THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN TOP MANAGEMENT POSITIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH

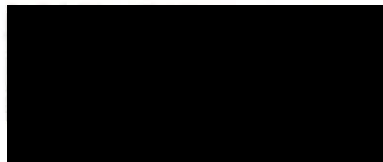## BY

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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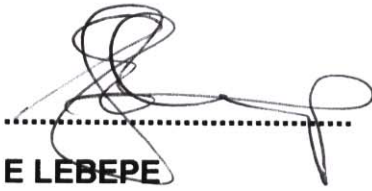University of the North, Turfloop, South Africa.

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that the dissertation hereby submitted to the University of the North for the degree of Master of Public Administration has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University, that it is my own work in design and in execution, and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

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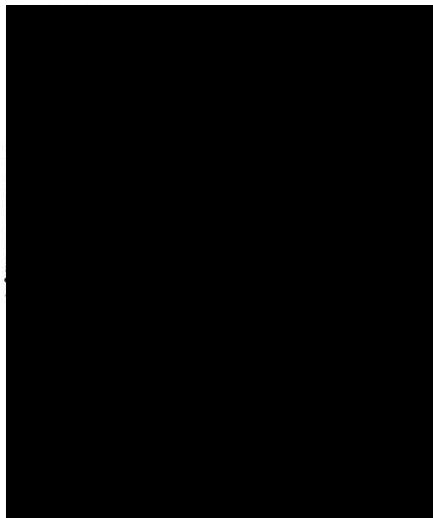
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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1   INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Statistics from Commonwealth countries (Lund, 1997) and the US (Glazer-Raymo, 1999) indicate that the underrepresentation of women in top management positions is a universal phenomenon. There is, however, some concern about this and in a number of countries efforts have been made to address the issue. Policies such as the Employment Equity Act (1998) and The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) are direct results of these concerns and efforts.

Despite these policies, in South Africa the growth in the number of women in senior management positions has been relatively slow. An initial analysis of the household survey data indicates that 'highly skilled - category A' occupations tend to be overwhelmingly dominated by white males. Women of all races are marginalised at this level of employment. African women, despite being the single largest group in terms of population numbers, make up just three percent of this elite occupational strata (Wolpe *et al.*, 1997: 121). According to this analysis, women tend to dominate the "highly skilled - category B" professions. Women hold more of these positions in all race groups, but more so among Africans. African women account for over 29 percent of people employed in this band (Wolpe *et al.*, 1997: 122). Researchers undertook a small-scale investigation on the role of women in top management positions. The focus was to look at good practice in recruitment and selection procedures to change the situation for women in senior management in higher education (Wolpe *et al.*, 1997: 122).

With this investigation by Wolpe *et al.* in mind, this research investigates the under-

representation of women in top management positions at the University of the North. According to the Employment Equity Act (1998) no person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds including race, gender, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility and others. The Enactment of Anti-discrimination and Equal Opportunity (2001) emphasizes that women should not be discriminated against because of their gender and that women should be given first preference in top managerial positions. The University of the North has recently witnessed a process of restructuring, from eight faculties down to three with eleven schools under these faculties. The question remains: did the University, in their restructuring, take into consideration the issue of women representation in higher positions (e.g. Deans of Faculties and Directors of Schools)?

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The University of the North like most institutions of Higher Education is called upon to implement the Employment Equity Act (1998). One of the areas that needs urgent attention is the employment of women, especially black women, in senior management posts. This mammoth task cannot be accomplished without thorough investigation of what are the causes of this problem (i.e. lack of women in senior positions).

It is against this background that the research problem was formulated. The problem to be investigated is:

- Lack of women in senior positions at the University of the North (Unin).

The research question to be answered is therefore:

- Why are there a lack of women in the senior positions at the University of the North?

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1.3   FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESIS

Despite their comparable qualifications, women are, however, not entering the highest leadership positions as their male counterparts (Burke and Macdermid, 1996: 49). Despite gains in women's status, successful leaders are more likely to be men than women. While women continue to advance educationally, their share of management jobs rarely exceeds 20 percent in most countries (Modipa and Maqubela, 2001: 3). The underrepresentation of women in certain social spheres and jobs could be attributed to life conditions under which most women find themselves in life. There are socio-cultural factors that are likely to discourage and demotivate women from aspiring for higher jobs as social positions. (Burke and Macdermid, 1996: 49.)

From this background the following hypothesis was generated:

- The lack of women in senior positions at the University of the North (Unin) is caused by the perception that women are inferior human beings.

1.4   PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is:

"To demonstrate that the perception of women as inferior human beings caused the lack of women in senior positions at the University of the North (Unin)".

The general orientation of this study, i.e. the research question, the purpose of the study, unit of analysis, categories of data, sources of data and methodological skills, are clearly indicated in table 1.

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TABLE 1 SHOWING THE SYNOPSIS OF THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Research question	Why are women underrepresented in top management posts at the University of the North (Unin)?	
Hypothesis	Women are underrepresented in top management posts at the University of the North due to the perception that women are inferior human beings	
Purpose	To describe (descriptive study) how the perception of women as inferior human beings leads to the underrepresentation of women in top management posts at the University of the North	
Unit of analysis	*Women* in top management posts at the University of the North	
Characteristics	Representativeness	
Categories of data	**Human behaviour and human characteristics**	**Products of human behaviour and human characteristics**
Sources of data	• Women in top management positions • Men in top management positions • Staff members at the human resource department	• Constitution • Legislation • Memorandums • Personnel Policy and Procedures (PPP) • Circulars • Letters issued by the University of the North
Methodological skills	• Selected group of managers interviews • Observation techniques	• Reading and understanding of meaning

(Source : Adaptations of Figure 14.2 by Wessels 1999: 376).

1.5 RESEARCH APPROACH

Research approