have plans for a more comprehensive induction process. A senior faculty manager indicated that one of the other faculties has a strong induction programme involving some compulsory teaching support. The challenge, he indicated, is that it is difficult to have a generic programme across the faculty, given the range of disciplinary differences. However, he confirmed that the approach was very "ad hoc" and that a number of new academics come in with little experience, particularly in teaching, and "in the process of figuring it out, they rely very much on a specific mentor in a discipline". But according to some of the feedback they have received, mentorship often involves just sitting down for coffee to say welcome and then new academics are "sort of left to their own devices". In order to access the help they need "they have to get over their own fear...put themselves out there" (Senior Faculty Manager).

All participants were aware of a range of professional development opportunities available to them, and many had been given this information formally on appointment. However, their ability to access these opportunities is determined by their own ability to act, to make decisions about what might assist, and to find the time to attend courses. These are not always possible, given teaching responsibilities, and so must be fitted in as another layer of work. So, the opportunities are available, and the academics are aware of them, but there is no uniform access to these, as they are dependent on individuals negotiating their own time and identifying priorities. In the case of those working on their PhDs, this takes precedence over other (non-compulsory) activities. Accessing formal professional development activities is suggested as a luxury that very few have the time for:

I mean, I have got emails about 'come to this writing retreat' and stuff like that. Writing retreat with you know child and family is not going to happen...And similarly, you know in the first semester I couldn't do any of those courses, those are full day courses, and I was teaching three days a week, so...(Amanda).

These are important points for considering the ability of early career academics to achieve functioning and wellbeing in their professional lives. Although many areas of support may be available to academics: formal and informal mentorship; professional development opportunities (to support teaching and research skills development); induction programmes and other programmes; their ability to take advantage of these programmes is sometimes constrained by other factors. In this way the availability of support does not necessarily translate into the freedom to properly access that support. This is an important consideration for institutions that are focused on encouraging more people into academic careers and retaining women and black academics in the academy. The availability of professional development opportunities is not on its own enough to ensure that academics are able to access the right kinds of support. Providing the opportunities is the first step but creating the conditions of possibility for academic staff to access the support they need is the next.

According to a faculty manager the challenge is also assigning time and responsibility to people to ensure that induction processes are implemented and actually work:

Typical academics, we all just want to work in our own little silo...we don't want to collaborate...I mean people...understand the benefit of something like this...but it comes down to nobody wants to actually do the work, be responsible for it, unless they are getting some sort of buy out or something (Senior Faculty Manager).

In thinking about how professional development opportunities can be offered for early career academic women, this section has provided ideas from the narratives of the women and the kinds of ways in which support can be provided and incentivised. Personal agency and resilience is important in accessing professional development opportunities, but there are also ways in which institutional conversion factors could better enable professional development opportunities to be more meaningful for this group.

Academic identity and career development

This section examines the views and aspirations of the participants about moving on in the academy. It explores their career planning and expectations and examines their professional aspirations and anxieties and what influences their planning and decision-making. This section looks again at conversion factors and valued functionings that feature in the aspirations of the group. It also explores adaptive decision-making, which features as an important part of career decision-making, is influenced by environment and appears also to be gendered.

All the participants have ambitions to progress in the academy, but their ideas about how they will get there differ. Both Harriet and Irene, who have strong research interests and are better established than the others - both being senior lecturers - are clear that they want to become professors, and Harriet has a timeline for this. The others are very uncertain about how they will progress in the academy. For Anna, her discipline is fairly male-dominated, and she describes it as an "old boy's club", despite there being two women full professors in her department. She doubts her own place in the discipline, which appears to be linked to the fact that she is still finishing her PhD, and she does not have a clear vision of the future. She wants to go further but is aware that there may be few jobs available.

Emma and May are in a similar position as post-docs with no certainty that they will obtain a permanent position in academia. They both work in a field where permanent positions do not come up frequently and are aware that they must look for posts widely, including outside the country. Both have PhDs from universities outside South Africa and are therefore part of international academic networks, while one of the women is not South African. Being a post-doc is also a "grey" space for Emma between staff and postgraduate student, where access to academic life and work is dependent on the environment in which you work (she has struggled to get access to good postgraduate supervision for example). It is also difficult to work with the uncertainty. She gives an example:

> It hugely influences your ability to even plot your own career if you're worried…after you sign a contract if it's a one year contract you kind of relax for about four months and then you start to panic…you don't know if you can apply for a conference the next year, because you don't know if you can make it…(Emma).

As a result of this she has submitted a funding proposal with a senior colleague's name, as her position does not allow her to apply for funding. This in turn creates a symbiotic relationship. She indicates that the relationship is not exploitative, as she approached him and is using his status, but the difficulty is in having to "go through these types of negotiations" (Emma).

May is also on a long-term postdoctoral contract within a research unit. For her there is a lot of anxiety about obtaining a permanent post, and about her ability to get a decent salary. She would like to get a permanent post, but is uncertain that a post will ever become available:

> Academic employment is becoming increasingly precarious...Moving from fellowship to fellowship. And that makes planning for the future really hard...I'm in my early thirties, but I kind of feel like...I can only think in three to five-year cycles. I'd like to be able to be a proper grown up and think about buying a house, you know, and settle down (May.)

Her major concern is obtaining permanency and she has a clear plan as a result of the uncertainty:

> So, I mean I do have a plan. I mean, I've got my first book out. My plans from this year have been that I'm working on my new book project that I want to be out before the end of my fellowship, so that if I need to get a job then I've got two books and that'll be easier...instead of publishing as much as I have been I'm only going to publish in really, really good journals, because it might be that I never, never publish again in my entire life...So to get really prestigious journals onto my CV I suppose (May).

She also indicates that she only goes to a conference if she can produce a publication from it: "I'm not going to conferences for the sake of going to conferences. And so far, that's kind of worked" (May). She knows that she is in a better position than many as she has access to substantial research funds through a grant that supports her post-doctoral position. She thinks that she may have strategized in this way even if she was not on a contract, but may not have been so focused on it: "Maybe I wouldn't have had the same kind of strict time scale because my money runs out in four years, but these are all things that I would be doing anyway" (May). May's plans are closely linked to her desire for a permanent position. However, her longer- term professional aspirations are less clear. She says that she has never

thought about being a full professor. Her partner, who is also an academic wants to be "a full professor at a big grand institution", and she indicates that when he first mentioned this to her when they first started dating:

> this was a completely new revelation to me. I've never thought of myself as a full professor...what I want to carry on doing is developing my research. I want to have a reputation as a good researcher who writes interesting and useful books, who is a kind and nice colleague, and.... an enthusiastic teacher. And those are things that mean more to me (May).

For her there is some ambivalence about what it means to be a professor, and she does not want to hold a management position, as she is "not very good at playing politics":

> I mean, when I look at, particularly the women around me who are all full professors, I see the enormous workloads and expectations on them, and I must admit I don't particularly want that. So, I'm not looking for huge amounts of promotion. I would just like to kind of keep doing what I am, but to get better at it (May).

She links her aspirations to the way in which she does her job, rather than to the recognition that comes with it. She talks about having colleagues who do want to progress and are putting a lot of energy into applying for promotion. She admits that she probably will apply for promotion when it is "appropriate":

> because I know that at the end of the five years of my fellowship, if I can't get a job here, I'm going to have to get a job somewhere else, and that having those promotions will be helpful. But I must admit that those I see as being almost incidental. Those will happen during my career. What I want for my career is for me to develop my research, to become a better researcher than I already am...to teach (May).

The reference to the desire to develop the skills of the job, rather than to link her aspirations to the outward recognition of promotion is a common theme expressed by other participants. In May's case there is confidence that if she continues to do her work well she will, in any case, be recognised. This is not the case for all. However, there is an underlying reluctance to link ambitions to the official recognition attached to higher levels of promotion. This may well be a

protection against the anxiety that it is difficult for women to reach professorial levels, combined with the uncertainty that she can perform in all the ways expected of a senior academic.

A senior manager in the faculty acknowledges that institutional policy can seem completely opaque for new academics and that the policy terrain is "a challenge to young people coming in because institutions have policies that are embedded in people's heads and institutional memory" (Senior Manager/Administrator). Gaining the necessary skills in different areas is therefore not simple because you cannot produce a "standing order" for different tasks across all disciplines. As she indicates, "a lot of it is in the practice" (Senior Manager/Administrator).

Maria is similarly finding her comfort zone as an academic, having published as a sole author in a journal with a 70% rejection rate and one internationally recognised in her field:

> It was something that...I didn't know if I could do it and I thought if I could do it I would do it later in my work. So, I think that's something I'm really proud of and it came at a time when I needed it to come because I was just, at that same time when that happened, I was really dealing with some difficult stuff at work. So...yes it boosted me and it really signalled to me that this is where I belong (Maria).

Through the publication of this work, she has had international exposure and has been able to build international networks. This is important to her partly because she is not South African and may want to leave at some point to return to her country of origin, but also because she is working in a field that she enjoys:

> I will still be an academic. I don't know if I'll still be here but I'm pretty confident that I'll still be in academia and that I would have generated more partnerships, maybe I would have developed a different area of research, but I'll definitely still be in academia (Maria).

Maria stops short of describing herself as someone who will become a professor. She knows at this point that she will still be an academic, but she does not interpret this as a definite arrival at the ultimate achievement of professorship.

Emma, Maria and May all have husbands who are academics and whose careers are moving more quickly than their own, despite them not having children. They relate this to different sets of aspirations, but it appears that all three express an ambivalence about following an academic career path, which their husbands do not share.

May is anxious that she may not be able to progress, hence her strategy to publish in the right journals, publish another book, and ensure that her CV is strong enough to obtain a permanent academic post. She is also uncertain that as a white academic she will get a job and is anxious about the future of the humanities in South African universities.

Maria worries about having the space and time to do research so that she can publish and "move forward on paper". She feels that it is important to be seen to be moving in terms of promotion so that if you want to move you can show that your work is being recognised. It is important for her to have a solid CV so that she has options beyond her current position and current university:

> I mean, I think that you have to set yourself up and not only in terms of your own milestones and your own work, but you really do have to set yourself up in terms of making people aware of what you want and then sometimes really having to be assertive and aggressive (Maria).

Abby's doubts are linked to her own feelings of being one foot in academia and one foot out. This may be because she is also recognised as an artist in her own right, and because of the discomfort of being in an academic creative arts field. She does want to progress, "I mean, who doesn't want to be a professor?" (Abby). She describes the difficulty of modelling her career on the very few women who were in the first academic department where she had worked:

> all of the women in the department were very disgruntled, older, you know, like retiring in the next 5, 6 years at that point, and without PhDs ...except one who left because the university didn't recognise her research...and another who passed away (Abby).

This did not provide her with a clear sense of possibility about becoming an academic. These adapted aspirations create ambivalence amongst the participants about moving ahead and

becoming professors. Promotion will bring a level of autonomy over research and publication, as well as freedom from overloaded teaching commitments but there is simultaneously an anxiety about the responsibilities that come with a higher rank. Progressing will allow them more independence, autonomy and flexibility over their own work: "the PhD feels like a means to an end to some flexibility and some freedom to more be able to do what I want to do….to research in an area that I want to research in, to teach some things I want to teach"…(Abby).

Amanda has submitted her PhD but at the time of the interview it had not yet been confirmed. She is aware that this will change her relationship to the university "but I think I'm in a better position being in the department now as a full-time person to see how things work, which puts me I think on a stronger footing to negotiate" (Amanda).

Progressing in an academic career means identifying strategies for getting ahead and building the right kind of networks to support you. It is not always clear to the participants how to do this or what the rules of the game are, and for those who feel settled in their posts, it has taken time. The absence of role models is a challenge as there are not many women who have reached senior positions, but at the same time, those who have managed to negotiate an academic career offer some hope. The participants show that they focus on strategies for getting ahead, and that while they would like to develop their careers in different ways (and to be recognised for this) they are clear about work that they need to do to progress and obtain promotion. They employ several coping strategies to keep up levels of confidence in their own abilities, including in areas in which they feel the institution does not support or recognise their work. From an institutional point of view, there are some key points of achievement which are valued by the group.

Being able to produce one's own research is clearly a critical part of developing an academic identity. How this is recognised, however, is also important, as achievement is also about being recognised as worthy of an academic career, which is primarily accessed through achieving research recognition. This happens through publishing and developing your own research and is expressed in a range of ways, through promotion for example, or achieving job security. Recognition is also achieved through broader networks – being recognised through publication in an international journal or becoming part of a broader international network in a field, for example.

Participants relate various aspects of "learning to play the game" which includes meeting teaching and research expectations, learning about research writing, applying for funding, publishing, and meeting other core expectations (course administration, committees and so forth).

Becoming an academic and inhabiting the professional identity of an academic is clearly not a straightforward process. However, the development of a professional identity appears as a central concern for academics. There are different strategies required to both achieve a work-life balance, and to find the aspects of academic work that this group most enjoy. This is sometimes at odds with the expectations on them and getting ahead may also involve adopting approaches that they are ambivalent about. There is a tension between the wide variety of academic work, and what are perceived as the narrow requirements of getting ahead. That is, although there could be many different types of academic career, there is a need to learn to progress in the areas in which they will be most recognised. For some this is a process of learning to play the right game, but for some this is more difficult, as the aspects of work that they are most interested in (such as teaching, or professional practice in a discipline), may not be adequately recognised or valued. It appears that teaching is not valued to the same extent as research, but at the same time, early career academics also struggle to find the time to do research because of teaching and administrative responsibilities. This shows a gap between institutional vision and practice - one which has an effect on new academics in forming a professional academic identity. Achieving institutional recognition for one's own professional valued functionings is an important conversion factor for this group of academics.

As noted earlier, there is evidence that some of the group experience 'imposter syndrome', where part of the process of developing a professional identity is learning to feel that you belong in the academy. This is achieved in different ways for each of the academics: an award, a book, a journal article, a PhD – a varied set of achievements that contribute over time to feeling more worthy of working in a university. There is some evidence also that the group are working hard to affirm their own identities, for some that teaching is valuable (despite the messages they may receive) and that there is pleasure in developing their own research. However, it is also clear that where academic work is multi-dimensional, so are the identities of academics.

Conclusion

There are many routes to an academic career. Only one person in this group had the experience of a linear route and she had worked out very early on in her undergraduate degree that being an academic was exactly what she wanted to do, which meant that she planned her further studies and research work with that goal in mind. The others have taken varying routes to becoming academics, doing other kinds of work, working across institutions, and starting their PhDs at different points. This is for different reasons, including personal circumstances and not seeing academia as a viable career.

Understanding the multiple pathways to becoming academics is important in itself, because it can tell us a lot about what kind of induction processes might work – generic approaches to induction may not be the best approach, given that people enter academic jobs with different work histories, some have finished PhDs and done prior research, others have not. They are also at different stages of their professional and personal lives, which will influence the kind of support needed. It seems clear that no academic is immediately certain about what kind of support they need at the outset – evidence from this group is that many are only able to reflect on their areas of support needed after being in a post for some months. Then, there is evidence that much of the learning that works best is self-directed. That is, given the many roles they must play, early career academics will have different developmental needs, and should be able to identify their own priorities and direct this learning with the support of more senior or established academics.

The kind of support provided to early career academics must first recognise the importance of purposefully supporting new academics as they enter. It may be that understanding these differences is important to understanding the complexities of becoming an academic. In the experiences of this group, these differences are not well recognised, and this affects the ways in which the group enter and become comfortable in academic jobs.

Academic work, as described by the participants detailed here, is relentless and multi-dimensional, which means that it is not easy to adapt. It requires a range of strategies and support (not automatically available) which take time to learn and put into practice. This points to the importance of mentorship as the traditional apprenticeship approach does not appear to be standard in every department. Being junior in the academy brings about particular experiences, and it is not always easy or possible to negotiate difficult

environments. There are several moments where the participants have postponed tackling issues because they are not ready or willing to take on challenges until they have achieved more seniority. This raises questions about what kind of support can be offered to early career academics to help them negotiate the complexities of academic work.

Many of the group have found this a personal and perhaps lonely struggle and have had little targeted support to assist them. However, they recognise that "learning to play the game" is critical for getting ahead. This involves learning what to say "no" to and when. This is not easy for most and is sometimes at odds with their beliefs about the work they should be doing, and in some cases, the work they like doing.

The flexibility that academic work offers, which was acknowledged by all, is undermined by the multi-dimensional demands of the work and the expectations of early career academics. Some of this is clearly gendered, in the experiences of mothers for example, and in the description of the different tasks and expectations of women and men within their departments. The normalised cultures of their departments appear to place women under intense scrutiny, while leaving men to get on with the business of moving ahead.

Linked to this is that there are different types of academic career. This appears to be significant for several women in this study. Despite the importance of teaching, working closely with students, developing new approaches to teaching and curriculum design, and other tasks, the most valued work is clearly research. Leading research projects, producing publications, becoming a rated researcher, and bringing in research grants is the most valued work - the work that allows you to progress fastest in an academic job. This requires saying no to teaching and forms of student support (which is difficult for junior academics) and being focused about balancing workloads to prioritise research.

Women who have stayed in academia despite not producing research may provide some hope for the group that academic careers are possible, but they also provide examples of how constrained career progression can be if you do not focus on what is most valued. This is a struggle for several of the group, who either value the range of academic work, or are more interested in aspects of academic work other than research. The two academics in the group who have progressed the most and have reached a level of comfort with the work that they do, are both interested in producing their own research, and in prioritising this over other tasks.

Developing their professional academic identities, adapting to academic work environments and progressing in the academy are described as complex and difficult to negotiate. This requires early career academics to adopt different strategies in order to meet requirements and get ahead. Assisting this group of women to take on academic jobs may require a range of responses: that institutions tackle gendered institutional cultures, accept the many different types of academic career paths and reward the multi-dimensional nature of academic work. At the same time, providing targeted and individualised support for early career academics could offer some solutions to the difficulties of retaining women in the academy in their early careers, and giving them opportunities to get ahead. Ultimately, recognising the importance of achieving academic identity and forms of autonomy in the working lives of early career academic women may be critical for retention.

Chapter 6: Narratives of gendered working lives and gendered institutional environments.

Introduction

This chapter is focused on an analysis of the gendered working lives of the participants in the study, by identifying those aspects of the narratives that focus on institutional culture and norms and how they impact on working lives. These narratives contribute to explaining Acker's (1990) 'gendered interactions', as well as understanding the symbols and images of gender, which I have described in the conceptual framework as 'gendered ideologies'.

The chapter is structured in four sections around the four broad sets of themes that emerged from the data analysis process. The first focuses on experiences that are identified as linked to being an early career academic. The second section looks at experiences of working life that contribute to a picture of gendered institutional culture. The third focuses on intersectional issues that arose from the narratives relating to gender, race and class. The final part is focused on parenting and family and its relationship to academic working lives.

The chapter does not present the data as if there is a universal experience of all women early career academics. In fact, the working lives of this group appear varied, depending on their departmental location in the institution and the cultures of their department and discipline. The chapter will look at the broad themes that arose from the interviews and make connections with the conceptual framework identified in chapter three.

Experiences of being an early career academic

Several narratives arise from the interviews about experiences of being early career or having junior status in the academy. This section explores some of these examples and reflects on the responses to particular experiences.

It appears that being junior in the academy (which does not necessarily correlate with age but rather with time spent in academia) does affect the ways in which early career academics in this group feel able to challenge particular experiences. This is particularly the case for the three who have been or are still finishing their PhDs (Amanda, Abby and Anna) and could be considered more junior than the others who were interviewed.

There are two reasons for PhD achievement marking different experiences amongst the participants. One is that not having a PhD confirms that you have not yet reached the status that allows you to participate fully in the academy. In most research-led institutions, a PhD is considered a pre-requisite for an academic job. In Metro University, it is a pre-requisite for a permanent academic post. The second is that the sheer workloads involved in maintaining a full-time academic job and completing a PhD at the same time mean that people postpone tackling workplace 'issues' until they have completed.

In each case, the three participants articulated that they decided to "wait and see" or "do it later", indicating that they feel an ambivalent sense of belonging, which makes them postpone responses to particular events until a future time when they feel that their professional status is more solid. Those who are more settled, however, do show agency, and have experienced conflict when challenging more senior academics.

Each describe an incident relating to their junior status. Irene relates a process of re-designing a course that she was teaching to allow for a more multi-disciplinary approach to teaching in her particular discipline, and to try and approach things from a different epistemological perspective. She designed a new course based on her ideas and was then "summoned" to the office of the Head of Department (HOD), who proceed to "rip apart her course" and question its relationship to the particular form of the discipline. She also heard that the readings she prescribed were "not recognised academics" in that sub-discipline. Irene felt on strong enough ground not to back down and suggested an external review of the course design, as she had previously clashed with her HOD on ideas relating to pushing the boundaries of the field. The external reviewer affirmed the course and recognised its contribution to pushing the boundaries of the discipline as a positive move. In this case an attempt to bring in new ideas and approaches was successful, with some outside mediation, and primarily because Irene had felt confident about challenging her HOD.

This was not the first time that Irene had challenged this individual. When I asked her why she had felt comfortable doing this it emerged that she had been originally allocated this person as a PhD supervisor, but had realised early on that they did not share an approach to the discipline. She had asserted herself as a PhD student and negotiated her way out of the relationship and acquired a new supervisor. This had been a conflictual situation. A friend in a similar situation had not managed to challenge her situation and had eventually dropped out

before completing her PhD. This anecdote says something about the need for early career academics to assert their agency at an early stage, where they are clear that it is of fundamental importance to them and on matters of principle:

> I would have found a way: there was just no way it could continue, but part of, I don't know, I think it's back to that moment of me being in my honours and researching people and taking that initiative. I knew this was not where I wanted to end up doing a project I did not want to do with the epistemology I was not comfortable with, and I knew that wasn't where I wanted my complete trajectory to end up. It would have been a very difficult thing to negotiate given the rules at the time, which it was about you have to work with whoever you're allocated to, which is very different now because now you get to choose (Irene).

It is also important to note that Irene has the backing of strong external networks in her discipline and was able to draw on the resources and support of that network in supporting her challenge to her head of department.

Anna relates that she is keen to start influencing changes in her own discipline, where she feels the curriculum is "radically untransformed" and new ideas are "ridiculed". However, she feels that as a junior academic without a PhD that she cannot easily do this. She has ideas but is uncomfortable raising them. She feels disempowered by her status, and though she doesn't experience a direct block to raising issues about curriculum, she is not confident to do so. She is still more at home with her peer group of postgraduate students, with whom she does some academic writing.

Amanda took over the management of her Department's masters course from a male colleague. As she is relatively junior and understood that the department had been happy with his work on the course, she decided to stick to what he had been doing. However one of her male colleagues complained about her and criticised the methodology course (which she had kept exactly the same!):

> And I thought about it long and hard, and wondered if I should respond, and eventually I did, to say that XX had been running it for six years, and I had followed exactly what he had done. And clearly, if there had been these concerns, they would

have been pre-existing me…and I want to understand why, at this point in time, I was being challenged… (Amanda).

She indicates that she almost had "a little bit of a breakdown about it", as it felt very much like a personal attack as opposed to a constructive engagement. She has a sense that it may have been about race or gender (and was certainly related to her junior status) but she is not able to name it as such: "but I did feel in that instance, it was an opportunity to have an attack at something that someone didn't like, because I was the weak link. I'm hoping not…but…" (Amanda).

The incident has had a positive outcome, as it resulted in a process of curriculum review within the department, but she struggles with the personal nature of the attack. What was also interesting about the event was that she received no overt support from the head of school, who was copied in on all the correspondence, and who would have had an opportunity to comment or intervene: "and that's still what troubles me…I feel like he should have just had a one liner to intervene, but he didn't" (Amanda). Only one colleague expressed any support and told her to ignore it!

Although Harriet has come to the university from a prior (teaching) career, she explains that the contexts of school and university are different. The hierarchies are not as overt in academic departments, but power dynamics exist. It has been an adjustment for her to move from being senior to being junior and she has had to learn different ways of working from what she previously knew. It has been hard for her to know when she can intervene, because although she has achieved "positional seniority" relatively quickly, "there are quite often reminders that actually, I'm the new kid on the block" (Harriet).

Abby, who is in the School of Arts, found her teaching load to be a burden, and put much time and energy into teaching, often in areas that are not related to her own interests. This, she feels, is related to the idea that as a junior academic, you must put in your time:

> it's extremely complicated…there are, kind of, unwritten laws around, like, baptism by fire in that, you know, you must pay your dues, you must stick it out until you, like, come out the other end, and yeah, you're with us, you're survived the whatever, your

self-initiation...and that stuff is just exhausting and it's boring...like you don't understand what you're doing until three years have passed...(Abby).

She has also struggled to negotiate for things that she feels are important for her career development. As noted earlier, she recently requested a six-month teaching buy-out to finish her PhD but was only allowed three months. She did not feel that she was able to negotiate further:

I didn't feel entitled to negotiate. I didn't have the tools and I didn't feel entitled to push back. Partly because it already feels like asking for some time off is a bit cheeky actually if I'm honest about it....I'm asking for six whole months off, that feels really quite cheeky. So when he pushed back and said no, only three, okay, that's a bit less cheeky (Abby.)

The point here is not whether or not three or six months is reasonable, but that the narratives show that there are unspoken or unwritten rules which are part of the cultural dynamics making it difficult for new academics to negotiate institutional expectations. These rules may differ from department to department and faculty to faculty but there are many areas where departments can exercise discretion and this can lead to perceptions of discrimination.

Amanda had a difficult experience being appointed in her Department. She had been in the department before, as a tutor, and came into the university with prior teaching experience at another university. Instead of appointing her as a lecturer (which she felt she had the credentials for) it was argued that she should be appointed as an Associate Lecturer[20]. She also indicated that "they weren't accountable to me about what the salary scales were". She felt that she did not have enough information about the salary or position she might be entitled to. In the negotiations she ended up accepting a higher-level salary (as she had prior salary history to use in her negotiations) but then accepted the lower title of associate lecturer. The agreement is that in a year's time, once she has submitted her PhD and she has submitted publications, her post will be confirmed at lecturer level. She was surprised by the experience, because of her track record at the university, including contract teaching, and then being put on "stringent" terms without being recognised at the appropriate level, particularly in a context where she met the criteria. Her experience was of being de-valued and not having her

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[20] Associate Lecturer- In this institution, this is the rank below Lecturer.

achievements recognised. She is not confident that she will be confirmed as promised as there is nothing in writing. She also indicated that she felt it would be better to be in a more stable position before she challenges the status of her appointment, and therefore chose to accept the position at the level offered (while negotiating on salary) out of "economic necessity". She knew that she was being underpaid, as another young male academic who had recently been promoted was open with her about his salary. She partially regrets having taken the conditions of the post as she is concerned that when she goes to ask for the salary increase and the lecturer title, that she may not get them:

> and I've got emails about it, and every time I read it, I'm like, Amanda, what have you done here? Because it doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense (Amanda).

This is another example of institutional culture that can be gendered. It is often difficult for women to negotiate with respect to salaries and working conditions. Given that individual arrangements are negotiated at department level between HODs and individuals, it is often up to individuals to push for what they think might be a fair agreement, but this is difficult when much of the information about expectations, salary levels and so forth is not available.

It is also true that while policy may be fair, individual experiences or departmental micro-politics may affect the way in which early career academics experienced policy implementation. According to a recent agreement between the academic staff union and the university, a change had been made to the salary scales at the institution, raising the lower levels of the band and reducing diversity within the salary bands, in conjunction with a substantive multi-year wage increase agreement. The effect of this was greater equity, including gender equity, because diversity in salary differentials was reduced. Amanda's story shows that she may be a victim of direct discrimination. She may also be reacting to the lack of recognition of her abilities in not being appointed at the level of a lecturer. In this case, the recognition may be more important for a sense of belonging than the salary itself.

An institutional manager in the central administration mentioned a case of a junior employee who felt that she was being discriminated against in her department. At the start of her appointment she had to look for an office herself, struggled to find a workspace, to have her phone unblocked and so forth. She experienced her first few weeks as "hostile". She found the departmental networks to be closed and found little support from colleagues. In terms of the

university procedure, individuals must raise grievances or disputes of this nature with their departments and then at school and ultimately faculty level. The devolved structure places the responsibility for managing complaints directly with the department. She was advised to explain "her lived experience" and follow the appropriate procedure but also to think about what kind of recourse she would want. This was quite an extreme case of a negative experience without induction, without support. The manager's argument is that there are opportunities for abuse within institutions that may ultimately end up with individuals leaving the university, which is a situation that Irene described in her Department.

As with Abby and Anna, Amanda's view is that she is too junior to take on arguments and debates within the academy. In a recent incident a pregnant student was told to repeat an entire course, and Amanda wanted to take the issue up within the department, but she chose not to, "because I just have my own stuff to deal with" (Amanda):

> So, I don't have a grand strategy about it. Perhaps my strategy is to see if (the university) upholds the deal after my first year, and see if I get the title change, if I get the pay increase as promised. And if not, I guess that gives me some grounds to, some limited grounds to petition about this issue (Amanda).

She is not confident that she would be able to challenge any blocks to promised promotions but will consider it when the time comes. She has not, at this stage, considered what institutional avenues there may be to challenge any such obstacle. Amanda's response may well be gendered in the way in which it is an avoidance of conflict. It is also in stark contrast to Irene's confidence in challenging her head of department about curriculum.

Maria relates a very difficult experience with an older male colleague who challenged and insulted her in front of a group of 250 students. He had had a minor dispute with her about the way in which she had completed her workload documentation. It ended up with him telling her that:

> 'I was only a bloody lecturer', in front of a group of 250 students...and it was a matter of me turning around and saying, good morning, let's go ahead and get started (Maria).

The same person later disrupted a lecture of hers and was taken to task by a senior woman professor, who told him that he had behaved unacceptably. She took quite firm action over the incidents, writing them up and taking a complaint to the head of school. He was made to apologize to her:

> In retrospect, I'm really glad that it did happen...because these things happen and you have to stand up for yourself, and it was an opportunity for me to make sure that I set things straight...But you only do this if you're assertive enough and to a point, if you're aggressive. You know, many people will come into a junior position just say I need to earn my keep, I need to wait it out...I like that about myself that I was able to handle it and go through the processes and make it clear to him that this was unacceptable (Maria).

Despite being junior, Maria took action, with support from a senior colleague. This may have given her the space to act, as she was not left alone to deal with the matter. This could be an important conversion factor for junior academics: having the support of senior colleagues in dealing with some of the everyday conflicts. These 'everyday' experiences of micro-aggressions, everyday sexism and interpersonal interactions, can add up to a difficult gendered experience for new staff. Institutional cultures that allow gendered expressions of power to continue remain exclusionary to new recruits if they do not fit the ideal employee frame, and they do not feel confident to challenge difficult experiences.

Subsequently, the engagements between Maria and her colleague have been awkward, as he avoids her, and their relationship is cool. She is comfortable with this, as she knows he has done similar things to other staff members, and she hopes it means he may stop the behaviour towards others.

Though it sounds as though this staff member may just be a bully, these experiences may well also be gendered. As Maria notes:

> it's hard to tell if things are gendered, because rarely is it made explicit...I mean he does this to men, he does this to women. I think that, but I do experience it as being gendered and having to do with hierarchy...he made it clear it was about hierarchy (Maria).

However, she blames the institutional culture for not dealing with his inappropriate behaviour. He had apparently left the university previously and then returned:

> So, it is the responsibility actually of the leadership at the top not having had a good talk and to say, look you're welcome to come back, but you have to change. I think he's been allowed to be who he is and who he is, is inappropriate and unprofessional at work, and there are very, very few people like me who will call someone out and be comfortable with it…and I know the university has historically accommodated idiosyncrasies and has accommodated egos…and just people who are a little different, but I think that there are some things that we can't compromise on. I mean you have to have an environment that…promotes collegiality, that promotes collaboration, that is transparent…(Maria).

Here, Maria raises management issues and suggests that there are actions that can be taken to prevent this kind of behaviour. This is important, as it recognises that transformation requires institutions to change at many levels. Inappropriate use of power or inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour may not fit with the overall policy goals of the institution, but unless they are corrected at the micro-level of a department or even between two individuals with the support of a mediator (informally or formally) they can become an accepted feature of a gendered and discriminatory work environment.

As a Senior Manager in the faculty admitted:

> I keep going back to the climate…the climate you create for enablement…people talk about institutional culture, but in that is the climate for wanting to do your work, feeling valued. Feeling I can put myself forward, feeling I understand this place I'm working in. You know? (Senior Faculty Manager).

She agrees with Maria that it is complex and requires leadership.

Another manager indicated that changing the demographics of the staff is a disruptive process, as universities were designed as elite spaces for predominantly white men, and being a black woman in a male work environment shifts power relations.

Overall, the group relate different experiences that are significant as early career academic staff members. These span negotiations over employment conditions to assertions of epistemic agency, to bullying. There are many factors that impact on their experiences, including the leadership styles of their heads of department, the different workloads in departments, the nature and level of their appointments, the lack of formal mentoring systems and the opaque nature of some expectations.

The responses of the participants varied considerably, from Irene's relative confidence, to Maria's challenge to bullying behaviour, to others feeling unable or unwilling to take on battles. This is particularly the case for those who are still completing their PhDs and are more junior. This shows how in similar situations different forms of personal agency can restrain people from moving forward and equally how both institutional positioning and personal confidence factors can assist people in overcoming difficult situations.

Individually, many of these narrated experiences may appear as being once off, isolated incidents. However, in a context where the point of analysis is gendered institutional cultures, a range of issues arise which could be mediated by an intentional focus on how the reproduction of social attitudes have a systemic effect on everyday interactions, and how "sticky" gendered attitudes affect the micro-politics of working relationships and departmental cultures. This requires a focus on developing new ways of managing workloads and curriculum development, along with attempts to foster different institutional cultures. The narratives highlighted in this section are intersectional in the sense that they raise gendered issues but those that specifically relate to being early career. It is possible to see how the small, everyday injustices or micro-aggressions, which often appear as interpersonal events could add up to people feeling excluded, to cumulative disadvantage and even to people leaving the academy. Individual experiences which manifest in the everyday can accumulate, and do not operate on their own. The next section expands on the theme of institutional cultures and gendered work cultures.

Narratives of gendered work cultures

Overall, the group identified few direct experiences of gender or sex discrimination in specific terms. This is striking because participants often had to be prompted to think of instances of discrimination. Gendered experiences are often so 'everyday', so insidious, and so 'normal', that it is hard to recognise them as experiences that stand out, and therefore hard for

individuals to identify systemic issues that may be gendered. However, there were several examples of what could be described as being part of gendered working cultures.

It was clear that sexual harassment is prevalent in the university and there was some discussion about this. Irene describes how her thinking was affected by a sexual harassment case where an academic staff member was being dismissed. This man was a friend and so she and others "rushed to defend him". She describes that cultures that allowed harassment within the institution had been left unchallenged for many years and blames this on both men and women. She implicates herself in this too:

> ...but we were also aware that he'd been in relationships with students even before the case came out, and for some reason we justified that as a neutral consensual relationship. At no point did we think that this could be out of the ordinary even if it was mutual and consensual. I mean there are these power dynamics between members of staff and students and we didn't interrogate that...(Irene).

Irene calls this a case of "cognitive dissonance", where someone may think they are opposed to a form of behaviour but are able to disconnect actual behaviour by a person from this. For Irene, his dismissal has at least changed the ways in which people understand the boundaries of sexual harassment and the power dynamics of lecturer-student relationships. Before his dismissal the power relations between staff and students, which can result in sexual harassment and harm to students, often went unnoticed, as the work environment allowed academic staff to engage with students in the manner of their choice. There is now a policy in place relating to staff-student relationships.

Abby describes the field in which she works as "unhealthy working spaces", where relatively small groups of students work closely with academic staff at all hours. She also works in a department where a staff member was dismissed for sexual harassment. She describes how deeply the incident relating to the academic's dismissal affected the Department, describing it as a "toxic" situation, with students distressed and academic staff trying to keep things on track, presenting a changed face to the outside world, but without adequately dealing with the cultures that had allowed the serial harassment to continue for so long:

It feels really messy, it feels like it's in recovery from a whole range of stuff, but particularly…I mean, the (sexual harassment) series of events was shattering and I was sessional staff here…I couldn't believe how little support there was for the staff in particular…the students were all over the place, it felt like there was nobody holding space for them. And the primary concern felt like it was about making sure that the general public understood that the place was still standing…(Abby).

She acknowledges that as an academic group, there is little understanding of what could be done differently:

I'm not sure we as a group, have any idea how to begin, to be honest, without, like, kind of, strangely implicating ourselves….my sense is that it was allowed to happen at some level, that it's not possible that nobody knew…he was protected (Abby).

Amanda has had similar experiences in a different department. She also has direct contact with students who have experienced sexual harassment and talks about how students feel abandoned, even though the structures are there to support them. Amanda took over teaching responsibilities from someone in her department who was also fired for sexual harassment and so this is significant for her too. She does not believe that it has changed the way people behave and she is sceptical about whether the university can deal with an issue that is so endemic:

So many of the students are coming to me and saying they've been raped [not necessarily at the university], or they're victims of sexual abuse, and you know I was when I was younger. So, it's an endemic thing. It's beyond the institution, and I'm not sure how an institution can respond to something that is so much wider[21] (Amanda).

Irene discusses a former staff member in her department who had been well-known (and tolerated) for regularly making lewd comments to colleagues. She now recognises these incidents as sexual harassment:

He was tolerated by the female members of staff, he was just accepted generally and if you happened to be at the receiving end on a given day you knew that this was who he

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[21] South Africa has one of the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world – see chapter seven.

was, and you somehow tolerated that. There was an understanding that this was someone you should actually lay a complaint against, right. Informally we would speak and say I was really upset by this comment or this behaviour but we... didn't even label it as harassment of any kind (Irene).

The narratives of sexual harassment seem to indicate hermeneutic injustice, where a collective ignorance about the forms that sexual harassment takes, has previously allowed for different kinds of practices to continue unchallenged. Similarly, the ways in which sexual harassment can be boxed as the deviant behaviour of individuals, rather than as a structural or institutional practice, allows for the practices within institutions to remain unaddressed. Sexual harassment is often an inter-personal manifestation of broader sexist cultures. According to a university manager, a the work that needs to be done on sexual harassment and sexist cultures is not just about having the policy in place and following procedures to investigate 'gender-based harm':

> The real problem that we see is the familiar situations and domestic relationships and the clear lack of a genuine equality within such relationships and the lack of assertiveness of women and the playing out of gender stereotypical roles. I think this is a huge, huge issue (Senior Manager).

In her view being within a university offers an opportunity to deal directly with changing cultures and behaviour because it is a semi-closed environment, and there is a need to have rules of engagement defined. People's relationships cannot be affected outside the institution, but within the institution, there is an opportunity to create different kinds of inter-personal interactions (Senior Manager). So, contrary to Amanda's view that institutions can do little to change the broader social problems of gender-based violence and harassment, there are suggestions embedded in the narratives above, both relating to institutional work that can be done, and opportunities for changing behaviour given the nature of universities.

While sexual harassment is a direct manifestation of gendered academic cultures, other, more subtle, behaviour may be gendered, allowing for gender to be reproduced in exclusionary ways. Amanda indicates that she has "not yet" experienced direct discrimination or harassment. She indicates "not yet" because "when you have colleagues who've worked here for longer, you hear things" (Amanda).

Participants describe other aspects of gendered institutional culture. For Harriet, it is clear that it is women who get things done in her school, and men who appear to get away with not doing things, particularly anything administration-related: not answering emails, not handing reports in on time. The result is that they are not called upon to do admin work:

> men kind of can be incompetent, and they're almost indulged in that…but it becomes a vicious circle, because you get to a point you say, look, I'd rather do it myself…(Harriet).

Her problem is with the "normalised" practices that allow men to get away with doing their own thing. She agrees that women are complicit in allowing these practices to continue:

> How can I put this? Women get together, they make things happen, do it quickly, efficiently, couldn't be bothered to include the men, they'll just include too much hassle, just do it, get it done, and I think that in turn makes male staff think well, just let them do it… (Harriet).

May relates similar experiences, where female colleagues do more administrative work than men:

> And…I think that our male colleagues do get away with more, you know. If they make a mess with something that's like you know one screws up when his teaching is supposed to be…I would never do that because I can imagine the dire consequences of it, and you know one of my male colleagues…everyone will rush to save him and it will be fine…(May).

She talks of this as a "culture" that others will pick up the slack, "it's something that sort of hovers beneath the surface" (May).

There do appear to be gendered divisions of labour, though the participants are reluctant to describe this as such. As shown above, male academics get away with doing relatively little of the 'slog work' (admin, teaching undergraduates and so forth). Amanda references a male member of staff who does very little, does not have a PhD, and nobody puts pressure on him

to change, and indicates that in her department the women academics pick up "the teaching slack".

These narratives are important as they relate to every aspect of Acker's organisational framework. They show workload structures that could be gendered, with women academics taking primary responsibility for the 'domestic' work of the academy, the less prestigious work that is not related to recognised and rewarded work outputs. They also relate to the impact of social ideologies on academic work, showing how job technologies may provide space for different (gendered) types of jobs. The narratives show how the everyday individual practices of different academics can have a systemic effect, ultimately affecting the institutional culture and practices that have become the "norm" in an institution. This links to the sub-structures of prestige then created, in which hierarchies of the ideal job are created. The prestige linked to achieving in particular areas appears to also be linked to not doing certain things and explains why academics talk about getting ahead in terms of letting go of certain responsibilities, including administration and teaching. If these sub-structures are preventing women from moving forward, then they are gendered. The narratives also link to how identity is developed as they talk to ways in which institutional culture and ideology affects becoming or being accepted as a "successful" academic.

Maria reflects that there are older, male academics who have been at the university for a long time and will not change or ever get fired. Therefore, they get away with saying things that "have no place at work":

> the people that I come across on an everyday basis, they're generally good people but they're stuck in a certain time-frame when it was okay to tell dirty jokes at work…is this a collegial conversation where you can have coffee and tea with someone and talk about something other than work, or is this really…the system of making women feel uncomfortable and bringing up…topics that have no place (Maria).

According to a senior faculty manager there is quite a bit of gender "bullying" in the faculty, which is often "pernicious" and taking place at an inter-personal level. In his view, there is a need for staff to learn how to interact with one another, in particular, for men to learn not to be aggressive in meetings in ways that shut other people down: "it would be helpful for a lot of our colleagues to learn how to advance an argument without actually shutting people out…in

particular using aggressive behaviour as a means of trying to prevent others from having a voice" (Senior Faculty Manager). In his view, gender awareness starts and stops around sexual harassment, and there is little recognition of other ways in which gender affects the work environment of the university.

Emma reflects on her marriage and its own gendered nature in the university (her husband is an academic in the same university). Her experience is that although both of them are in academia, people expect that she should be the one to make sure the household chores are done and her husband's hair is cut. The role of wife is still seen as important:

> But I think that there is something society has imprinted on us in terms of what it means to be a woman and try as we might it's going to take generations to strip that off…there's a senior female academic who said…I'd really like to have a wife…Because you see all these senior male academics who have a woman running around after them, picking up their shoes and ironing their shirts and just picking up what falls…and for female academics, we can't let anything drop for fear that no one will pick it up…(Emma).

In a follow-up email to participants, I requested information about domestic assistance. All the participants had access to some form of domestic help. However, most only had part-time domestic assistance, predominantly for cleaning. Those with children had assistance from both domestic staff and family members. However, it is important to note that in a South African context, most middle class employed women do have some form of domestic assistance at home. This is similar in many countries with high levels of inequality:

> For many professional and upper-middle-class women in India, the ability to engage in outside paid employment on approximately equal terms with men is crucially conditioned by this ability. And even the relatively small increase in the numbers of professional women in India has been heavily facilitated by the possibilities of hiring domestic workers for the many household tasks that are still (unfortunately) seen as the basic responsibility of women (Ghosh, 2013).

However, this does not necessarily undermine the point that Emma makes, as gendered expectations of women still permeate the work environment of universities. In addition, the

private responsibilities of women in the home can impact on their workspace and time, whereas the social expectations of men still do not extend to the domestic sphere in most households. A South African study on participation of women in the economy shows that on average throughout their adult lives, women spend considerably more hours on productive work (this includes employed work and work in the household). Firstly, unpaid work is significant and often excluded from research on productive work, and secondly, women are responsible for the bulk of unpaid work which also affects labour market participation. Calculations done as part of the study show that on average a woman in South Africa "would cumulatively spend 15 500 hours more than a man in productive activities between the ages of 10 and 70 years" (Department of Women, 2015: 11).

Even where there are mostly women, and even in faculties with greater numbers of women in senior positions, it takes a long time for gendered cultures to change. This is partly because women in senior positions do not necessarily play an active role in shifting these cultures.

One participant indicated that she has experienced a "wonderful sense of community" at the university. She constantly compares Metro University with the previous (South African) university she worked at, where she felt "just like yet another young female member of staff who they expected to go off and have babies", and where she saw many women denied promotion. She provided examples of men and women with similar publication outputs, but with men consistently being promoted. She also describes a situation where a male student asked for a man to re-mark an essay which had received a low mark from her. The head of department backed her up and refused. At this previous institution she felt that expectations of women academics were low, and those who worked hard and published a lot were seen as anomalies.

The sexism at her previous university was constant, from both students and staff:

> I felt like I was walking around with bricks on my shoulders. To walking into a classroom and not being able to keep the students quiet, but a younger male colleague could keep them quiet just by standing up and staring at them (May).

Her consistent comparison with her previous university makes it hard for her to see gender discrimination as it is a much more equitable environment in her view:

..when I came to this university it was so different, I have a woman boss, the Dean is a woman, the senior people in the faculty with whom I interact the most are nearly all women...and so my experience here has been so completely different that maybe I've experienced it as better than it really is (May).

Many participants talk about the impression that men are left relatively unchallenged, but women's mistakes are often pointed out to them. This includes a culture of accepting, tolerating or ignoring lewd - often sexist - language, or men getting away with not taking on administrative or teaching responsibilities. This allows men to pursue research interests and is possibly one reason why they appear to progress faster than women. From the examples above, though, it may also be that women tend towards accepting the responsibilities, which may be gendered and relates to the difficulties that they relate in saying "no".

Though this group of academics can reflect on some aspects of gendered cultures, and sometimes implicate themselves in propping up those cultures, they do not explicitly identify their own experiences as gendered. This suggests that institutional cultures are complex to understand and talk about, and it is not always simple to identify incidents as gendered. When asked if they had experienced specific discrimination or harassment themselves, none identified any experiences. However, when exploring their work lives, many gendered experiences emerge. So, there is clearly a hermeneutic gap in understanding experiences as being about direct discrimination or harassment. They are seen to be part of the cultures of their departments or schools and are often referred to as trivial, as if only unusual or outstanding events can be experienced as discrimination.

A senior faculty manager, also a woman, admitted that she struggles to identify direct gender discrimination, but reflexively acknowledged that "maybe it's not a good question to ask me because I'm sufficiently powerful to be able to ward off gender discrimination" (Senior Faculty Manager). She also acknowledged that she finds it hard to see gender, "if situation arises, I don't interpret that in the first instance as a gendered response...but I tend not to put a gendered interpretation on many things" (Senior Faculty Manager). She attributes this to her own upbringing and a relatively gender equal household. She also drew a comparison between careless administrative behaviour which can be interpreted as relating to race or gender, but which is actually just administrative injustice (such as a department posting marks on a

noticeboard outside an administrator's office so that students can only access information by travelling to the institution, instead of online).

However, the senior faculty and university staff interviewed all mentioned the importance of institutional culture in creating a sense of belonging for early career academics, particularly women and black staff, to create environments where people can feel at home. The university has a few structures and committees that are trying to address institutional culture change at, including the Institutional Forum[22], a faculty transformation forum, and an Institutional Culture Committee. The university also has a broad anti-discrimination policy that covers all types of discrimination and has a range of administrative offices that are involved in dealing with social justice issues including disability, transformation, employment equity, and addressing gender-based harm. However, they acknowledged that because of the devolved structure of the institution there are huge variances across the university, which mean that the "lived" experiences of academics will differ from one person to the next. As Leonard (2001) and many others have shown the hidden "rules of the game" influence institutional environments.

The next section incorporates a broader perspective on gender as a part of the "transformation" discourse, focusing on intersectional narratives that relate to the interplay between gender and race.

Views on gender, race and transformation

In several cases, race was mentioned as the dominant issue in the institution. This perception comes through in the literature but was also emphasized by more than one participant. Given that the numbers of black women in senior positions in the university are extremely low, and white women are much better represented, this is understandable.

According to Irene, most of the discussions about change in the academy are about race and not about gender and "no one really talks about the gender disparities" (Irene). Yet for Anna, sexism is quite stark in her discipline. The ways in which the discipline itself might be sexist makes her uncomfortable, and she feels that the attitudes within her department about transformation (both race and gender) are dismissive.

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[22] In terms of the Higher Education Act (1997) every public higher education institution must have an Institutional Forum (IF), which is an advisory body to council, with a broadly stakeholder-based membership. In terms of the act, the IF must be consulted on key decisions, including the appointment processes for senior appointments, and matters relating to transformation.

Irene describes "subcultures" within departments, which are about networks of people, and are, in her experience, often racialised. Few of the young black staff who joined the Department when she did have been retained:

> Yes, and it really speaks to that feeling of exclusion, and every one of them in their moment of resignation wrote very scathing letters to the Dean at the time as well about why they were leaving and actually pinpointed these different networks that were happening (Irene).

She also describes the difficulties of a black woman head of school who struggled to influence change:

> ...she saw what was going on but did not have the power to...there was just no way she could touch these informal networks because you know they exist but you just have no space or avenue to actually disturb the stronghold of how they're formed... She had a very hard time of it, a really hard time of it... and I'm not sure if it was a race thing or a gender thing but I think it was a bit of both, but her authority as the head of school was just not respected by particular members of staff (Irene).

She notes that the black members of staff felt that they needed to support her even when she made decisions that they did not agree with, because they could see that she was being treated so badly. She indicates that there were different "subcultures" operating within the school and these were racially divided. She experienced this as "alienating":

> ...networks being very entrenched and very closed, so you knew certain decisions got made that affected you implicitly because you either got bumped off a course or not or you got allocated a particular administrative task that really did not speak to your skills and capacity. And in that sense I felt very alienated from the department. And at the time when I first, joined the department there had been an upsurge of staff employment, sessional staff... seventeen of us ...and I would say about thirteen of those appointments were all black members of staff and all of them are long gone. They resigned in the next couple of years after being employed (Irene).

At a later point, a new black (male) head of school was appointed, who brought new ideas and systems designed to take away the power of the "networks" by putting in place transparent processes. Irene has survived these different points of leadership in her department and school. However, she has remained steadfast in pursuing her own academic goals, regardless of the effect of institutional culture on her work. She indicates that although the networks still exist, they have less decision-making power or control than they used to, and the transparency of the workload model process has helped this. She has more confidence now in the way the system works.

In terms of her personal agency, sticking to academic goals and not leaving has partly been a result of the significance of her external networks, and her connection to powerful people in her discipline outside the university, who have helped her to feel empowered to contest certain decisions and challenge workload allocations:

> (there are)...racial networks that I'm not able to access and there are some networks that I am able to access actually, so it kind of works both ways. But I am also aware that I have the networks that exist outside of this space to contest those networks should they happen to impact me in some way (Irene).

Irene speaks about the importance of leadership styles to experiences of departments in the university. Her school had benefited from a head of school who had tried to break down informal networks that excluded particularly black and women staff, and had created a more open and transparent culture of decision-making. This had a positive effect on her experiences in the school:

> We had a meeting, you might have heard about this, but the VC had called a meeting amongst black staff.... and in that meeting that was the eye opener for me because listening to the horror stories I thought I was at a different institution, and I only realised in that moment just how we were cocooned in some ways...(Irene).

She emphasises the importance of informal networks. Even with clear leadership that attempts to break down informal networks, to make workloads more transparent across the school, and across both junior and senior staff members, the informal networks still hold

sway, and if you are not able to break into these, it is difficult to progress. She indicates that several young black women have left her school for precisely these reasons.

For Harriet, the nature of academia is really quite "individualistic" and she describes this as a [western] masculine culture. She personally is "very committed to the idea that we all do well when everybody does well". Her field is dominated by women, but the culture of the academy is quite masculine. However, in Harriet's view, race is also a major issue, "I think race is the big issue…I actually think that race trumps gender" (Harriet). She believes that:

> the identity markers that lead to exclusion and marginalization need to be kind of concurrently built…I'm really not saying that I don't think gender issues are important, but I'm saying as a white woman, I would feel uncomfortable if the agenda of women was promoted, because I really do think that I'm more advantaged by being white than I'm disadvantaged by being a woman (Harriet).

Abby, who is black, has a very different experience of race and gender in the academy. She sees herself as part of a "transformation project" which interferes with her identity as an academic. Someone pointed out to her that she was an equity appointment and she "ticked all these boxes":

> Well it's a very weird feeling I suppose to know for a fact that among the reasons that I am here is because I am aligned with the transformation project. It affects me on a level of personal belief in my abilities to do something and be recognised out of merit. But it's not nice, it's just not a nice feeling and I have to quite constantly remind myself that I'm good at what I do and that's why I'm here (Abby).

She feels that transformation has become a kind of "glorified research project", rather than a focus on meaningful change. This means that people focus on what needs to be done to show that they are taking transformation seriously. They have to do certain things to bring in research money and meet certain targets and talk in certain ways and hold seminars. This is part of the compliance approach to transformation mentioned by Lange (2014):

> you know, I feel like there's a way in which the transformation agenda has become in a way like not a real thing…. it feels like it's at a particular level that is not accessible. It's

full of terminology...there are just lots of angry people, and you know I'm among them...(Abby).

For her, though, this surface-level compliance with the idea of transformation and the performative aspects of what gets done in the university has very real effects:

> but it means real things for people who actually work here...to know that among the decisions for your hire are the fact that you happen to be black and happen to be female.. you're like part of a project now (Abby).

She questions the genuine institutional commitment to transformation, which in her view would include a concerted effort to bring in new academics, not just bringing people in as part of a transformation project. Abby's impression is that those who get ahead, who get published, who get recognised, are still mostly white and male. Abby speaks about a important set of experiences of institutional culture, which make her uncomfortable. She has to remind herself that she deserves to be at the university and does not feel that she belongs.

In contrast, for Madea, who is coloured, the focus on increasing the numbers of black and women academics is positive:

> I mean our VC is talking a lot about promoting black academics, coloured academics. I mean that makes me really excited...he wants me to stay...so it actually made me feel, like, wow, you know, there's a place for me...there's a recognition that extra support is needed. And with the right kind of guidance, you know, we'll get there...I hadn't felt that before...it was quite a powerful turning point for me. The dream of actually becoming a professor could become a reality. Maybe the support will be there, you know, to take me to the next level...(Madea).

She cautions though that there will need to be significant cultural changes in the institution to retain black academics:

> But you see that the problem is also I think to get us is not the issue. To make us stay is the issue. ..But how we are accommodated or assisted...nobody likes to feel like I'm constantly failing...like I'm never succeeding...I think I have felt that (Madea).

She is positive though, that having powerful black women in senior positions - and there are more now - is important. It makes her feel that it is possible. Abby, by contrast, feels that there are not enough role models and it is difficult to see herself as a black woman professor at the institution. This shows how different people can experience the same sets of policies but experience them differently across school and departments.

In Emma's view there are two types of departments: those with distributed power and those with top-down systems. In her department, which she describes as "top-down", the culture means that other voices (women and black people) are "marginalised". She suggests that although academics should be self-managing to a certain extent, there needs to be some uniformity across departments if gender equity is to be achieved. Even where there are women in powerful positions (that is women heads of department and schools), women and black academic staff tend to get over-burdened with teaching and administrative responsibilities, thereby failing to hit their research targets and not getting promoted.

In Emma's experience, proper 'workload models' which distribute workloads fairly within the department help to ensure that junior and women staff do not get overloaded with particular kinds of work. Without these it is difficult for them to say no to work that they are allocated. This supports Irene's experience of a transparent distributed workload model in her own department.

Emma appears to advocate for more transparent systems to eliminate unfairness. In her view, South African academics are resistant to this kind of managerialist control, but she compares this to an over-managerialised UK system, where people's jobs are constantly under threat, and there are greater levels of competition. There is a tension in pushing for gender change in universities. More centralised control and more reporting and auditing can focus managers on the wrong outcomes (numbers rather than substantive change) but also could threaten the flexibility that exists in academia, and that all the participants valued. For Emma, the resistance to change must be shifted if new groups of academics are to come into the system:

> We have to stop giving white males a bigger voice at the table...the generation hasn't changed, while they changed their public face...we're training the new generation right now, and that makes it so fundamentally important in terms of how we are currently treating our undergrads...institutionally change is always rooted in the youth...like

there are certain opinions my grandfather had that he died having, but now he's dead (Emma).

She recognises, however, that her own stance on the need for racial and gender change is not popular. She is pushing for more black PhD students to be admitted. She also believes that race is dominating discourse on transformation at the university, and that there is not enough of a focus on gender.

There is a gap between those making the decisions and those implementing them. In this case the devolved power of the departments creates a gap between the overall policy intent and the reality: "it's just too big, there's not a lot of channels between the people making the decisions and the people implementing the decisions..." (Abby).

Amanda acknowledges that there are challenges with the institutional culture being racialised and gendered, and that there:

> are many kind of...mountains to climb on many different fronts, but I haven't sought out understanding equity programmes, or equity funding, or things like that (Amanda).

This is yet another example of possible sources of support for someone which exist, but which an individual either feels are not available to her, or actively chooses not to pursue them at a particular time. For Amanda, there need to be different approaches to retaining black women:

> For me, it's in part gendered that if you want African female academics, there has to be a realization that those African female academics are perhaps supporting seven to twelve people behind them. So...I support younger cousins, but the burden is not only on me (Amanda).

In her view this means that you need to provide different kinds of support for individuals in the academy, depending on their personal circumstances. Identifying what support individuals might need is the best way of assisting people to get ahead. She admits, however, that she does not have a clear idea about how this would work practically.

May expresses concern about emerging racism at universities, describing an academic seminar where a student stood up and said that "we need to kill all white people". What was worrying for her was that, although the student received some support for his views, no one was prepared to assert "actually that's a totally unacceptable thing to say". She is concerned about being limited in her academic work:

> I think what I've always found attractive about universities is this is a place where nothing is off limits. We read everything. We talk about everything. The idea of placing limits on what we can think about or read about, just seems to me to be in opposition to any university project (May).

Emma works in a department with no senior women and believes that there is a pattern of gendered problems there. Women have left the department for reasons of discrimination, and she herself feels that she has been held back:

> And I went through a job process where a white male got the job ahead of me…but after that a few members of staff came forward and said we didn't realise he was going to throw you under the bus, so let's see what we can do in terms of supporting you…(Emma).

Her response to this is an understanding that she needs to be focused about the work that she does and the support she gets. She has had to request and push for graduate students so that she can get supervision experience. She also believes that it is strategic not to work on gender issues as it is a point of marginalisation, and she has seen this happen in other contexts:

> …and I don't work on gender as a point, like I'm not going to be the woman that does women's [discipline], because I don't…I've seen too often that women get marginalised within her discipline…but there is one article that I'm not publishing until I'm more established…because I don't want to be labelled as a women's [discipline] and then not be taken seriously in (this area) that is very male dominated (Emma).

Maria has also experienced racism at the university. This has been difficult for her as she is not South African and not easily identifiable as fitting into any (South African) race group. In a meeting she was mistaken for being white and was asked in publicly by a senior manager

about her position on a particular matter as a 'white foreigner'. She does not identify as being white, and is not labelled as such in her home country:

> I am socially constructed differently here, but it is difficult in terms of coming from a place where I have been othered. It's been made clear to me that I am the other...that I am not white...to come into a situation where you need to own your whiteness and your white privilege too. But we do construct each other and we continually construct and reconstruct (Maria).

She has also had experiences with white colleagues who assume that she shares their world view, because they assume she is white, based on her physical appearance and her non South African accent.

> I think, in another context that some of these ladies are wonderful and nice, and have been very good to me, but I think that they have it wrong...I think they have no idea of the privileged position that they have occupied and that these changes are necessary and that we have to do something to change how the university looks (Maria).

What is interesting about this experience and the others detailed above is that they show the insidious nature of institutional and departmental cultures that can be experienced as discriminatory, but are difficult to identify directly. Normalised practices that put women under intense scrutiny and allow men to operate relatively free of interference are described above. The same is true for issues of race. Transformation is addressed at a relatively superficial level, but little attempt is made to deal with the below-the-surface issues, and tackle the difficult issues about normalised practices within the cultures of departments. In addition, the relatively junior status of most of this group has meant that they are mostly reluctant to tackle issues that make them uncomfortable. These narratives show how everyday experiences can affect the institutional environment and that ideas about race have an effect on individual identity and a sense of belonging. The next section addresses the work environment and being a parent.

Parenting and families

Two of the academics interviewed in this group have young children and have struggled with what this means for their academic jobs. Amanda has a young daughter, and her parents look

after the child while she is at work. This support is invaluable to her. Abby has a young son, and domestic assistance with child-care.

Harriet has adult children and does not therefore have immediate challenges relating to child-care. Madea's children are also older. Anna, Maria, Emma, May and Irene do not have children. Three of these participants indicated that they have decided not to have children until they are more established in their careers. This is part of a strategy to delay having children in order to move ahead in their careers, and is a gendered choice in a society in which women still have the primary responsibility for child-care. They have seen the challenges other colleagues faced, and - in at least one case - related a lack of career movement to women choosing to prioritise having families over career progression.

Whether and when to have children features strongly in the narratives of each of the academics. It is something that is factored strongly into career planning: "yes, I do plan to have kids and I mean women have a fertility window and it gets really uncomfortable if you get out of that fertility window..." (Emma). Here she means that women must plan to give birth before a certain age, or they may struggle to conceive. However she is not comfortable talking about it: "I never mention having children in my department or in spaces in which I'm worried that certain male colleagues will interpret it as me being less useful..." (Emma).

This is also because she says that a colleague who was treated badly while pregnant (an attempt was made to keep her on probation for an extended period) and another (a single mother) was pushed out, having concealed the fact that she was a mother for two years. The perception remains that women who have children should not work in academia, because they do not (or cannot) contribute in the same way as those who do not have children. This contributes actively to discrimination, and to perceptions of an unfriendly environment for women who are mothers, or who wish to be. She has picked up some antagonism towards mothers in her department and this has made her reluctant to talk about having children.

May does not feel that there is an expectation that she should put her career on hold to have children:

> I never set out to do this, but all of the most important mentors in my career are
> women. Some of them have had children...some of them have chosen not to, have

chosen very specifically not to have children, and some of them had…but I've never (at this institution) felt any pressure about my career, that if I were to fall pregnant that there would be issue about that…I've got colleagues with children and feel that I would be supported (May).

She has heard young academics express concern about the effect of having children on their careers, but she says that:

> the reason I feel more relaxed about the question was because of where I work. I mean, I know I work at a university dominated by women. I work at an institute where everyone except me has children. And where everybody's immensely sympathetic to the child-care needs of their colleagues (May).

May is able to say this knowing that she would be able to afford childcare if she did have children. She is clear, however, that she would like to have a permanent job before having children, so although she does not identify a direct institutional barrier to having children, it is a factor in her career decision-making.

There is an interesting dynamic here that deserves some reflection. Maria, who is not South African, is critical of the fact that privileged (and white South Africans in particular) take for granted the fact that they can draw on affordable child-care:

> You know, it happens to be the white women who have the young children who…get to the associate professor level and I think there's something taken for granted, especially in the South African context of you just get a nanny and your life is, you know, done for you (Maria).

She notes this as being taken for granted, and exploitative of black women:

> women have been exploited, women of colour have been exploited, black women have been exploited to get white women to work and to get white women promoted…it's not talked about explicitly. It's not named. It's not called, but I have had very nice white women colleagues who…just cannot handle their lives when their support structures, specifically their help, is no longer around (Maria).

For the two that have young children, a number of challenges are mentioned, which lead them to describe the academic workplace as gendered. They say they are struggling with a range of choices and despite the flexibility of an academic career (e.g. not having to be physically present on campus for regular hours and days), and the availability of domestic help, still feel unsupported in parenting. While this is unlikely to be a problem only specific to academic work, as it relates to all employment environments, one participant felt that academic institutions should lead when it comes to making space for people who have children: "what's striking to me is that universities are not necessarily leading in that, you know, in creating different kinds of workplaces" (Abby). There is an expectation that universities should provide a leadership role in creating more gender-equitable working environments.

For Abby, her status as a mother is a clear challenge:

> a barrier is being a parent to a young child frankly in a way that it is not a lifestyle choice that is valued or...for which space is made. I mean, just the fact that there isn't a crèche here baffles me....on the one side there's so much talk about how we must keep women, we must keep black women...but not a whole lot of action...all these buildings are being refurbished, but nobody is building a crèche somewhere for instance (Abby).

Several mentioned the absence of a crèche on campus for children of staff as a significant concern for all working women on the campus and felt that an absence of a crèche is a problem for creating a more gender equitable campus. There is currently a strong move to bring back a crèche (the previous one was closed a few years ago), and this is in part led by the Academic Staff Union. It should also be noted that a recent agreement was reached on equal parental leave for men and women, a progressive move in a South African context, allowing men to take up to four months of paid paternity leave.

Abby also indicates that funding applications for PhDs and post-docs are targeted at a younger group, under the age of thirty-five. She interprets this as part of a culture that values certain career paths, especially to finish your PhD before having children:

> So, there's clearly a kind of trajectory that is valued and it's that trajectory...go through school, masters, PhD, do the thing, teaching a bit if you want, but get the thing (PhD) out of the way (Abby).

For her there is a clear idea of what kinds of academics the university values, and having children does not fit into this mould:

> Here it's been about just noticing who is able to do what the university values, right, so who is able to teach and research and publish and go to conferences…and fill in the boxes in the document at the end, that is the test as to whether you qualify as a decent academic or not…(Abby).

Amanda has a slightly different view, which is that there is an "in-built bias" towards promoting men or women who don't have families or choose to put families on hold. She seems to imply that this is not necessarily a problem that the institution should deal with:

> Well I don't think it's unique to the academic profession, I think there's a certain age bracket that you find yourself in when you're in your thirties. It's when you have kids, it's when you have a family. And the thing for me, I mean the frustration for me is that I'm very lucky to have got this post. Because post-docs end at thirty-five and I'm way beyond thirty-five. I would have never qualified for a post-doc. And that's because I made the decision that I wanted to have a family. And biologically, I can't wait…that's the reality (Amanda).

She also relates it to the fact that she only started her academic career when she was already thirty, and getting married and wanting to have children:

> …it's kind of the sequencing. So I start late. Most people will do a BA, Masters, PhD right? So you finish by age thirty. I only started when I was age thirty. And that's at the point of when I was getting married, so all of those factors happened. And it was about not compromising what is going to carry me in life, which is my husband and my family. And I come from a very big family…there's always someone to uplift, you know, there's always other school fees to pay…there's always something else to be done for someone else…so, it wasn't like an economic decision. The smart decision would have been just to wait, but that's not how life works….(Amanda).

As an unmarried woman without children May also feels that she is expected to take on a higher burden of administrative work. She labels this a "single woman tax" or a "childless

woman tax". Irene made a similar comment, indicating that there was an expectation that she would rearrange her work plans to be available for certain meetings that were at awkward times for women with children, so that there could be women represented at those meetings. This may be a feature of how the work environment does not support parenting, so that when parents are unavailable, rather than accommodate their availability, the responsibilities are shifted onto other women.

One of the group who does not have children indicated that she does not understand why people defer their PhDs because of family responsibilities. She thinks that it is possible to find the space and referenced some of her women colleagues who are parents and also prolific researchers, "so I think it's possible to make it work" (Irene). She also later implied that she has been pushed into particular responsibilities because colleagues with children are not available at certain times. This implies that she does not believe special consideration should be given to people who are also parents.

However, another, who is also not yet a parent thinks that child-care is important:

> We need the crèche to open again. We need child-care. I think we need a formal policy document about parental leave, which sets down...what the university's policies should be towards people who are looking after children. Parents, single mothers, single fathers, whatever. My feeling at the moment is that this is done at the level of the department...I think we probably need a formal document which actually says this in black and white. To make sure that everyone benefits from it (May).

Maria attributes her ability to move ahead in her career to a choice not to have children:

> I think I have made quite a few strides in my work trajectory. That is not an accident and that's not because I'm somehow brighter than other people. I have made certain choices. I choose not to have children...It's been very conscious. There's no way that I would be in the position that I am now with what I have, which is having the CV the way it looks...I mean some people, some women do amazing things. I know plenty of women that are at associate professor level and have kids, but I choose to sleep. I choose to have a social life, so they're very conscious choices (Maria.)

Nonetheless, she is critical of the university and its stance towards parenting. For her a crèche on campus is a minimum criterion for being a world-class university. It is as important as lights on campus and water in the bathrooms:

> so I think in terms of people living their ordinary lives, there isn't support for that, you know for having young children...it gets disguised as your own life, your own personal things, not something that the university is responsible for...but you go anywhere in the world, any major university is going to have a crèche on campus...if you don't have the very basics...why do we have to fight for these things at all? (Maria).

Abby describes a recent Departmental strategic planning held on a saturday. This kind of time commitment is difficult for her, as she has to make special child-care arrangements: "Saturday...are you kidding? ...who is going to make a fuss about this except me?" (Abby). She is also concerned about the assumption that even if she could make child-care arrangements, she would want to be away from her child on a weekend.

For Amanda, the lack of progression of a senior female colleague is directly related to her having children:

> And you know it was very interesting kind of watching her career develop, because she also, she had two young kids. She's been here for a long time, and has seen many people promoted way before her. And that's because she has a career where it's not nine to five, and she can't be there to pick up the kids, or if they're sick, stay at home. And she's made that decision that she wants to do both. But it means kind of taking a backseat and not being an Associate Professor, because you have to be here all the time, do crazy publications, and committees, and faculties (Amanda).

The fact that her mentor has managed to maintain an academic career (albeit not progressing as fast as others have) is also a source of inspiration to her: "so it's been great having someone who's done it before to say it is possible, and it's hard, but it can be done" (Amanda). However, she is ambivalent about this as she is also discouraged by the fact that her mentor has been in the department for twenty years but has not progressed. This is also linked to a belief that it is not possible to be a professor and a mother.

In Harriet's view it is the difficulty of negotiating the work-life balance because of the relentless nature of academic work that makes things particularly hard for those with children. Hers are now grown-up but she still struggles with the volume and complexity of work:

> I actually can't keep up…So, it's kind of like, the things that you need to do in order to get ahead, you have to do over and above what you, what you're expected to do to stay where you are. Does that make sense? So, if I want to publish more in order to get ahead, it's not going to come out of a normal days', or a normal month's work (Harriet).

She is indicating here that the regular workloads of an academic cannot be fulfilled within a normal eight hour day, particularly if you have ambitions of being promoted. She describes a Christmas holiday when her family were sleeping but she was secretly working on a masters thesis. She didn't want them to know. For her, as her children are now adults, there is no issue of not giving them attention, but she struggles with the fact that the workloads are not possible within a normal working day, and therefore one has to steal time from other places, including holidays.

For Abby time is also a big issue, and it affects people differently depending on their personal commitments:

> Obviously, what is real is the time…the family time thing…there's a colleague of mine who was at (another university) and got his PhD from there, and he started teaching a year before me…and his wife had a baby three months ago. And in that time he has published a couple of things, he's directed a show, he's like made a whole bunch of new courses, he stays late…I rush out of here to relieve the nanny…..his working life here is undisrupted by the fact of this new baby. And that feels entirely gendered (Abby).

Abby's comparison with her male colleague reveals a key gender workplace issue, which is related both to how institutions accommodate people with family responsibilities, as well as how social structures outside the institution impact on experiences within the institution. As a father, her male colleague has limited caring responsibilities, whereas her entire schedule has changed because of having a young child.

There is no doubt that family commitments impact on women in academia and that academic jobs are not designed for people who are parents. This is primarily gendered because women are predominantly the caregivers for young children in South Africa, but academic jobs would equally be difficult for men wanting to play an active parenting role. In the case of having families, ideologies of domesticity and ideal workers are linked to academic jobs and the difficulties for women. There are still powerful ideas about the need to separate public/work life from private/home life, as if the two do not impact on one another.

Those who are still becoming established and have young children find it difficult to negotiate the kind of time that they need to get ahead. They also find it difficult to compromise on child-care responsibilities, which means that they sometimes miss out on - or grudgingly participate in - compulsory activities that are not set at convenient times for parents. This is the case even though they have relatively affordable childcare, which many young academics in other parts of the world don't have. Even with childcare, many women want to spend time with their children, so childcare only allows them to be at work for certain hours in the day. They are still restricted when they must relieve the carer, fetch children from school, and spend time with children outside of normal working hours. There are also many family responsibilities that cannot or do not get 'outsourced' to other people.

Abby suggests that it would take different ways of organising and thinking about the workplace to change the gendered nature of academic work, as experienced by those with child-care responsibilities. It is still mostly women taking on these responsibilities, and even men with young children are not hindered by this. The multi-dimensional nature of academic work also makes it challenging for people with family commitments, as it is not the kind of work that can be compartmentalised into certain hours of the day.

What is striking is that for those who do not have children, and may still want to do so, it is a prominent part of their career development thinking, either factoring in the desire for particular achievements before having children, or feeling that it is necessary to hide any desire to have children from colleagues. Given that many women's careers in academic life have either been delayed or restricted by choosing to have children, this anxiety is not surprising.

Conclusion

This chapter has used elements of Acker's theory of gendered organisations to argue that institutions are gendered in complex and multi-dimensional ways, all of which are relevant for understanding the working lives of academics. Gender operates at systemic levels, in and through policy, in symbolic ways through gendered ideologies, through overt and hidden structures and practices within institutions, and affecting individual identities and the responses of academics to the multiple layers of social and institutional factors. While this makes gender analysis complicated and 'wicked', it is also the case that a narrower, more one-dimensional approach would not provide a full enough picture of the multiple effects of gender on individuals and their working environment. Gendered cultures interact with a range of other factors: race, personal circumstances, career and job status, to impact on the experiences and identities of early career academic women.

From the narratives explored above, it appears that despite clear evidence of gendered institutional cultures, women find it difficult to name and identify some experiences as gendered. This links to the idea of 'sticky' gender norms, of 'gender going home with you' (Petesch, 2012). The everyday micro-politics are clearly described but are narrated as individual incidents. Individual interactions are de-linked in individual narratives as singular experiences, rather than of manifestations of a broader structure and culture that could be described as white and masculine. When described in a chapter in this way, it is possible to begin to describe the institutional environment in its gendered and racialised forms. Combining the narratives into the analysis in this chapter has allowed for aspects of hermeneutical injustice to emerge, and in highlighting the everyday experiences, it is possible to think about what different kinds of interactions might look like in a transformed institution. A working environment that is free from sexual harassment and gender or race-based bullying and work structures and cultures that are more accommodating of parents are critical for enhancing capabilities of academic women.

Chapter 7: Theorising the functionings and capabilities of early career academic women in the context of gendered institutions

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to link the findings of the study, outlined in the previous two chapters, with the theoretical framework outlined in chapter three, to draw conclusions about how gender impacts on academic working lives and the well-being of early career academic women and to propose a set of valuable capability dimensions for early career academic women that arises from this particular study. These could form the basis for further research and discussion within institutions aiming for more gender-just and equitable academic environments.

This chapter starts with a focus on the professional identity narratives of four of the participants. They have been selected because they exist at two opposite poles of the study. On the one hand Abby and Amanda have both not completed their PhDs, and are in junior positions, yet to be confirmed in permanent positions. They both have young children. Their narratives are filled with uncertainty and anxiety, as they work out the expectations of the positions, define their place in academia and make decisions about where to focus their professional efforts. On the other, Irene and Harriet are the participants in the most senior positions, who express a growing comfort and certainty about their careers and their academic work. They have moments of enjoyment, have a clear plan for their future, have learnt many aspects of 'playing the game', and are able to reflect on the things that have helped and hindered their journey into academia. Irene and Harriet are senior lecturers, they finished their PhDs some years ago, they have edited books and are well published. They have a strong research identity and firmly articulate their own experiences and agency as academics. Their narratives include reflections on the key moments of challenge in becoming an academic, the major constraints and enabling factors that supported their careers and understanding of their own plans, aspirations and valued areas of functioning as academics. Harriet has grown up children and entered academia following a career as a school-teacher and principal and Irene does not have children.

Combined, the four narratives represent the diversity of experiences of the early career academic women in this study. Early career may work differently in another context and here the narratives are illustrative rather than representative. They do overlap in that they are still building their academic careers. They also provide a lens through which it is possible to explore the gendered professional identities of the participants. The narratives are used as a frame for explaining the valued functionings of early career academic women (achieved in some cases, but merely aspirational in others). The gendered nature of the functionings in this study are also explored. The chapter further outlines the conversion factors that have enabled and constrained their professional career development. The conversion factors point to intersectional inequalities entailing gender equity redress in the university. Intersectional inequalities give an indication of structures and processes which may need to be changed to support a more gender equitable university. Such intersecting conversion factors (or intersectional inequalities) can compound each other in specific biographies.

The second part of the chapter looks at related research on capabilities and education and gender to draw on capability sets that have been developed in similar projects. From an engagement with these capability sets and the contextual valued functionings of the whole group in this study that have emerged from the data, a set of capability dimensions is proposed.

Valued functionings in the professional development of early career academic women

From the professional narratives of the participants in this study, it is possible to identify a set of core functionings that emerge from the narrative data. This section outlines these functionings by engaging with the four narratives.

Irene had a relatively clear route to becoming an academic and has been well published. She has reached a point where she feels that she has a good knowledge of the systems that she must negotiate and how to negotiate them successfully. She is clear about what needs to be done to progress in the academy. This has been achieved from a mixture of personal knowledge (her father was an academic so the world was familiar to her) and academic mentorship. She has become skilful at navigating the system.

Irene is clear that she wants to be a professor. She also has a defined identity as a researcher:

It's just in terms of my relationship to publishing it's become who I am…there isn't a day when I do not write and sometimes, I write a paragraph, sometimes it's just one or two sentences, but there isn't a day when I'm not in that space (Irene).

Harriet is also close to this goal of achieving balance, understanding what she must do to get ahead and finding the most satisfaction in pursuing her own research interests. She has recently been invited to apply by her head of school for an associate professorship. Harriet and Irene are the most senior of the group in terms of academic rank (they are both senior lecturers).

Abby and Amanda, in contrast, are far from finding their own happy medium and are struggling to achieve a sense of belonging. They are still overwhelmed with teaching and administrative responsibilities and have not found the autonomous space to pursue their own interests. They are aware that they need to pursue a particular academic trajectory in order to move forward, but this is often at odds with their own interests. For example, professional teaching identities should be supported and recognised, so that the different strengths of academics can be recognised, but at the university everyone is being pushed to achieve in the same area, which is to produce journal publications.

Amanda has a very clear identity as a teacher. She has a masters degree that focuses on teaching and is passionate about helping students to succeed. For Amanda, a rewarding academic career is very much about teaching:

But my main kind of angle in it is still about how you learn content of an academic discipline, rather than just delivering content. So I'm still very much interested in the pedagogy of learning, rather than just being an academic who researches and writes…I don't think because you yourself learned how to learn means that you know how to teach (Amanda).

This arises from her own experience of achieving academically despite having a learning disability and having been supported by a mentor who has children with learning disabilities and was able to support her early on in her postgraduate studies. Amanda has already adapted her expectations of progressing as an academic, as she feels it is unlikely she will succeed by moving up in the hierarchy while focusing on a specialisation in teaching. She indicates that

she is most likely to work in the academic support field, which could restrain her career progression. Implied in her career plans is the idea that being a regular academic (who conducts research and teaches) is incompatible with caring about student support and student success.

Her strengths lie in teaching and learning, and she also has a masters degree in higher education teaching:

> and that's kind of why I think that it would have to be a move to the side…academic support and development, or something where it kind of doesn't put things in jeopardy, which may be a cowardly move (Amanda).

In Amanda's experience and her observed understanding of an academic career, becoming an expert in teaching and learning and focusing on student support and development happens at the expense of an individual research career. In her view it is not possible to have a successful research career, focus on teaching and learning and progress in the academic hierarchy. In her idea of an academic career she does not fit the mould of the ideal worker and can never fit this mould. It is therefore important for her to create an alternative idea of the likely trajectory of her career. This may be about adapted preferences but could also be a clear choice to prioritise the work that she values most over an ambition to progress in the hierarchy.

Amanda has not had much space for her own research work, with heavy teaching loads and being the coordinator of the masters programme in her department. As she indicates: "the imperatives are what the department needs".

Both Abby and Amanda have young children. Amanda would like to progress and become a professor, but also wants to be able to have another child and spend time with her children. As described earlier, she sees herself "eventually ending up in the kind of research support or admin side of it." She does not believe that it is possible for her to progress as an academic while at the same time helping students progress, focusing significantly on her teaching, and being a mother.

Abby has a similarly ambivalent attitude towards progressing in the academy. She would like to progress her academic career: "I mean who would not want to be a professor". Yet she

doubts the institutional environment, and whether the institution will support her to progress. There is a sense that she will have to do it on her own:

> I mean, being a professor, first of all feels like it's like a marriage...a relationship you have to an institution, but I don't think I trust the place enough to support me ultimately and to support that journey (Abby).

The contrasting positions of the four participants can be related to several factors, including whether they or not have completed their PhD, being mothers of young children, the length of time they have spent in academic positions, and their own particular interests. However, despite the contrasting positions and experiences, a similar group of valued functionings emerges for all the group, some of which have been achieved by Harriet and Irene, and which are aspirational for Abby and Amanda.

In the capability approach, functionings are those things that people are actually able to be and to do:

> ...a functioning is an 'active realisation of one or more capabilities...Functionings are beings and doings that are the outgrowths or realisations of capabilities.' (Nussbaum, 2011: 20). Hence, in Nussbaum's terminology, a functioning stands in relation to a capability as an outcome stands in relation to an opportunity (Robeyns, 2017: 93).

Exploring valued functionings can provide a rich source of information to think about relevant capabilities. In an institutional context, this can also inform thinking about what policies and practices can both enhance and expand the capabilities of early career academics and reduce barriers to career progression for this group.

The next section explores the functionings that have emerged in this study, reflected through the narratives of the four participants, briefly described above in terms of their achievements, professional choices and aspirations. The narratives of the participants in the study reveal much about what they value in an academic career. What would they like academic jobs to look like, and what are the things that they have been able to achieve that they identify as important? Looking at valued functionings helps to show what it is that this group value about and hope for in their academic careers. Thinking about the kinds of careers and jobs that are

valued may improve understanding about what kind of working environments (the social uptake conditions) should be fostered in order to encourage more women (and possibly other marginalised groups) in the early career to enter and remain in academic jobs.

The valued functionings and their corresponding capabilities are grouped below into three broad areas: navigating academic life; being recognised and valued; and achieving autonomy. These are multi-dimensional and they are also relational. This means that they are linked and inter-dependent in different ways, which are not always overt, and need to be addressed simultaneously. For example, there are aspects of achieving autonomy that are dependent on being recognised and valued. Certain functionings may be dependent on others but will also be experienced and achieved differently by different individuals. Ultimately the purpose of the next section is to present a set of normative capability dimensions for this group of early career academic women, extrapolated from the contextual functionings that arose from their narratives.

Successfully navigating academic life

There are four areas of navigation that emerge as important from the narratives of the four academics. The first involves developing an understanding of the formal expectations of the job. Harriet and Irene indicate that they have developed an understanding of the institutional expectations of them as academics. They know that there are certain things that need to be done in order to maintain a successful career and progress, which they both want to do. A certain level of research output is necessary and getting access to research funding, and for both research is a priority and something that they love. They have identified their own research niches and enjoy their research work. They have learnt to say "no" to things they are not interested in, while maintaining an appropriate level of necessary work – supervision, administration, participation in committees, and finding time to work in the areas that matter most to them. They have achieved a certain level of functioning in this area, which has a positive effect on their professional wellbeing.

On the other hand, Amanda and Abby are still grappling with their academic working lives, how to find time to publish with high teaching loads, how to balance an academic career with having young children, whose advice to follow, and what kind of academic career they want. While they are aware of the work that must be done, they are uncertain how, in the end, they

will be able to sustain a research programme adequate for promotion, given their interests and experiences and high teaching loads.

Amanda has asked for career advice from two people in her Department. One is a fellow male early career academic who has progressed fast, and the other is her mentor, a woman who has remained at the same level for many years, and has focused primarily on teaching. The man's advice was to "get in the big research projects", get teaching buyouts and use that to do projects. The woman's advice was to "work smart", not to go off and start new things, because you devote all your energy to finding your feet. Stay where you are in your research field, and keep adapting it, because you don't have time to start anew. She finds this advice discouraging, because it appears to limit the potential of being an academic: "I think the advice that's being offered is you don't have time…" (Amanda). The advice she receives from her female mentor is to be safe, be cautious, work smart, but not to think big. Don't expect too much - you can't expect to progress, because I have not. On the other hand, the advice of her male colleague is to give the teaching work to others so that you can focus on your research career.

These two pieces of advice represent two extremes: on the one hand, be self-interested and focus what will put you in a competitive position, and on the other, don't be too ambitious and be safe because you may not be able to progress. In both cases though, the message is not to give too much of yourself. The different experiences of these two academics informs their advice. This shows that advice from others can be both empowering and restricting. Arguably, the advice is gendered too.

What emerges from all the narratives is that formal induction and accessible forms of institutional support were absent for the participants. Each individual has sought their own forms of support over time but started out with a limited understanding of the formal expectations of the job. The expectations are opaque for many entering academic jobs. Irene gained significant knowledge from a broader disciplinary network, and Harriet appears to have navigated the job using her own prior experience as a manager. Neither Abby nor Amanda are certain about what to expect and what is reasonable to ask for. Abby has asked for time off to work on her PhD but is not sure how much is reasonable to request. Amanda had a difficult salary negotiation and is not happy about how it was resolved. The lack of clear formal advice, the devolved nature of departmental operations which allows for different

practices within the same faculty, and the relatively opaque rules, make this a difficult area to navigate. They also leave people vulnerable to unfair practices.

Linked to understanding expectations is the need to make choices and decide on the major career trade-offs that an individual must make in order to function well professionally and progress. Irene describes as critical the kind of support that she has had in "learning to play the game". For her, this includes learning about teaching, learning about doing research, learning about how to access funding and understanding what work you need to do to progress in the academy. For her this is also about learning how to say "no" to things. She has done this through her own determination, and through strategic relationships with senior colleagues in her field.

Abby recognises that in order to get ahead she needs to "play the game":

> I realise that I have to be much more strategic about being here if this thing is going to go the way I'd need it to go...and much more self-serving and much more just strategic about what I do and how I do it (Abby).

The group also draw on a wide range of examples when discussing the careers they anticipate following. They can draw on examples of those who have progressed and those who have not. Amanda has looked at the career of her mentor, who she feels has "reached a ceiling", despite having been teaching for a long time. This is "disheartening" for her, but she is also aware that, in being strategic, she needs to draw on other career examples. She has sought advice from a man who has recently been promoted: "I'm still learning about the different possible paths and avenues...and how to work smart within the opportunities, within the obstacles, and still achieve" (Amanda).

There is also, in Abby's view, a pressure to aspire to one type of academic career only:

> there's a pressure that if you're going to stick with it then that's what you're aiming for. I mean, you must be aiming to be a professor.....sometimes it feels like a bit of a cop out to not, kind of, play the game so that is the goal, so that is the prize that you're winning, because obviously why else would you be here... (Abby).

Her view of the possibility of progression is linked to her perception that academics who are interested primarily in teaching seldom get ahead. This is informed by what she has seen happen to other female academics. For Abby, the single-minded pursuit of research output is a challenge, as valuing research means that you must pursue it at the expense of other things. Also, in her field, there is some contestation about what is accepted as research, as creative outputs are not always recognised in the same way as research "if they don't produce research value".

Abby also loves the teaching that she does but must also do teaching that she is not comfortable with. For her, there are challenges marrying institutional expectations of teaching and assessment with teaching in the creative arts area:

> so that tension is alive and well between people who are, just going to teach practice...
> train artists who can make art. And then a whole other section that says, yes, we must
> train artists who can make it and think and write and read...there's a bit of an impasse
> actually. And we are here, we are in the university system (Abby).

These comments show some of the complexities of defining different types of academic careers and the experiences of how feelings of exclusion can arise from the desire to explore different career trajectories. In order to navigate the academy successfully, strategic choices must be made. There is no single path, each job is different, and each career unique. Irene and Harriet have achieved some level of certainty about what kind of career they want and have made - and continue to make - critical decisions in support of this. Abby and Amanda have not yet reached certainty. Institutional factors are important at this point as their decision-making is influenced by what possibilities they perceive to exist in the institution.

The second navigational functioning is about achieving balance. The flexibility of an academic career is highly valued by the participants, but academic work is relentless for all of them, and requires constant decision-making about priorities. This requires a combination of agency and support. It seems possible to find the right kind of balance, particularly if you can balance your interests with the work that has to be done. Irene articulates that she has found a happy medium between the amount of teaching and administration work and what she really loves to do, which is write and think and research.

Harriet is keen to move up the ranks but is anxious about losing what she perceives to be the relative peace of a lower-level position. With higher rank comes greater management responsibilities, and she does not like conflict. However, she is eager to be recognised in her own field and is clear that she would like to be a professor within the next five years. Harriet, like Irene, relates one of her biggest challenges in getting ahead as linked to learning to play the academic game. For her, this includes learning to prioritise and say "no" to things. She has had to overcome the guilt of refusing to do certain things but recognises that learning to say "no" is a critical part of getting ahead and developing an academic identity. Given that she struggles to deal with conflict, she has had to work particularly hard at this: "at times I've actually had to stop an email and say no, this problem is not for me personally, it must be sorted, but I don't actually have to do it myself" (Harriet).

The challenge for her is to learn to prioritise the things that will advance her career, and not only respond to requests that might be important to her personally. For Harriet there is a tension between enjoying the relative freedom and autonomy that comes with some seniority (and she has achieved a relatively senior role quite quickly due to her earlier work experience prior to becoming an academic), and not wanting to move up the ranks, as this will require greater responsibility:

> But there are many days where I think I actually should apply for demotion and go back to just being an ordinary lecturer, and just be in my little corner...there are times where I think I'm just not cut out for this kind of work...I think this is quite an individual and competitive environment, where the idea is that success is scarce, and if I stop and help you, then it's going to be to my own detriment (Harriet).

In some faculties there are corporate cultures where you must be in your office for particular times. Amanda has had relative flexibility and support from the head of department. She recently had a month away from the office (still working) but with the freedom to work on writing, "...so, I think it does help if you have someone who's mindful of just letting you work out your own time" (Amanda).

Some of this is gendered. As the previous chapters have noted, several participants mention that men get ahead because they focus on career-enhancing work, which will get them promoted quickly, leaving the "academic housework" (Macfarlane and Burg, 2019) which

includes administration, course coordination, undergraduate teaching, and pastoral roles with students, to more junior staff, and women.

Some of the factors that impact on the decision-making of these women and help them to navigate institutional demands include induction, mentorship, and professional networks. Irene has a strong professional network within her discipline that provides support from outside the institution. She also had the support of a senior male academic in her field. Harriet brought a certain level of maturity from having had a senior career in education but had no formal induction or mentorship. Instead she sought support informally. Abby and Amanda have both had support from women mentors who encouraged them to enter academic careers, but who in both cases had themselves struggled to progress. This has had mixed results for them, as they grapple with self-belief. However, in Amanda's case mentorship was critical as it helped her to overcome her own learning difficulties.

The third area of functioning involves overcoming personal anxieties. Each of the participants indicate that they have had to face up to and overcome their own anxiety about aspects of their academic career. This is different for each person but is linked to both capabilities and social and family support. For Irene, despite an understanding of academic environments as a result of her father, and achieving academic success quite early on (becoming part of a research network early in her postgraduate studies and editing a book before completing her PhD), her reflections indicate that her journey has not been easy:

> So, academia when I first started was a very anguished place to be actually, especially coming from a *[historically black and rural institution]* as a student and then entering into the academy as staff, you don't have a sense of what you think you can contribute and it's a process. It's almost a psychological process. It needs a shift and it doesn't just happen overnight (Irene).

She had considerable support from her PhD supervisor, as well as from a range of senior people in her discipline. Over time, working and collaborating with the right people, and with active support from her supervisor she gained confidence. In the beginning she was anxious working with senior people, and only overcame that with time:

But it was a process in terms of starting to think of myself as someone who could potentially actually make that kind of contribution. That was the one thing. And so, it was just a process of slowly letting go of those anxieties (Irene.)

For Amanda, writing a PhD was a huge challenge:

I think the PhD really knocked me. In fact, it was a complete test of my self-esteem, my self-confidence, everything…always second-guessing and doubting. And the only thing that turned it around was by having short-term writing contracts. Consultancies. Because I knew that I could write, and deliver, but for some reason, a PhD, it just challenged me (Amanda).

Irene and Harriet narrate a combination of personal factors in developing confidence and esteem as academics and learning to navigate institutional expectations (which comes from their own learning, but also from support from those more senior than them), as critical to developing professional identity. They have developed an understanding of what is required from them to work in the area that they are interested in (in both cases as researchers). They are also both clear that they want to become professors, which means that they want to achieve the autonomy, independence and recognition that comes with seniority in the academy.

All the participants, however, exhibited high levels of self-motivation and resilience in their academic careers. Personal characteristics are important in becoming an academic. As chapter five showed, all participants showed an intrinsic interest in writing, producing knowledge and teaching others. Some of this motivation originated in early experiences at home or in school, with encouragement of parents and teachers, early exposure to academic work through parents, and - for many of them - encouragement by lecturers at undergraduate level and encouragement to do postgraduate work. The origins of an academic career may well start early on in life, where someone has access to the right conditions for studying and pursuing writing and research (support of teachers, lecturers and family) combined with the opportunities for this interest to be nurtured and supported. However, while an intrinsic motivation to teach and research was evident in all the participant narratives, there is a strong social element at work in many of their careers, as becoming an academic also involved the support and encouragement of family and other academics. This can be class-related as a

strong schooling background and a professional family are important factors in supporting early exposure to the possibility of an academic career. However, while family and educational background are important for laying the foundation of an academic career, they are not necessarily sufficient.

Only one of the four participants discussed in this section started out with an academic career in mind early in life. The others, while working in other areas, maintained a motivation to study further and pursued postgraduate studies. This is an essential path for all academics and completing a PhD is a key conversion factor. Understanding the motivation of young people who show an interest in and aptitude for pursuing teaching and knowledge careers, may assist in understanding why people become academics. This, combined with other factors, such as support and encouragement of relatives, friends, and teachers, can be an important conversion factor in shifting people from "accidental" academics into clearer pathways to academia. Again, self-motivation is therefore not only a personal factor, but is combined with social elements. Individual resilience appears an important conversion factor for the group.

Early career academics develop coping mechanisms to mediate their insecurity and the uncertainty about whether they will get permanent jobs and be recognised for their work. These include adapting preferences or aspirations to mediate expectations that may not be met, or which do not seem attainable for them. Adaptive preferences are gendered. These adaptive aspirations are complex and not only personal, as they relate to the gendered structures of institutions and to interaction with some of the social factors such as a lack of female role models in senior positions.

Despite this, changing careers, completing PhDs and overcoming a learning difficulty are all indications that these individuals have shown incredible resilience:

> But I think the PhD is not, it's not about the submission that has been the achievement, it's about the many times that I've wanted to give up Amanda).

In order to get ahead they have overcome significant insecurities and feelings of not belonging or being an imposter: "Oh, I wonder if they're going to find out that all I am is a glorified high school teacher" (Harriet).

Part of the process of overcoming anxieties and feelings of not belonging involves becoming assertive, especially in areas of curriculum and teaching, gaining epistemic agency, autonomy and authority. This often requires courage in the face of resistance from more senior colleagues, as Irene described in chapter six.

Equally important, and a common theme throughout each narrative, was the ability to say "no". This is partly necessary because the nature of the work is such that every academic must make individual choices about areas of focus, given the multi-dimensionality of the work. However, it is also gendered, in the sense that women have tended to be stuck in positions where they do the bulk of administrative and teaching work. Saying no is seen as critical to moving ahead, as achieving balance is not only about professional well-being, but also about the strategic selection of tasks to maximise opportunities for promotion.

As the previous chapters show, an important theme for early career academics was understanding the nature of academic jobs and what is necessary to get ahead. Those who indicate that they have achieved some level of comfort in their jobs have done so in part because they have found balance in their career, fulfilling the expectations of the job, while making time for the work that they value the most. They indicate that they have "learned to play the game" which means doing what is expected of them while pursuing the activities that they most value. Others have not achieved this, not necessarily because they don't have an appropriate understanding of what they must focus on, but rather because they have not made, or are not yet able to make, decisions about how to balance the different aspects of their academic work.

All participants indicated that there are aspects of an academic career that are not always clear at the start and that it takes time (and support) to fully understand expectations and how much space there is to choose priorities while meeting the requirements of the job (which are not the same for every person), and what is required to achieve a balance and get ahead. Given the multi-dimensionality of academic careers, there is no single answer to how each person navigates the expectations of an academic career, considering the competitiveness of the academy, the formal requirements and their own strengths and interests. Daily choices must be made, and trade-offs between different priorities are necessary.

Most participants acknowledged the relative flexibility of academia compared to other kinds of work. The time independence or time autonomy that academics have is seen as a positive aspect of this field. While having freedom to choose when to work and the ability to do personal things during a working day (including fetching children from school) is positive, the freedom to choose when to work is only one aspect of autonomy. Despite the time flexibility, academic work is "relentless", so finding balance is also about making choices about focus.

Recognition and value for academic work

It has been noted that one of the gendered aspects of the academy is the way in which policy and institutional practice construct different value between teaching and research. As the literature has shown, academics are expected to teach, but they are primarily rewarded for producing research. Early career academics, as the data shows, struggle to find time for research work when they have high teaching workloads, which means that they do not easily meet the research requirements of their posts. There are also academics who value teaching above other responsibilities and would like to be recognised for the work they do. Some enjoy administrative work and play an important role in this area, but it emerges that a key goal for many early career academics is to do everything possible to reduce administrative workloads. Those who get ahead quickly spend as little time as possible on administration. But what if you enjoy teaching, community engagement, course administration and curriculum development work?

The participants all recounted a key point of recognition that had an important effect on their sense of belonging in the academy. For Irene this was an edited book; for Harriet a single-authored book and being asked to apply for promotion; for Amanda completing her PhD. While promotion is the ultimate recognition of professional achievement, there are many other diverse ways in which individual academics can be recognised for the work they do. This includes recognition of the many dimensions of academic work, and not just the overt requirements of promotion. Each academic career is different and will follow a different trajectory, depending on the interests and circumstances of the individual.

There is a tension sometimes between achieving in one's key areas of interest and being formally recognised. This is most often clear in the tensions between teaching and research outputs, but there are other areas like the creative arts and areas of professional practice where trajectories may be different. Also, administrative work must be done and should be recognised.

Institutional recognition emerges as having three dimensions: the first is about the multi-dimensionality of academic work and the recognition of different types of career (or in the case of the narrated experiences, the non-recognition for different types of career). This is a focus of concern in several narratives and some discomfort, especially for those who have not yet achieved permanence or seniority.

Harriet is proud of the contribution that she is making in her field in the country, and notes that there was little scholarship in the area until she came to the University: "So that's what I'm most proud of. Sorry, does that sound arrogant?" (Harriet). The idea that talking about your own achievements is arrogant is clearly linked to her understanding of the academy as an individualistic and competitive place to be, which for her is negative. This idea of the academy as a competitive, individualistic place is linked to the celebration of individuals as researchers in their own field, their own right, what Diane Reay calls the "narcissistic competitiveness of academia" (Reay, 1997: 26). To belong you don't have to be part of a community, you have to perform on your own as a researcher, and you are most likely to succeed in doing that by focusing on your own achievements, rather than working with other people.

Being recognised creates a tension between formal recognition for your own achievements in an individualised academy which prioritises formal individual research output and achievements above other forms of recognition. This may also be gendered, and equally relates to class and race in different understandings of the social world:

> I suggest the female academic from a working-class background is unlikely ever to feel at home in academia. For many, socialization at least within the family, was into collective and community-based understandings of the social world, not the competitive individualism we now face, in which social networks are about instrumentalism, not connection" (Reay, 1997: 22).

There is a clear thread in Harriet's narrative of grappling with her own agency and emotions. She wants to move ahead, to achieve autonomy and independence in her work, and to be recognised for her research achievements. However, she does not want to do this by competing with others and ignoring her responsibilities. This is a constant process of decision-making, balancing individual decision-making with institutional expectations, and learning through the support of others, and overcoming their own anxieties. Some aspects of this are

gendered, including navigating the demands of becoming an ideal worker, the lack of support for different kinds of careers and different professional trajectories, an institutional culture and tradition that is narrow in rewarding only certain aspects of academic work, making space for development opportunities, developing epistemic agency and achieving a sense of belonging in a gendered work environment. Amanda notes:

> I'd like to stay in academic development and pedagogy helping students learn. A lot of students struggle. And a lot of academics don't have time to commit to helping students learn. Even though that's what a university's about. And more and more what I'm starting to see is that more students have problems. Just mental problems, emotional problems, social problems. Where those are even bigger barriers to learning. And a lot of academics just don't have the time to listen to someone's, you know, life story (Amanda).

Amanda notes as her biggest achievement when she was given the dean's teaching award at the age of twenty-seven "and that for me was like, okay, this is, it's a sign that I'm competent at this, and that I can do this…" (Amanda). So, Amanda has a strong teaching identity and is most interested in lecturing work. However, a primary interest in teaching may make it difficult to achieve promotion, as academics must perform across a range of areas. Being recognised for teaching through an award is an important conversion factor for Amanda, but without research outputs she will not progress.

The second dimension of recognition is about the space created for development opportunities. This is not just about meeting the basic requirements of the job, but also about identifying opportunities that affirm what it is that each academic values the most. Abby has not yet done a PhD and has been in academia for some time. She has decided to get it done and applied for a teaching buy-out. She indicates that the support for early career academics is "theoretical", as rules exist for support to be put in place, but it is not always possible to take up opportunities:

> the expectation is already out of control that we must teach and research and, and, and…but the teaching loads are big, right, so understaffed, everyone is understaffed, but it's a real thing and it has real consequences, on what you are able to do if you are

teaching massive undergraduate courses and doing their admin and co-ordinating other things (Abby).

She recognises that overwork is a common theme for everyone, but "it's a real thing". There would be more output if there was more of a shared teaching load so "we would actually have more time" which is what is valued. There seems to be little uniformity about how departments are staffed and how they operate, which means that there are different experiences across the group. Those in post-doc positions have limited teaching loads but those in lecturing positions (unless in a targeted development post) have teaching loads that prevent them from putting time into research. Workloads are clearly an important institutional conversion factor in achieving professional success for early career academics, and there are significant differences across departments and individual circumstances. Large teaching loads and classes prevent early career academics from being able to produce research and write. There is a tension between the expectations and the reality of day to day commitments for some of the participants. On the one hand, Irene notes the positive experience of having transparent workload models in her department, which allows individuals to pick up on any inequalities. In the case of Abby and Amanda transparent workload models are not in operation, which leads to concern about inequality in workload allocation. Workloads also appear a barrier to pursuing professional development opportunities for both these women. While professional development opportunities are available for early career academics, they are not compulsory, and it is up to individuals to decide what is important and find the time to attend.

Lack of time to pursue professional development opportunities is a key factor in early career academics being able to turn the availability of opportunities into real access to them. So, even though support may be available to academics, there are barriers to them accessing it. From an institutional and departmental point of view it is necessary to think about workload allocations to early career academics and how they may enable or constrain them in achieving the goals to progress.

Professional networks are also important. These may be both formal and informal, and can include being part of a research group, a professional development group specifically focused on early career learning, or a writing group. Both Irene and Harriet have found professional networks important to their learning and progression. However, in Abby and Amanda's cases,

neither appear to have found a constant source of support and reference. They have only had engagement with individual mentors and have not found an academic network, either within or outside the institution. This may be an important barrier for them in accessing support initiatives and also in achieving a sense of belonging in the institution.

The participants tend to identify areas of work that they have learnt about through a specific mentor or colleague. Much of this appears accidental rather than institutionally coordinated. Where mentors were formally assigned, this was often not at the start of a post. The third dimension relates to the creation of a sense of belonging and a trust in the institution that it will affirm individuals, and that they will feel a sense of affiliation. This links to the idea of community of care and has some resonance in Nussbaum's (2000) capability of affiliation.

Amanda consistently comes back to the lack of progression of her woman mentor in relation to others:

> the person who was on sabbatical has just been given promotion. And he's been here 6 years. So, he's had this meteoric rise in the department, published phenomenally, has brought in two big research projects. Has no family, and is male. X, who is this mentor for me, has been here since the 90s, has sat on many faculties, committees, which she was told is a criteria for promotion…this other academic who got the promotion had only been the MA coordinator, hadn't sat on any other big committees or faculties. So, he was given the promotion…or so it seems, I mean, I'm not on these things to decide. So, it seems he was given the promotion just based on the grants and the publications. So, it's disheartening for me to see X in this position of where she's been here 20-something years, and is still a senior lecturer… (Amanda).

Abby has not had formal mentorship, and would like this, but thinks that it must be specific to the field - although there are generic issues that all academics face, challenges are often discipline-specific. In her previous university she was informally mentored by a woman who was "deeply generous with her time". However, this woman was herself marginalised in the discipline and was not senior, despite working in the university for many years:

> either you make a decision to align yourself to how the university functions and to behave in a way that it's, like, recognised so that you can be promoted, or you don't do

that and you are at peace with the fact that you might be a junior lecturer for your entire academic career (Abby).

This is like Amanda's mentor, who supported her from her second undergraduate year. Abby and Amanda both describe colleagues who have taught and are practitioners and are excellent teachers, but haven't published enough, and therefore cannot become permanent or get promoted because of their lack of research output. This influences the career aspirations of each one, as they are aware of the consequences of not producing research for academic careers. For Abby also, the lack of women role models is a factor in her feeling as though she can progress:

> I want to have the choice not to work in a university if I want…I feel if I was going to model my career on…I feel like if I was, kind of, surrounded by black female professors, then it might feel like a more attainable, more obvious career trajectory, and I'm not surrounded at all by them….particularly not in my discipline (Abby).

A lack of female role models in the academy, especially black women, is a constraining factor for many women as it can limit aspirations. Seeing women who have not moved up the ranks, despite working hard over many years can also be discouraging. It may appear that women who have not moved have not prioritised research, or they have not moved because they had children instead of focusing on their careers. Seeing women who have become professors can be an important conversion factor, as it gives early career academics a sense of possibility.

Achieving Professional Autonomy

The two participants who have the most senior academic positions (senior lecturers) are clear that a significant part of their enjoyment of their work is the ability to focus on and choose the work that they enjoy the most – in both cases this involves pursuing their research interests, and therefore coincides with what the university values and recognizes the most. Their enjoyment of academic jobs derives from having found a research field they are interested in and being able to pursue that. As one participant puts it, to "produce my own knowledge". This requires self-belief and confidence, which takes time to develop for all participants but is aided by an institution valuing this area of work. The achievement of autonomy is expressed in the quotation from Irene below:

And now in my thirteen years of being in this space I've had different moments. So, I'm very firmly grounded in the course that I want to teach. I am involved in projects that I want to be part of and I have the space to do those projects. I am very quickly becoming adept at the different funding processes as well. So, it's a very, if you know the system, it's a good place to be and that's where I'm finding myself at the moment (Irene).

Equally, the participants consistently relate the aspiration to be able to choose the work they can focus on, rather than fulfilling certain requirements in order to get ahead. Achieving this autonomy requires promotion and an institutional culture that values each contribution. Autonomy is not only about having a say over how to structure one's time and areas of work focus – it is also about holding authority over areas of work. A number of participants relate stories about asserting ideas about curriculum and course development in their disciplines as early career academics and experiencing resistance. Part of achieving autonomy is choosing what and how you teach and having the authority to influence new approaches. Irene was able to challenge a senior professor and assert her own ideas. Amanda was challenged by a more senior academic in her department and was scarred by the experience.

Achieving autonomy is not only about being able to produce one's own knowledge in a field of choice and to do so with confidence, but also about feeling recognised in this work. The freedom to pursue one's own valued research interests is also about having epistemic agency – to choose the work most valued, to teach and develop curricula in areas of strength and interest. The idea of an academic job as one in which an individual has epistemic agency and the self-determination to pursue valued interests is not only related to epistemic justice, but also helps to move beyond the ideas and constraints of an ideal worker. Epistemic agency is linked to autonomy but goes beyond having the freedom to choose areas of work and priorities for research. It is also about being able to determine priorities in the types of academic focus and to construct different types of career, which emphasise different areas depending on a person's individual interests and strengths.

There is a second dimension to autonomy, which relates to self-acknowledgement and the formation and achievement of an academic professional identity. Part of identity formation as an academic is about recognising oneself as an academic, which is also linked to a sense of belonging as an academic professional.

Harriet has struggled with adopting an academic identity and feeling like an academic, having come from a teaching background. As noted earlier, this is related to an 'imposter syndrome' that she believes to be gendered:

> the assumption is that because you're an academic, somehow you think of yourself as better and somehow you think of yourself as being superior……And I consciously downplay that…oh I just teach at the university. I don't inhabit that (Harriet).

She acknowledges the importance of support in beginning to adopt an academic professional identity, which she thinks comes from mentorship (having help in learning how to navigate the different expectations of the academy) and from writing groups for early career researchers:

> I think what was really useful was some of the identity work around thinking of yourself as an academic, and what does that mean, and what does it mean to inhabit that space… (Harriet).

The support of close family members, particularly parents and partners appears significant to all participants as an important conversion factor in laying the foundations for academic careers, but also in supporting the group through the early career phase and the important milestones entering academia. This ranges from initial support from parents and teachers in encouraging knowledge and writing work; support and encouragement from partners (in at least three cases the partners were also academics) and critical support from colleagues and supervisors. Having domestic help may also be an important conversion factor, as most participants have some form of part-time assistance with housework, and both participants who have young children have assistance with childcare (from family and employees).

In ideal circumstances, institutional environments that recognise the complexities of academic career trajectories and provide the necessary support and space for all groups of staff to flourish would be an important factor in encouraging career development for women. However, ideal situations rarely exist, even when policy requires attention to discriminatory cultures and norms. This explains Sen's emphasis on the importance of more justice rather than ideal justice (Sen, 2009).

This section has focused on categorising the complex, multi-dimensional and inter-linked functionings that have arisen from the narratives of the participants in the study. Though the section drew on the narratives of four women, they link strongly with the broader set of narratives presented in chapters five and six. Overall, valued functionings and capabilities are grouped into three major dimensions discussed in the next section. These relate to each other in complex ways and are inter-dependent. Each capability dimension has its own characteristics, but they all work together and are inter-dependent. Ultimately there are overlaps in all the areas of functioning, and complex interactions between people's individual and personal characteristics and social backgrounds and their diverse experiences within one institution will result in different experiences and achievements for different women. However, addressing all capability dimensions from an institutional and policy point of view could be critical for attracting and retaining larger numbers of academic women in the early parts of their careers.

Identifying capabilities dimensions for the development of academic women in the early career

From the empirical data, I have extrapolated three normative capabilities arising from women's voices in this study. These are as follows:

1. To be able to navigate academic life successfully (navigation);
2. To be able to be recognized and valued for one's academic work (recognition); and
3. To be able to achieve professional autonomy (autonomy).

I now consider these in conversation with a number of other capability sets that consider both gender and educational contexts. The capabilities dimensions that are ultimately arrived at are drawn from the valued functionings that have emerged from the data in this research, reflected through the capability approach and gendered analysis.

The capability approach provides an evaluative framework with a normative view of social justice that it matters what human beings can be and do, and that justice involves limiting discrimination and inequality, so that capabilities of all people can be enhanced, without inequality or discrimination. Hence the focus is on the freedom to achieve what it is that people themselves value. The emphasis is on wellbeing and flourishing and what it would take to develop these. In the context of a professional working environment, the focus is on what it

would take to eliminate inequalities in careers and working environments and promote wellbeing for early career academic women, with the aim of encouraging more people into academia, retaining younger and early career academics in institutions, and providing the space for them to develop professionally and succeed in their chosen career goals.
The usefulness of capability lists and sets is that they provide a framework within which institutional actors and policy-makers can think about how they might create the right institutional uptake conditions that will enhance the capabilities of early career women academics, and in turn lead to their attraction to and retention in academic jobs in greater numbers.

The importance of understanding the difference between functionings and capabilities is that although everyone may operate in the same environment, they may have different combinations of capabilities due to the gendered dynamics of society, the institution, and their own backgrounds. While it may not be possible to understand each of these factors in each person's life, paying attention to the detail of what people are able to achieve in relation to their aspirations helps to focus on the common areas where institutions might be able to intervene to ensure that change is possible:

> by focusing on capabilities rather than functionings, we do not force people into a particular account of good lives but instead aim at a range of possible ways of life from which each person can choose. Thus, it is the liberal nature of the capability approach, or an anti-paternalist commitment, that motivates a principled choice of capabilities rather than functionings (Robeyns, 2017: 107).

Every individual will convert opportunities and support into different forms of functioning, and in a profession that is so flexible and multi-dimensional, this will differ from person to person. It is also worth reiterating that capabilities are socially formed (de Jaeghere, 2018; Walker, 2006).

Building on Nussbaum's ideas of a list of central human capabilities (Nussbaum, 2000, 2011), several capability scholars have developed capability lists through empirical and theoretical work both in the field of gender justice (Robeyns, 2003) and within higher education and gender studies (Walker, 2006 and 2007; Ongera, 2016; Walker, 2018). The lists provide a way

of looking at areas of social change to focus on the kinds of capabilities that are important for social justice in a particular group or area.

A study of these lists shows that there are some common capabilities or groups of capabilities that can be drawn on that are of relevance to discussing the capabilities of the women academics in this study. These studies are briefly discussed below. I have selected those that are most relevant to this study. The full sets of capabilities are then summarised in the table below. The purpose of this section is to discuss the relevance of some of these findings to the data analysis for this study. Using existing theory in this field in conversation with the literature on gender equality in higher education, and a ground-up approach from the empirical data presented in this thesis, may provide space for discussion about capabilities for gender equality in the academy for academic staff, with a particular focus on the early career.

As already indicated, this study was not designed as a purely capability-focused study and therefore the research design was not set up in order to develop a proposed capabilities list. Instead, the research has identified valued functionings of the participants and extrapolated capability dimensions from these, which seem to be both individual and group-based:

> When looking at group inequalities, the default position should be that group inequalities in achieved functionings mirror inequalities in capabilities, unless there is a plausible reason to expect one group to systematically choose different functionings from its capability set relative to another group (Robeyns, 2003: 87)

Nussbaum's list of central human capabilities, mentioned in chapter three, forms part of her partial theory of social justice. It has also formed the basis of much of the thinking within the capability approach about evaluating capabilities for social and gender justice. Nussbaum's list contains the proposed core basic capabilities that should, in her view, be applied to all human beings in order to have a flourishing life. For the purpose of this study it can be assumed that the participants in this group are middle class and therefore have been able to achieve certain basic levels of functioning given that they have achieved high levels of education and are not living in poverty. Nussbaum's list provides a foundational set of ideas of social justice, which can be used as a basis for expanding ideas of capability. While many of the central capabilities in Nussbaum's list may have been achieved at a threshold level by all academics, given their elite status, the list is nonetheless useful for thinking about capabilities

expansion for this group by focusing on how professional well-being might be enhanced in a university for all academic staff.

Robeyns' list proposes an ideal list relevant to achieving gender equality in a western society (Robeyns, 2003). Her list was developed by engaging with the relevant literature and debates on gender inequality in Western societies and engaging with other capabilities lists. It was also developed in the context of explaining and defending the necessary processes that should be followed when developing capability sets and lists in particular contexts. Robeyn's list is grounded in a broad understanding of debates about gender inequality and is therefore relevant to this study in its focus on gender in society, albeit with a western focus. It provides a useful framework for thinking about dimensions of gender equality in the workplace.

Walker's work on pedagogy and capabilities (2006) identified an ideal-theoretical list for capability distribution and evaluation in higher education, particularly for thinking about teaching and learning in higher education. The list was based on extensive policy analysis, engagement with literature and empirical research and was defended from this rich base as a multi-dimensional list for capabilities within and through higher education.

Walker (2007) has also developed an ideal-theoretical list for gender equality in schooling based on policy analysis and empirical research on girls in school in South Africa. Examining the gender equity and life opportunity aspirations of schoolgirls through education policy in South Africa, and the views of girls in South African schools about education, the relevance of this study is its focus on gender and the South African context of the empirical research. The academics in this study live and work in the same social context, albeit at different ends of the education spectrum.

The four lists mentioned above were methodologically developed in similar ways, although they cover a different scope. They address a broad theoretical base and are presented as ideal theoretical lists to be publicly debated. They are presented for engagement at different public policy levels, particularly in relation to social and educational policy. However, they are also multi-dimensional and can apply at different arenas, including workplaces, schools and other kinds of institutions, as well as at national level.

Ongera (2016) extrapolated a set of ten capabilities for gender justice in higher education, drawn from the valued functionings highlighted in her study of women legal graduates in Kenya and drawing on different phases of their educational journeys. The similarities with this study are notable, as the researcher also engaged with a relatively elite group of women (law graduates from Kenyan universities), exploring the social and educational experiences of this group through narrative research.

Walker's 2018 paper on capabilities and aspirations is based on empirical research with young women students at a South African university. The capability dimensions were developed from empirical data from in-depth interviews exploring gender, empowerment and agency amongst a group of male and female students, though the article primarily drew on data from interviews that took place with a subset of nine women students.

Looked at together, these studies show a variety of methods for presenting capabilities for particular groups. This range of empirical studies and theoretical work is located within a concern about gender inequality on the one hand, and the purposes, goals and realities of higher education experience and achievement on the other. This makes them relevant to a discussion on the working lives of academic women. I draw on the studies above to make links and comparisons across the various lists and sets to identify some of the core capabilities of relevance to this study, and discuss the ways in which they may apply to this study.

I draw on this somewhat flexible approach from Robeyns:

> The flexibility of functionings and capabilities, which can be applied in different ways within different types of capability analysis, means that there are no hard and fast rules that govern how to select the relevant capabilities. Each type of analysis, with its particular goals, will require its own answer to this question (Robeyns, 2017: 34).

The table below combines the capabilities lists and sets drawn from the six studies. These do not represent all capabilities lists that may be relevant to this study but provide sufficient depth to allow for a discussion about what capabilities could be considered in thinking about academic working lives of women in their early career.

The order in which the capabilities are presented (which may be important for the integrity of the individual studies) has been adjusted to provide a basis for a comparative discussion below and to show areas of convergence and difference in the kinds of capabilities that are relevant in different contexts. While each capability or dimension may have a specific purpose within the individual studies, they are grouped in a way that makes comparison with my own data more coherent.

Table 2: Drawing on capability lists/sets/themes for capabilities in gendered working lives of academics

Author (s)	Nussbaum (2000; 2011)	Robeyns (2003)	Walker (2006)	Walker (2007)	Ongera (2016)	Walker (2018a)
Focus of Study	Central Human Capabilities List- partial theory of social justice	List of capabilities for achieving gender equality in Western context	Ideal-theoretical list for capability distribution and evaluation in higher education	Ideal theoretical list for gender equality in schooling	10 capabilities for gender justice in higher education, drawn from empirical data on women legal graduates in Kenya	Multi-dimensional gender equality capabilities drawn from empirical research with female students at a South African university
Capability or Theme	Bodily integrity	Bodily integrity and safety	Bodily integrity	Bodily integrity and bodily health	Bodily health, integrity and safety	Gender Awareness (a) bodily safety (b) bodily integrity
		Political empowerment		Voice	Voice	Voice
		Mental well-being			Confidence and self-esteem	
			Educational resilience		Resilience	Tenacity
	Affiliation	Social relations	Social relations and social networks	Social relations	Social relations and networks	Affiliation
		Respect	Respect, dignity and recognition	Respect and recognition	Respect, dignity and recognition	
		Time-autonomy		Autonomy	Control over one's life	
				Aspiration	Aspirations	Aspirations
	Practical Reason		Practical Reason		Practical reason	
	Senses, imagination, and thought	Education and knowledge	Knowledge and imagination	Knowledge		Having a higher education
		Domestic work and nonmarket care				

Author (s)	Nussbaum (2000; 2011)	Robeyns (2003)	Walker (2006)	Walker (2007)	Ongera (2016)	Walker (2018a)
	Emotions		Emotional integrity, emotions	Emotional integrity and emotions		
		Paid work and other projects			Financial security and independence	Economic Security
	Play	Leisure activities				
	Control over one's environment	Shelter and environment				
		Mobility				
	Life	Life and Physical Health				
	Bodily health					
	Other Species	Religion				

The table above provides an overview of the capabilities arising from the six studies and provides a reference point for the discussion below.

Capability dimensions for the professional development of early career women academics

This section below draws on the capability dimensions from the six studies presented in the above table, as well as the three capability dimensions outlined in the earlier part of the chapter. Drawing on empirical data generated through this study, the capability dimensions emerging from my study are further explained and discussed below. These capability dimensions are directly relevant to the professional development of early career academic women and what kinds of capabilities may be required by this group to get ahead in academic work and persist in academic jobs.

Navigation: to be able to navigate academic life successfully

A navigational capability can be conceptualised in different ways and is shown to be multi-dimensional in the way in which it is critical to valued functioning for many of the participants. A strong element of navigational capability links to personal factors of developing self-confidence and esteem, the ability to learn and access learning opportunities, and the resilience to push through negative experiences and maintain a sense of individual agency. The opaqueness of academic work, which is multi-dimensional and requires learning across a range of dimensions (teaching and supervision, curriculum development, course design, research writing and publishing, raising research funds, collaborating with other researchers and various forms of administration) requires navigational know-how.

The capability lists from the six studies show some focus on dimensions that are relevant to navigational capacity, namely educational resilience and tenacity which appears in three of the studies. In these studies, resilience is critical for overcoming gender and other forms of discrimination for students in higher education. In my study, resilience does appear as critical for the group, and is linked to navigational capacity in the sense that that learning how to navigate and achieve balance and self-esteem has a strong personal dimension that requires significant resilience and agency. However, it is also possible to see how gendered and racialised institutional cultures can hold individuals back and therefore there is a strong social element to developing resilience. Irene's ability to confront difficult situations and hold her

own in the face of criticism is critical in her progress, whereas others in the group, particularly those who have not completed PhDs are still grappling with the extent to which they confront challenging scenarios and commit to doing what it takes to move beyond these situations. A combination of age and experience, individual self-esteem, the nature of an academic post (permanent or temporary) and unsupportive institutional cultures, act upon the women in different ways to constrain and enable their navigational capacity.

Participants' educational and work backgrounds influence the ways in which they are able to navigate the expectations of their job and the institution, and their own decision-making is critical to their experiences. Irene can observe the hidden male networks in her department, and has seen their effect on other young women academics, who have since left the academy, but she has persisted with her academic career in spite of the discrimination she may have faced. She acknowledges the support of external disciplinary networks and a strong mentor, who was once her head of school, but she also has found the research that she loves doing, and has a father who was an academic, which may have assisted in her resilience. Harriet is an older woman who already had a career as a school principal and has therefore negotiated other work environments, so although she grapples with her own feeling of being an imposter in the academic world and is frustrated by the gendered institutional cultures that allow men to get away with doing little administrative work. She has also found a research area in which she can excel and has built valued networks and support systems, through her own experience and agency. Abby is frustrated by the complexity of negotiating time for her own research and artistic work, with a heavy teaching load (though she is not the only one with a heavy teaching load) and appears discontented with the work she is doing. She has also not met the milestone of finishing her PhD, which appears to be holding her back. Amanda feels that she has experienced discrimination - in her salary negotiations and in the lack of support from colleagues, and although she loves teaching and has been recognised for her expertise, is uncertain about how she will find a role for herself that will allow her to progress. She does not see herself becoming a professor. Others in the group, such as May and Emma do not have high teaching loads but are concerned about their prospects of obtaining permanent academic jobs and are focused on achieving the kinds of research outputs which will allow them to compete for academic jobs.

One capability that is identified from the lists is Robeyns' (2003) focus on mental well-being. In Robeyns' study, mental well-being is drawn from a broad focus on women's lives and

research that shows that women have worse mental health than men and that biological and social demands on women leave them more vulnerable to mental ill-health. In her conceptualisation, mental well-being "relates mainly to the absence of any negative mental states of being and doings, such as not being able to sleep, worrying, or feeling depressed, lonely, or restless" (Robeyns, 2003: 78). Amongst the narratives in my study there are examples of loneliness and isolation, though none of the women actively described their state of mental health and were not asked to do so. However, Nussbaum's concept of "play" and Robeyns focus on "leisure activities" are worth mentioning here. Several examples arose in the narratives of personal struggles to balance work-life demands, not just in relation to fulfilling family commitments, but also about how to balance work with relaxation, given the "relentless" demands of academic work, and the difficulty in switching off from work, even when not physically present at the university. The constant need to perform a range of tasks makes it difficult to manage time for activities outside academic work and suggests that academics can only succeed if they integrate their research into their leisure time.

It is possible to see that there are several institutional conversion factors that could assist early career women academics to achieve well-being and success. These factors, including designed and targeted induction, equitable and transparent workloads, opportunities to express epistemic and pedagogical ideas, appropriate mentorship and access to disciplinary networks, can greatly assist academics in their early career. What is necessary is to shift from intersectional inequalities to social uptake conditions that enable women's career development and aspirations.

Recognition: to be able to be recognized and valued for one's academic work

The capability to be respected as a professional and to receive institutional and peer recognition for your work is very important for this group of academics. This dimension recognises that certain institutionally and peer recognised achievements are important for career development in academia. Academics may derive professional recognition primarily from external research networks, or from their own institution, or both. It is important that achievements are noted and celebrated (e.g. achieving a PhD, publishing in an important journal, getting a research grant, being promoted, winning a teaching award and so forth).

Recognition must also be linked to the multi-dimensional nature of academic work. A concern arising from the research is the tendency for only one type of academic work to be formally

recognised, which ignores the diversity of academic jobs, and entrenches different forms of discrimination, including gender discrimination. The concept of the prestige economy is relevant here. As many of the academics noted, though progression and promotion criteria may be explicit in policy form, the processes of promotion are open to interpretation and discretion. More than one example of male academics being promoted faster than their female colleagues was presented. Amanda's experience is that if you publish and bring in research grants you are more likely to be promoted than if you teach well and pay attention to your students. In the prestige economy of academia, research outputs are of greater value than time spent on teaching. Institutional recognition, primarily through the opportunity for promotion is critical to achieving autonomy, as autonomy generally comes with greater seniority.

Respect and recognition appear in four of the capability studies described above and is linked strongly to dignity in at least two of the studies. For Robeyns (2003), gender equity is connected to the ways in which social attitudes and gendered social structures both devalue women and treat them with disrespect. If this is associated with the idea of gendered institutions in the way in which they have been conceptualised in my study, then the systemic differences between women and men in the academy are relevant here, as well as the lack of institutional space for the different career trajectories of women and the lack of recognition of areas of work in which women tend to be clustered. Respect and recognition and dignity in this conceptualisation is also strongly related to the need for bodily health, integrity and safety (Robeyns, 2003; Ongera, 2016; Walker, 2007), as institutional cultures that are dangerous or damaging to women academics will contribute to a poor sense of well-being. In the education studies (Walker, 2006; 2007; 2018; Ongera, 2016) respect, recognition and dignity is also linked to epistemic dignity and recognition, which appears strongly in the narratives of the participants in this study and is discussed below in the section dealing with autonomy.

The capability to work in a safe environment and to have a reasonable working environment, with the necessary tools and resources to do the job (computers, office, library, classrooms and so forth) is important for any working environment. Equally though, noting the high levels of sexual harassment and violence in South Africa (Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre, 2015; World Health Organisation, 2013), which are considerably above the world average, and as reported in South African universities (Commission for Gender Equality, 2015;2016;2017; Department of Education, 2008), physical and mental safety and security is critical for all academics. There should also be an expectation of freedom from harassment

and discrimination in all areas of work, as this can be a major barrier to professional security and development.

What emerges from the comparative presentation of the capability lists or sets above is the clear areas of convergence across the different approaches. Bodily integrity is placed first in the list because it is the one theme that appears across all studies. This makes sense as all the studies touched in some way on gender equity issues, and bodily integrity is a central issue in discussions about gender equality, given the high levels of sexual harassment and gender-based violence that are experienced by women all over the world. However, given the focus on education in several of the studies, the capability to remain physically safe is a key aspect of participating effectively in education.

Bodily integrity is relevant to the discussions in chapter six about gendered institutional cultures and harassment, discrimination and micro-aggressions, some of the facets of gendered institutional cultures. Abby describes the toxic work environment created by a sexual harassment incident involving a staff member and students and how the way in which the department handled the incident affected the staff members profoundly. Incidents that could be viewed as threatening the bodily integrity of the academics within the work environment were described, but few of the participants articulated a personal experience. However, the idea that sexual harassment is deeply embedded in the institutional culture was reflected upon by Irene, who admits her own complicity in not seeing a male academic having serial relationships with young undergraduate students as an institutional culture problem, and as something that she and others were implicitly supporting.

Certainly, the literature reviewed in chapter two indicates that freedom from sexual harassment and violence is a significant issue on South African university campuses. I note this here, because although it may not appear as a dominant theme in the narratives, it appeared in the data through individual experiences of micro-aggression and widespread concerns about sexual harassment at the university, and it is therefore a critical theme that cannot be ignored. At the most basic level, a workplace cannot be safe and provide the right environment for flourishing and well-being if individuals are not free from harassment and danger. This should then be reflected upon in a discussion of institutional cultures and how they can constrain the careers of early career academic women. Indeed, the capability to be safe and secure, free from threats of physical harassment or violence, should be a basic

expectation of any academic, and not feeling safe and secure is a major constraint for any person working in any context. Related to this is the importance of grasping how institutions understand and address sexual harassment and gender-based violence, as sexual harassment appears as a hermeneutic injustice in the university environment, where there is a lack of understanding of how forms of gendered aggression and harassment manifest in an institutional environment. This was clear in the uncertainty within the narratives about whether some of their experiences of aggression or harassment or unequal treatment related to gender or race. There is evidence that the institution tends to address matters of harassment and bullying as individual matters or manifestations of inter-personal conflict, rather than examples of a broader institutional culture which permits gender and other forms of bullying and harassment.

Autonomy: to be able to achieve professional autonomy

The capability to be autonomous comes through strongly in the narratives in this study. Autonomy also appears as a highly valued functioning for all the academics. Autonomy in this context means the ability to pursue professional activities that are of value to an individual academic. In this context it is the epitome of a valued academic career: the ability to make independent choices about one's career and to be able to pursue the activities and research that one chooses. Although it remains a desired state for many, it appears that autonomy increases with seniority and rank, so is linked to the desire to move up the ranks and gain professional recognition. It is also both social and personal – as an academic develops a profile and becomes known for particular skills and niche areas, they are recognised institutionally and by peers for their achievements, but also develop authority over their own work, authority to choose and design their work focus in a way that optimises their professional wellbeing. Autonomy may have different nuances in different aspects of work but came through as important in both curriculum development and research. It is therefore not independent from how each person exercises their epistemic agency. The narratives in this study show that being in the early career and being a woman can constrain the extent to which academics can achieve their sense of autonomy, as some, like Abby and Amanda, have struggled to gain a sense of autonomy, whereas Irene and Harriet are becoming more independent and autonomous. Age may interact with gender and early career status in different ways, as Harriet's relative maturity in age and experience may have been a key factor in her ability to achieve autonomy as an academic faster than the younger academics in the group.

Robeyns develops an idea of time autonomy in relation to gender equity, as women's domestic responsibilities and the time spent on household responsibilities often mitigate against having time autonomy (Robeyns, 2003). In this study, most of the women have some form of domestic assistance to support their ability to work, though it is evident that child care and other domestic responsibilities impact on their time choices at work. Abby indicates that she was not able to join certain work activities because of her home responsibilities and Harriet talks about having to balance family time with work expectations, at the expense of her own leisure. As Robeyns indicates, women are often under different forms of stress, given the need to manage a combination of responsibilities at home and work (Robeyns, 2003). This is evident in the social expectations placed on the women in this study and is gendered. So, autonomy is a multi-dimensional capability, linked to the structure of academic work, and the balance between home and professional work environments. It is linked to Robeyns' idea of domestic work and non-market care, which is included in the above table and relates to the ability to undertake paid work, while at the same time care for family members and do non-market-related work in the family. Abby and Amanda, who both have young children, talk about the challenges they face balancing family and work commitments, and the expectation that work should take precedence over family, and encroach on family time. This is linked to the 'ideal worker' concept, which implies that workplaces are designed for individuals who do not have to spend time on family responsibilities. However, this is balanced by the fact that the academics in South Africa can afford support for domestic and childcare responsibilities.

The capability of developing new knowledge and exploring one's own area of knowledge development and teaching practice, including developing curricula, is critical to gaining autonomy and a professional identity. Knowledge, learning, and imagination appear in some form across all the studies in the table above as critical for both gender equity and in and through higher education. This capability may seem to be taken for granted as academics are working in the field of knowledge and knowledge development. The capability of a professional imagination and the capability to develop new knowledge is at the core of academic work, both in terms of research production and in terms of teaching university students to be independent, critical thinkers with disciplinary knowledge. However, there is plenty of evidence that this area is not straightforward. Who decides what knowledge is important and who mediates the ways in which early career academics are able to put their knowledge skills to work influences their capability to exercise epistemic agency.

As junior academics, Irene and Amanda both provide examples of experiences of trying to assert their epistemic agency in course and curriculum design. By epistemic agency, I refer to the ability to make decisions about knowledge, which includes in curriculum development, teaching and research. While Irene had the confidence to push her ideas, despite being in direct conflict with a head of department, and ultimately succeeding in having her ideas taken seriously, Amanda took over the management of a course from an established colleague and did not have the confidence to change anything substantial. However, she still faced considerable difficulty in this task and felt that she was directly discriminated against in being criticised for her work. Irene's ability to assert her own ideas in the face of strong opposition and draw on the support of external disciplinary networks, was important for her in managing epistemic injustice in the sense of testimonial injustice (Fricker, 2007) where her ideas about curriculum were dismissed out of hand by her head of department.

The concept of voice is important here, as voice is "the capacity to express one's concerns, views and interests, and being heard and those views taken into account" (Ongera, 2016: 184). Voice as a capability appears in three of the studies, which focus on the importance of higher education in allowing people to assert their own ideas. Equitable access to academic jobs is not simply about gaining physical access to a post, but about developing a contribution to the work of a department or faculty, which includes developing a valued research offering and adding to the curriculum development and teaching within a department. Institutional cultures that do not support and encourage these areas of development in individual academics can prevent epistemic agency from flourishing. Knowledge, imagination and thought appear as strong capability themes in the sets shown in the table above. These may seem self-evident in an academic environment focused on learning and developing knowledge. However, achieving knowledge and developing it as an early career academic are critical for a flourishing academic career, and any institutional constraints can have a profound effect on how individuals are able to develop their own knowledge, their distinctive contribution and their epistemological strengths.

The capability of developing and adopting a professional identity as an academic arises from the narratives in this study and is important as part of developing autonomy. Having an identity as an academic is complex and takes time to develop, as the participants articulate, yet appears critical to developing other capabilities. It is linked to formal recognition, but also to a sense of self and a sense of belonging. It is a complex personal process that is influenced

by the institution and the support of others. A positive professional identity appears as important for professionals in order to be able to achieve well-being in the workplace. There is no one fixed identity, as each person has different goals and priorities. However, professional identity emerges as important for many participants, particularly in a context where what it means to be a professional academic is opaque, contested, and constantly changing to early career academics. Self-confidence is an implied part of this professional identity, as part of identity development involves developing certain levels of confidence and letting go of anxieties and feelings of not belonging. For Ongera (2016), confidence and self-esteem are capabilities that are seen as critical for succeeding in higher education. In her study, confidence and self-esteem can expand other capabilities and are necessary for certain types of aspirational decision-making. She describes confidence and self-esteem as a "fertile functioning" (Wolff and De-Shalit, 2007 in Ongera, 2016: 186) which means that it is foundational for other capabilities. Having an academic job does not necessarily lead to someone feeling like an academic - yet feeling like an academic is an important part of professional well-being. The multi-dimensional nature of academic work is also implicated in professional identity development, as academic identities are not one-dimensional because of the diversity of the work content and job expectations.

Irene and Harriet express a strong sense of professional identity, though they acknowledge that it has developed over time. Abby and Amanda have uncertain professional identities. They do not see themselves as academics, and express anxiety about whether they will be accepted as such. This may link to the fact that Irene and Harriet have learnt to perform as researchers with strong research identities, whereas Abby and Amanda have a greater interest in performing in other areas (Amanda as a teacher and Abby with a strong background in a creative performance field).

The processes, ideologies and interactions within gendered organisations produce "gendered components of individual identity", as Acker (1990) has shown. Therefore the process of developing an academic professional identity for early career academic women cannot be separated from gendered aspects of the academy. Feelings of being an imposter, a lack of female role models in senior academic positions, mentors who have provided support but not moved in their own careers, the informal gendered structure of work, workloads, and career progression (linked to ideas about domesticity and ideal workers), and the gendered aspirations of some academics, all impact on the gendered nature of individual identity.

Indeed the "psychic refusal of becoming middle-class" outlined by Reay (1997), which is linked to a sense of impossibility about becoming an academic for working class people, may also be similar for race and gender exclusion. Abby is clear that she feels as though she is part of a 'transformation' project, that is, she is not recognised in her own right as a valued member of the academy, but serves a broader political project. This deeply affects her sense of identity, and she rejects the idea that she is an academic. As Walker (2018b) has pointed out in relation to students, 'personhood self-formation' as created through higher education is "an individual formation and a collective project" (Walker, 2018b: 562). This example also shows how race influences institutional affiliation. Abby's sense of identity is informed by her position as a black woman in the academy.

There are two capability dimensions that arose from the narratives in my study, appear in some of the studies discussed above, and that are linked to the above capability dimensions, but should be highlighted separately. These are explained below.

Affiliation: to be able to participate in social and professional networks

Affiliation appears as important across a range of studies. In Nussbaum's conceptualisation of affiliation there are two dimensions. The first relates to being able to interact socially with other people, which is also about having respect for others. The second dimension relates to non-discrimination, "being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others" (Nussbaum, 2011: 34). The six studies above all refer to the importance of social relations, networks and affiliation. In these studies these are referred to in different ways, from having an educational dimension for students in higher education in "being able to participate in a group for learning, working with others to solve problems and tasks" (Walker, 2006: 128), to the dimension of social support derived from friendships and group support (Robeyns, 2003). In Ongera's study, affiliation also extended to developing professional networks at university, which supported social and professional capital for women law graduates (Ongera, 2016).

However, it is also important in an academic working environment as professional networks and communities of practice are critical, possibly essential, in becoming an academic, as described by the women in this study. Affiliation, conceptualised here as taking place through professional working relationships, happens both formally and informally. This is a wide conceptualisation and covers the ability to form important personal and professional

relationships which may be diverse, take different forms, and can be institutionally mandated or personally pursued. Ultimately though, the level of personal agency in accessing possible networks is critical to achieving affiliation, which is also critical to achieving a sense of belonging in the institution, and in the academic work (which can include external disciplinary networks). In Irene's case, the external disciplinary network has been critical to her development as a professional academic and strengthened her ability to exercise epistemic agency in curriculum development. In Abby and Amanda's cases very little emerged of networks that could support their career development. The data from this study revealed numerous references to important aspects of affiliation, often profoundly important for someone's career development, including critical mentorship relationships, a support group for early career academics focusing on academic writing (Madea), external disciplinary networks which assist in asserting epistemic authority in a discipline (Irene, Anna), and sponsorship for research funding (Emma). These specific examples are important conversion factors, but the capability of affiliation through accessing social networks in a broad sense is expressed as something valued by all women in this group.

De Jaeghere describes the capability of community care, which means "both giving and receiving in a community as part of a broader ethic to ensure the wellbeing of all" (De Jaeghere, 2018: 12). This contrasts strongly with Harriet's description of the academy as being individualistic and competitive and may explain the isolation experienced by Abby and Amanda. It may also provide a way of thinking about the importance of affiliation through networks and forms of collaborative support that can provide support for early career academics in gendered environments.

Aspiration: to be able to aspire to a professional academic career

The capability to aspire is important for career development. In a context where getting ahead is complex and moving forward not a guaranteed outcome, or indeed where individuals may want very different things from their professional environment, the idea of aspiration as an important capability is put forward here. As the literature shows - and from evidence in this study - women and other groups who have been marginalised learn to adapt and narrow their aspirations based on perceived possibilities for getting ahead. The capability to aspire, to be able to envisage the possibility of career professional development unconstrained by inequities or institutional constraints, is therefore important. Early career academics should be able to aspire based on their own choices and interests and the environment should ideally provide

the space and the freedom for aspiration, whatever form that may take. Aspirations that are constrained, interrupted or adaptive can prevent academics from following their professional development goals.

Practical reasoning is important to being able to consider alternative futures and in planning for one's life (Nussbaum, 2000; 2011). Scholars have shown how important practical reasoning is for decision-making and agency in making personal decisions (De Jaeghere, 2018; Walker, 2006). In her discussion of the role of education in influencing aspirations for young people, de Jaeghere points to the importance of navigational signposts being provided by others to assist decision-making of young people. In the context of this study, the aspirational capacity necessary for early career women academics to think about their career goals is strongly linked to social and institutional factors and their access to forms of institutional and inter-personal support (induction, professional development opportunities, mentorship and recognition for different forms of achievement). However, it is also linked to agency. Imagining alternative futures also requires an element of being able to see alternatives (the aspirations window). In a work context, this requires scaffolding or navigational support, which in a schooling context can be provided for young people, and in a work environment can be institutionally enabled.

De Jaeghere (2018) and Walker (2018b) have shown how capabilities are formed socially and relationally. Walker has shown how aspirations can unlock agency and be capabilities-enhancing (Walker, 2018b). Amanda is constrained in her aspirations by focusing her attention on a role model in her own field who has struggled to progress. Equally Abby is clear that a lack of role models, that is, black women who have succeeded in her field, may be holding her back. However, their capability to aspire may be an essential component in their own progression.

The table below summarises the discussion in this chapter, by outlining the valued functionings identified, the key conversion factors across the different narratives, aspects of gendered and intersectional themes that arose and the links to the five capability dimensions described above.

Table 3: Summary of valued functionings, conversion factors and capability dimensions

Valued Functionings	Conversion Factors	Gender and intersectional themes	Capability dimensions
Navigating academic life			
Understanding formal job expectations and making choices	Access to appropriate and meaningful induction; access to professional development opportunities; professional networks; individual agency; prior career and previous work experience; support of family and partners; mentorship.	Adapted preferences	Navigation: to be able to navigate academic life successfully
Achieving balance	Learning to prioritise and say "no"; mentorship; flexible working cultures; workload allocations and models; type of academic post; having young children and care responsibilities.	Support outside institution- having domestic support;	
Overcoming anxieties	Family support; mentorship and active encouragement of more senior academic colleagues; confidence, self-esteem and self-motivation; educational background; professional networks; overcoming learning disabilities.	Socialization; imposter syndrome; being assertive.	
Institutional recognition of academic work			
Different aspects of career	Institutional rewards for different types of academic career; a primary interest in research; a primary teaching identity; access to appropriate and targeted forms of support.	Ideal worker ideologies, individualised competitive cultures; gendered nature of time and workload allocations.	Recognition: to be able to be recognised and valued for one's academic work
Access to development opportunities	Teaching and administrative workloads; time autonomy; PhD completion; learning about writing, teaching,	Recognition of targeted and tailored support needed.	

Valued Functionings	Conversion Factors	Gender and intersectional themes	Capability dimensions
	fundraising etc; type of post/appointment; forms of mentorship.		
Achieving a sense of belonging	Professional networks; mentorship; role models; key points of institutional recognition.	Role models; gendered career advice; gendered and racialised institutional cultures; discrimination/harassment/bullying and racialised and gendered networks.	Affiliation: to be able to participate in social and professional networks
Achieving Autonomy			Autonomy: to be able to achieve professional autonomy
Epistemic Autonomy and Agency	Early/intrinsic interest in knowledge and teaching; assertiveness and agency; self-confidence; access to professional networks; mentorship; identifying a research niche; autonomy to structure one's time.	Gendered and racialised epistemic cultures and injustices.	
Developing an academic professional identity and sense of self	Completing a PhD; forms of institutional recognition; clearly articulated institutional policy for progression; devolved decision-making; institutional recognition of different career trajectories; a lack of recognition for student support work; institutional rewards for teaching; academic networks; publishing in key journals and publishing books; access to appropriate support; role-models.	Personal beliefs about gender; gendered aspirations; gendered structures; imposter syndrome; gendered bullying and cultures tolerant of sexual harassment; a lack of female and black role models; experiences of exclusion from racialised and gendered networks.	Aspiration: to be able to aspire to a professional academic career

Conclusion

This chapter has focused more closely on four of the narratives, while drawing on broader findings from the study to identify the core valued contextual functionings of a group of early career academic women in one institution, and from this to extrapolate five critical capability dimensions. The capability dimensions are relational and operate differently in each person's life but can be found across the sample in this study. It has been possible to identify broad themes from the narratives, which collectively provide a basis for thinking about how early career academic women function in this institution. From functionings it has been possible to identify capability dimensions for early career academic women in this study. This opens possibilities for thinking about how capabilities could be enhanced by institutional policy and practice to support the achievement of gender equality in universities.

Gender and race as conversion factors, or intersectional inequalities, are implicated in the functionings of the academics in diverse ways. Racialised and gendered sub-structures and institutional cultures appear to act upon the participants in insidious ways. Everyday institutional experiences of discrimination and aggression can profoundly impact on a sense of well-being, belonging and affiliation. Forms of gender and racial discrimination also appear as critical in restricting the development of epistemic agency, which is a key component of autonomy and identity, and for an aspirational capability, which is key to moving ahead.

Each capability dimension supports and strengthens the others: "the dimensions are incommensurable, and one cannot be reduced to any of the other dimensions...Each dimension supports the others, and all are important" (Walker, 2006: 115). Autonomy is strongly linked to epistemic agency and in turn all functionings influence professional identity development, which is critical for attaining professional well-being. This means that no one set of interventions will improve the circumstances of all academics. Each person will respond differently and make different choices within the institutional environment that they are working. However, much can be done by institutions to consider the ways in which they can provide the best possible opportunities for early career academic women to achieve success and well-being. These multi-dimensional capability dimensions (Walker, 2006) offer a possible way of thinking about this.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter outlines the main findings of the study and returns to the research questions outlined in the introduction. The study set out to explore the working lives of early career academic women in the context of a multi-dimensional and inter-related set of policy challenges: the need to encourage more young people to enter and be retained in academic careers, and simultaneously to reverse persistent gender (and race) inequalities in universities. In a post-apartheid context South African universities have been subject to local and global pressures for change, including the encroachment of managerialist demands on academic work and the important policy imperatives of social justice. New policy has had mixed results. While aspects of academic working lives have changed, institutional cultures and structures remain difficult to shift, despite relatively progressive policy. I have described in earlier chapters how the co-option of equity and transformation goals into institutional audit cultures has reduced their transformative value, and there has been a lapse into complacency as universities have struggled to deal with the more complex aspects of transforming gendered and racialised institutional cultures. Despite this, the nature of policy is such that its effect on everyday working lives is diverse, and constantly changing. Arguably, there is a need for sharper policy goals, and different types of institutions. Paying attention to the quality of the working lives of early career academic women could add value to this area of work.

The chapter also explores what this study has contributed to the field of higher education research on gender, reflects on the methods and design and the use of the conceptual framework selected. I then outline some findings and recommendations that may contribute to policy debates about gender inequality in higher education in South Africa. The chapter also discusses the limitations of the study and provides pointers for further research in this area.

Main findings

How does gender impact on academic working lives, career development choices and professional identities of early career academic women?

The previous chapters have shown that gender does indeed impact on the professional identities, academic working lives and the career development of women academics in their

early career, in ways which may be overt or insidious. It profoundly shapes women's available career scripts and how they constitute themselves as academics and professionals. Looked at through the multi-dimensional framework from Joan Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organisations, it is possible to unearth the complex and multiple ways in which gender impacts individual academics.

Gendered divisions are both overt and subtle. Metro University has a minority of women in senior academic positions - women tend to be clustered in lower academic positions, even in the humanities, where women are in larger numbers than in other fields. On its own, the structural position of women in the university does not provide much insight into what is going on, but the low number of women (particularly black women) in senior positions is caused by complex factors, not just the structural racism and sexism embedded in South African higher education history, but in enduring factors within institutions themselves. The structural position of women also has real effects, as a lack of black female role models can profoundly affect the aspirations of individual women - as described by two participants. In terms of the idea of an 'aspirations window', it is important for early career women academics to be able to see real possibilities of moving ahead, which includes people in their immediate networks. Several of the participants provide examples of women who had remained in the same academic positions for many years, and there are many examples of women 'opting-out' of academia.

A more nuanced picture emerges in exploring the working lives through narratives of a group of early career academic women. In this way, the gendered ideologies operating in the institution begin to emerge. The literature has shown the predominance of gendered ideologies in all working environments, and universities are no exception. There is evidence in this study of the social effect of ideas about domesticity and the public and private roles of women in some of the institutional engagements described. However, what emerges most strongly is the way in which institutions are still structured in ways that make it difficult for these ideologies to shift. They are deeply implicated in the way in which work, and work environments, are structured in the university. Linked to ideas about the 'ideal worker' - in academic terms a man with no family obligations, free to focus on work, pursuing individual research projects and bringing in research grants - the ideal academic does not reflect the real people working in institutions, still starkest in relation to women, but no doubt affecting many men with caring and other commitments too.

Job technologies, in terms of how promotion takes place, how workloads are organised, the opaqueness of job expectations and devolved power structures within a faculty, all have gendered effects as described by the women. At a policy level, promotion criteria are clearly articulated, but policy is implemented differently in different spaces, and women are not always able to access the support they need to get ahead, sometimes because of family responsibilities, and sometimes because the structure of their workloads prevents this. In some cases, their own socialisation and working styles work against them too, as learning to negotiate an academic environment is something that requires both individual resilience and specific targeted support, especially the support of communities and networks that are not always available to women. Learning to adapt to the formal expectations of the job and balance these multiple expectations requires both personal agency and institutional support. There is no guaranteed outcome for each individual as the workloads, departmental and disciplinary networks, and access to formal support vary considerably. Decision-making emerges as complex for some of the women, as they must learn to say 'no' to balance their workloads, perform the right kinds of tasks that will result in formal reward and recognition, and to navigate multi-dimensional aspects of academic work, which are not all equally recognised. The relative flexibility of an academic job emerges as positive for many of the group, but they are still weighed down by multiple expectations, and some find this flexibility also has to be negotiated strategically.

In short, gendered institutional cultures exist in academic institutions, as they do in other kinds of institutions. Gender, as a complex cultural and structural phenomenon, operating through ideology, discourse, and institutional structure and culture, impacts on identity, experience, and professional development, interacting with other social factors to drive the achievements and choices of women academics. It is important to note that every individual has a particular experience which depends on the interaction of personal factors with institutional environment, and every individual will act in different ways, depending on the mix of personal and social factors influencing their decision-making. Indeed, understanding that gender influences academic careers and the wellbeing of women academics does not mean that every individual will be affected by the same environment in the same way.

In the study gendered ideologies emerge as implicated in institutional culture. Several participants detail difficult engagements with senior colleagues as they try to assert their epistemic authority in curriculum design and course management. The micro-politics of

individual professional interactions reflect that sexist attitudes towards women and women's knowledge continue to exist and can have real effects for early career academics. Institutional cultures that allow for weak leadership practices, everyday sexism, and devolved power without transparency and consultation can profoundly affect the experiences of early career academic women. Individual challenges can be resolved, but in most examples that emerge from the narratives, change only happens at an individual level through considerable energy and engagement. Those without secure jobs and positions and who are still completing their PhDs are more constrained in taking up individual battles. Individual examples of epistemic injustices, combined with aspects of hermeneutical injustice within institutions - such as leadership failures in managing fair workloads, institutionalised forms of sexual harassment, and treating gender injustices as individualised interactions rather than matters that can be dealt with institutionally result in institutional cultures that are blind to systemic gender inequalities in the working life of academics.

Institutional culture and work expectations not only result in different experiences of this group of women, but also in different professional academic identities. Academic identities, as described in the literature review, are multi-dimensional, and constantly in flux. They are inter-dependent - on personal characteristics and social background, forms of recognition, and access to meaningful support - which includes formal and informal mentorship, departmental and disciplinary networks, and access to induction and professional development opportunities. Women in this group have all grappled with 'imposter syndrome', with achieving a sense of belonging that appears as critical for developing an academic identity, and with their own capabilities to aspire. Several of the group grapple with their own aspirations and appear to be adapting their professional aspirations downwards or sideways, based on negative experiences and a lack of belief in the fairness of the systems in place to recognise their career trajectories. In a profession where the work is by nature multi-dimensional, and where career trajectories can differ in many ways, forms of recognition are relatively one-dimensional. This poses difficulties for several of the women in this study. However, some have been able to transcend these difficulties, and gain a sense of belonging, to achieve well-being and enjoyment in their academic work. This is complex, again relating to personal and social backgrounds and influences, access to professional networks, support from family and mentors, and learning to navigate the complexity of academic work. In all cases though, gaining a sense of commitment and achievement as a researcher is critical to the development of a stable academic identity. It is worth exploring how more early career

academic women can find joy in their work and a sense of well-being, and this is both a personal issue and a social or institutional matter, as institutions could better facilitate a sense of belonging for academics starting out.

The 'prestige economy' emerges as an important concept in this study and is gendered in the structure of academic work and recognition. Some women in the group are ambivalent about moving ahead and experienced their entry into academia as accidental. While they are all searching for autonomy and independence, they aspire to achieve this in different ways. They want institutional recognition but are less keen on the individualistic and competitive nature of academic work. They want to move ahead, but without the burden of management responsibilities. These appear to be tensions inherent in the structure of academic careers and may not only have gendered effects. However, there are insights in all these areas that can assist institutions to think differently about how academic careers and work are structured and supported.

The findings in this area are therefore diverse: gender has multiple and complex effects on early career academic women. There are structural barriers, discriminatory institutional cultures affected by gendered ideologies that negatively impact women, recognition is gendered, and gendered identities emerge from institutional experiences. Everyday injustices or personal struggles can sometimes also intersect with race or more junior status, as they are often about others exercising power over colleagues. Experiences of exclusion, epistemic injustice and aggression are sometimes not only about gender but may be linked to race. Race is undoubtedly important in the South African academy, as the literature has shown, and as several of the participants experience. However, like gender, racialised sub-cultures and networks and how they are experienced by individual academics are often difficult to articulate as they are deeply implicated in the everyday practices of the University. As Kiguwa argues:

> part of the dilemma has to do with the almost invisible nature of informal institutional cultures within departments; these function to reinforce and sustain hegemonic practices, spaces and traditions of the academy that are exclusive to already marginalised bodies. These cultures and communities of practice are so invisible as to render any challenge and resistance almost impossible, precisely because one would first have to undertake the work of making the invisible visible (Kiguwa, 2019: 11).

However, there are also narratives of possibility and examples of positive experiences and identities emerge.

How do early career academic women understand, experience and mediate gendered institutional environments, with what effects for their professional functioning and agency?

Individually, the participants in this study talk about a range of valued ways of being and doing (functionings) in talking about their career development and working experiences. However, examined together, the narratives identify some valued functionings that are shared across a broader group. A group of women working as academics have achieved different functionings from a group of undergraduate students or a group of engineers, bureaucrats, or nurses. From the valued functionings and aspirations of the group it has been possible to identify a set of capability dimensions for early career academic women in the context of a South African university. These may have broader relevance.

Five capability dimensions emerged from the narratives of the participants in this study:

- **navigation:** to be able to navigate academic life successfully;
- **recognition:** to be able to be recognised and valued for one's academic work;
- **autonomy**: to be able to achieve professional autonomy;
- **affiliation:** to be able to participate in social and professional networks; and
- **aspiration:** to be able to aspire to a professional academic career.

These capability dimensions have both personal and social dimensions. That is, personal agency and decision-making is required to turn opportunities into real functionings, but institutional policy and environment also impact significantly on whether early career women academics, who aspire to professional well-being, can turn professional aspirations into working lives that are valued.

A safe working environment, which includes protection from all forms of gender-based harm, including sexual harassment and gender bullying is a necessary pre-requisite for a gender-equitable working environment. Autonomy and independence emerge as the architectonic valued functioning for an academic career, but this is intricately linked to moving upwards and institutional recognition and value, which can come in varied forms. The capability to

aspire has strong personal dimensions, as aspiration is necessary for successful career development, but also has a strong social and institutional dimension. It can be facilitated by professional networks and institutional support, as well as role models. Affiliation is critical and has institutional dimensions in the relationships that academics build with colleagues, within disciplines and academic departments, as well as the kinds of formal networks and supportive communities that can be built from personal agency and facilitated by formal institutional arrangements. Epistemic agency and contribution is strongly linked to autonomy because academics must be able to develop their own research domains, develop expertise in curriculum design and teaching, and be able to contribute in this area within an institutional context. This can be both constrained and enabled by institutional structures and support. Ultimately, all early career academics are searching for a professional academic identity, which is linked to all the other capabilities dimensions. It is enabled strongly by institutional recognition and affiliation, but also by the autonomy and epistemic agency that comes from professional development. As the literature and the narrative data show, professional identities are complex and changing, and will be different for everyone, but recognising the importance of the capability of autonomy in the working lives of academics could assist institutions in actively finding ways to support academics to achieve a professional identity.

Reflection on the conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study was broad, drawing on feminist thinking about organisations, in particular Joan Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organisations. This theoretical framework allowed for an exploration of a range of concepts that can be identified at multiple layers in organisations.

The value of the capability approach, in conjunction with Acker's theory of gendered organisations, in facilitating the analysis of data in this research project, is that it allowed for exploring the pluralism in the responses of individuals working in a single faculty or institution, while at the same time highlighting the structural and cultural aspects of the university that impact on professional well-being and identity. It allowed for exploration of each person's individual experiences and aspirations, while recognising personal, social and institutional factors at play in their professional career development. It enabled me to draw on a rich set of diverse literatures and policy discussions, linked to complex personal narratives, and provided a normative framework and set of tools with which to analyse the data.

Each interviewee had a unique story to tell about their working lives and aspirations, but when viewed together through a gendered and capabilities lens, similarities emerged and have enabled a set of broad capability dimensions from which recommendations can be developed for institutional policy and practice. There is value in understanding the common experiences of a group so that it is possible to identify similarities in the factors that best facilitate and least hinder professional development and professional well-being. There are common themes that emerge, and these not only add to the understanding of how early career academic women experience and mediate institutional life, but also what the imperatives for change in the academy may be.

The 'ethical individualism' of the capability approach which sees each person as important for analysis, while allowing for analysis of personal, social, and structural factors was important for this study. While it is necessary to understand that the complexity of human behaviour and institutional environments will interact in different ways for each person, it is possible to identify common themes within the capability approach that help individuals convert resources and opportunities into successful academic careers, despite the effects of gender and other forms of constraint or exclusion.

One cannot say that women are entirely excluded from higher education, as there are more women students at undergraduate level, and often more women academics at the junior levels of the academic hierarchy. Women have also not always been the only marginalised group in higher education. However, a feminist approach to understanding gender in organisational terms helps to unearth structural and social phenomena that may form part of the continued exclusion of groups in higher education - or at least the factors that could be addressed through institutions and policy to reduce barriers for women and early career academics. A capabilities lens adds to this because of its focus on wellbeing and freedom:

> The account we strive for [i.e. the capability approach] should preserve liberties and opportunities for each and every person, taken one by one, respecting each of them as an end, rather than simply as the agent or supporter of the ends of others. [...] We need only notice that there is a type of focus on the individual person as such that requires no particular metaphysical position, and no bias against love or care. It arises naturally from the recognition that each person has just one life to live, not more than one. [...] If we combine this observation with the thought [...] that each person is

valuable and worthy of respect as an end, we must conclude that we should look not just to the total or the average, but to the functioning of each and every person. (Nussbaum 2000, 56 in Robeyns, 2017: 57)

This study did not set out to develop a comprehensive list of capabilities required for early career academics, or women academics, or even South African academics. The research questions were designed to achieve a greater understanding of the interaction between career development and a gendered institution. However, identifying capability dimensions that are important for the development of early career academics was a useful analytical step towards understanding the complex interplay of personal, social and institutional factors that impact on working lives and professional development of academic women.

In turn, understanding what capabilities could be fostered for early career academics and women in higher education may add to our knowledge of what is required at the level of policy and institutional support to create opportunities for women in the early career to become academics and stay on an academic career path. If institutions can better support capabilities as goals for early career academic women, who themselves can decide on the valued functionings that they wish to pursue, then a combination of purposeful institutional policy and practice and individual agency, may provide the right conditions for more early career academic women to enter and stay in academic careers.

Limitations of the research and identified gaps

At the outset of this project I identified a gap in focused research on early career academics, the fact that much research work on women in the academy has focused on women who have achieved seniority, and the need for research that focuses on understanding academic working lives and professional identities. This project set out to fill to those gaps.

One of the limitations of the method was excluding men from the study. In my view, too many gender studies only focus on women, as I have also done in this study. However, this can be justified in terms of the relatively hegemonic place of men in the academy and of dominant masculinity, but it is still fair to note that many gender studies exclude the experiences of men. In an increasingly precarious academic work environment, many of the experiences of women may also apply to other groups who have been historically marginalised from academic work, including black South Africans, and people from poor and working-class

backgrounds, very few of whom make it to university in the first place. The nature of exclusion in the academy is increasingly nuanced, as the South African context shows. However, as Mama notes, there is a "still-evident malestream tendency to ignore both the persistence of gender inequity in our institutions, and the transformative potential of feminist methodologies", and a "failure to demystify the dynamics of patriarchy" and this "is ethically indefensible" (Mama, 2011: 19).

There are two methodological limitations worth noting in this study. Given the "sticky" nature of gender and the difficulty of seeing and articulating experiences as being gendered, the data collection process may have been enriched by the addition of focus group discussions. In a focus group environment it may have been easier for participants to more clearly identify certain experiences as being linked to gender and/or race, in discussion with other academics. More intersectional information may also have arisen from participants in dialogue with one another, rather than in discussion with one researcher. However, this approach was not possible for pragmatic reasons, as explained in chapter four. The second limitation is that of time. The interviews took place at a particular moment and time, and the responses of the participants were therefore codified at a particular moment in the professional development of the academics. Should it have been possible to conduct a more longitudinal study, a different set of reflections may have emerged. This limitation was also linked to the demands on my time as a part-time doctoral researcher. However, these considerations point to areas that could be strengthened in further research in this area.

It should also be noted that the use of an intersectional approach was relatively narrow, in the focus primarily on categories of race and class. While other possibilities may have emerged with a closer methodological focus on intersectionality and a more integrated theoretical framework, this required a more focused approach at the outset, and a different research design. A more integrated (as opposed to broad and open) theoretical framework may have addressed this limitation.

Why do gender inequalities persist in universities and what can be done about it?

This is a broad question that cannot be answered by a single study, but it is important to focus on what this study might add to the knowledge about why gender inequality is so difficult to shift. This study has shown that institutions are gendered in complex and multi-dimensional

ways, all of which are relevant for understanding the working lives of academics. Gender is systemic, operates in and through policy, and symbolically through gendered ideologies, through overt and hidden structures and practices within institutions, and affecting individual identities and the responses of academics to many social and institutional factors. As mentioned earlier, this makes gender analysis complicated and 'wicked'.

However, looking at these many dimensions also offers opportunities for thinking about what the possibilities for change could be. What kinds of interventions and changes would be necessary to shift deeply embedded gendered institutional cultures and to provide a positive environment for all academics, including the more marginalised, to fully develop authentic academic identities, given that:

> the end of policy making and institutional design is to provide people with general capabilities, whereas the ends of persons are more specific capabilities...an effective capability-enhancing policy may not be increasing disposable income, but rather fighting a homophobic, ethnophobic, racist or sexist social climate (Robeyns, 2017: 49-51).

Acker's own view is that "a radical transformation of work and work relations may be required" (Acker, 1990: 155).

This means that one must look to ways in which the institutions themselves can be changed and not merely at what women need to do to adapt to the current realities. Morley urges that we should "re-imagine the academy":

> A goal should be to make the academy gender-free. Leadership roles appear to be so over-extended that they represent a type of virility test. We need to ask how leadership practices can become more sustainable, with concerns about health and well-being as well as competitive performance in the global arena. In other words, we need new rules for a very different game (Morley, 2013b: 16).

It is of course important to point out, as does the feminist literature on leadership (Morley, 2013b; Acker, 2012) that increasing the numbers of women leaders, while necessary for social justice, does not necessarily impact the gendered nature of institutions, as:

...the presence of women in senior positions is not an accurate measure of organisational development, as female cannot be unilaterally equated with feminism, nor are all feminists reflexive about their location in organisational power relations. Furthermore, a process of 'masculinisation' can occur for 'successful' women (Morley, 1999: 75).

Cultures and discriminatory norms can be disrupted (Vincent, 2015), and from a capability perspective, Nielsen suggests:

the importance of raising ethical questions as to how we can create more inclusive and attractive research environments in which women and men alike are free to function fully, to do and be what they have reason to value (Nielsen, 2017: 151).

If institutions are to become more gender equitable, then it is necessary to look beyond the numbers game. Indeed, institutions can do a great deal more to support early career academic women, in assisting women to turn capabilities – as in the five capability dimensions mentioned above - into valued functions, which includes:

- Targeted initiatives for induction and professional development support which target individual needs at points within individual career trajectories. This implies institutional support in alignment with self-directed and identified development needs, including those provided through induction and professional development programmes and mentorship initiatives.
- Developing fair and transparent workload models, which allow individual academics to see and engage with their own workloads in relation to other academics in their department or unit.
- Promotion requirements and other policies which are more clearly articulated and explained, enabling early career academics to understand the expectations of the job and develop their own more clearly articulated career trajectories.
- Targeted initiatives addressing areas of institutional culture that can create barriers to the development and progress of early career women academics, such as the development of criteria for different levels of institutional management and leadership in supporting and encouraging the development of early career academics, facilitating

meaningful access to support and development programmes and appropriate mentorship, and reducing gender-based harm.

Institutions could in this way pay greater attention to fundamental aspects of academic career progression, which includes greater recognition for the multi-dimensional aspects of academic careers, including teaching and formal mentorship and support for others that facilitate more collaborative working relationships, as well as different forms of leadership. The five capability dimensions that emerged in this study also offer a lens through which institutions can think about initiatives and institutional cultures that better support early career women academics. As De Jaeghere notes:

> ...this relational and socially-embedded framing of capabilities requires rethinking educational policies, practices and pedagogies so that educational institutions and programs are more connected with and interact with the social environments where these inequalities take form, and, importantly, can be transformed. ...the challenge is that education is a contradictory space where inequalities are reproduced and yet, they can be transformed (De Jaeghere, 2018: 16).

In thinking about what a gender just and gender equitable university might look like, are we focusing on fixing the women or fixing the university? (Burkinshaw and White, 2017). This is a fundamental question addressed by this study that has policy implications. A university that addresses gender equity with intentionality in purposive and deliberate ways could explore how better to positively address the institutional factors that can enhance career development for early career academic women and reduce the negative constraints on their career development, rather than expect women to adjust their ways of being and doing academic work to fit the idealised model of an academic worker.

To take this further into the domain of national higher education policy, South Africa may benefit from a sharper focus on gender equity in policy, which could frame gender equity more broadly than being only about numerical equity. By acknowledging the existence of gendered institutional cultures in universities, it might be possible to compel universities to report in more nuanced ways about initiatives that actively change gendered institutional practices, structures and approaches, rather than those that are targeted only at fixing women to fit in.

Turning the focus back on the need for institutions to change and adapt, as Morley (2016) argues, the "intra-actions" between neoliberal academic performance expectations and the development of academic identities create negative academic identities for those who do not perform as expected and new forms of epistemic injustice are created within institutions, reinforcing gendered privilege. As Nielsen (2017) also suggests, if these competitive and individualistic technologies continue to create cumulative effects on women that result in them "opting out" of academic careers, and if universities in South Africa are moving in the same direction as universities in other parts of the world, then gender just and equitable universities may still be far off. In the meantime, there is much work that universities could do to enhance gender equality for early career academics. This study has proposed a focus on capabilities as the goals for such developments.

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Appendix A

Researcher: **Thandi Lewin**	Study Supervisor: **Professor Melanie Walker**
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PhD study: Early Career academics, gender and universities: a study of working lives and institutional cultures

Dear Participant

You have been invited to take part in the above-mentioned research project. The project aims to contribute to the empirical base of research on academic lives and career formation in South Africa. The study addresses the research questions of how gender impacts on academic working lives, career development choices and professional identities of early career women academics, and how gender is experienced, mediated and understood by this group of academics. An introduction to the study has been shared with you.

I would like you to participate in this research because you will be able to provide answers to some of the research questions, based on your professional position in the university. I have requested that you complete a written questionnaire and participate in a 90 minute face-to-face interview. Through your participation in this study you will be assisting me to complete my PhD research, as well as contributing to a project that aims to contribute to building knowledge of the working lives of early career academics, in particular in relation to gender. The findings of the study will form part of my PhD dissertation, and may subsequently be published in other forms.

The nature of the study requires that I will be asking you to comment on personal and professional matters, some of which may be emotive or uncomfortable for you. I understand that there may be some matters you do not wish to discuss in the interview. I also intend to use pseudonyms to protect your confidentiality as much as possible. If any concerns arise for you during the research, please do raise these with me directly.

While I greatly appreciate your participation in this study and the valuable contribution you can make, your participation is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part in this study. If you do choose to take part, and an issue arises which makes you uncomfortable, you may at any time stop your participation with no further repercussions.

If you experience any discomfort or unhappiness with the way the research is being conducted, please feel free to contact me directly to discuss it, and also note that you are free to contact my study supervisor, whose contact details are provided above.

Yours sincerely,
Thandi Lewin

Appendix B

Interview schedule: early career academics

Research Questions for the Study:

- How does gender impact on academic working lives, career development choices, and professional identities of early career women academics?

- How do early career women academics understand, experience and mediate gendered institutional environments, with what effects for their professional functioning and agency?

- What does this reveal about why gender inequalities persist in universities?

Please note, a written questionnaire with various work-related questions and a short biographical questionnaire will be administered prior to the face-to-face interview. Both are designed to collect key information necessary for the study, without prolonging the face-to-face interview time.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Opening question:

1. <u>ECAs:</u> **How did you come to choose this work? What do you enjoy most about being an academic? What do you not enjoy?**

   a. What have been your major achievements in this job so far? What work [teaching, research products, community engagement] are you most proud of? Have you been recognised for these, and if so, how?

   b. What are your professional aspirations? Where do you want to be in 5/10 years? What are your plans to reach your career goals? What challenges do you anticipate? Do you think these will be different for others?

   c. What, in your view, are the major challenges facing early career academics at this university? And in the humanities?

   d. Do you pursue activities outside of academia? If so, what do you spend time on? How would you describe your work-life balance? What strategies do you use to balance work and family responsibilities?

   e. What policies and programmes has this university put in place to improve conditions of service for early career academic staff?

   f. Academic promotion policies and practices: do you think these are fair? Are there ways in which academics are rewarded differently, in your experience?

   g. What policies and support structures are in place at the university to support people with families? Is this gendered and if so, in what ways?

2. **Gender and ECAS: What do you perceive to be the major gender inequalities at your university? In what ways do you think gender is relevant to your working life or to your professional agency at this university and in your department?**

   ➢ What specific pressures (and from whom) do you experience in this job? To what extent is your professional environment shaped by socio-cultural gender norms?

   ➢ What aspects of the department/faculty/university environment do you find supportive and enabling? What aspects do you find constrain you? Is this gendered/raced, and if so, how?

   ➢ What gendered or other divisions of labour do you identify in your department/faculty/university? To what extent are these broader social norms alone or reinforced/ignored by the university? How does this differ between early career and more established academics? Are there other differences (e.g. race)?

3. **Gender-specific experiences: Please describe one or two specific experiences that have been gender-significant for you? (these may be both positive and negative experiences)?**

   ➢ How did you handle particular situations? How would you do it differently? What institutional support/intervention might assist in overcoming such situations?

   ➢ Where do you derive your professional support from? Who supports you? Who and where are your mentors? Who has most influenced your academic career and why?

   ➢ What formal networks are you part of? Institutional, discipline-related, national, international? What informal networks would you consider yourself part of? Describe your participation in these networks.

4. **Discrimination: Have you personally experienced any gender, racial, or other form of harassment or discrimination in this post? How was it manifested? How did you respond to it? What support did you receive from institutional structures? From colleagues?**

   ➢ What could have been done better by those involved?

   ➢ What has been the personal/professional effect of any of these experiences?
   (further question hidden to hide university identity)

5. <u>ECAs and institutional cultures</u>: **What do you think are the constraints in this University that may be specific to you? And institutional enabling factors?**

   ➢ What support have you received from the institution for your professional development? What professional development opportunities have you chosen to pursue and where have these been accessed? Are these different for men and women? Are they different between early career and more established academics?

6. <u>Gender-related policy/structure at university</u>: **Are you aware of gender-related policies within the university? Could you describe what you know about these. How do you think this university is doing in making progress on gender equity?**

   ➢ What specific equity programmes exist for academic staff? What is the university doing to address structural and cultural issues within the institution that may be discriminatory, or perceived to be so?

   ➢ How has the University responded to the Soudien report and other national policy imperatives related to gender in relation to academic staffing?

   ➢ Can you comment on the prevalence of sexual harassment at the university and the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy and other gender-related policies

   ➢ What is your view of gender and other forms of equity? Transformation? And related to that your view of institutional progress on these matters?

   ➢ Are there specific programmes for the advancement of women academics? Please describe these. Have you benefited from these? What programmes are in place to address gender inequities amongst academic staff? Are you aware of faculty specific or department-specific programmes?

   ➢ Is there staff action around gender and other equity-related issues? What form does this take?

   ➢ In the time that you have been working at the university what shifts have taken place to improve gender equity amongst academic staff in particular? What barriers do you see to improving gender equity?

   ➢ What are your views about current shifts taking place in the HE sector relating to university transformation and how do you think they are impacting upon/will impact upon your university?

➢ From your standpoint do you think academic working life has changed for women? If so, how?

7. **<u>Views of change:</u> What do you think could be taken up that is not being addressed? What could be done better? What do you see as your role in promoting gender equity in your university?**

➢ Is there staff action around gender and other equity-related issues? What form does this take?

➢ In the time that you have been working at the university what shifts have taken place to improve gender equity amongst academic staff in particular? What barriers do you see to improving gender equity?

➢ What ideas do you have to shift some of the issues you have talked about above? What could the university do differently?

➢ Why do you think gender (or other forms of) inequality persists in this university?

8. **Are there any internal reports/studies etc, publicly available or not, that would help to provide contextual information for this study?**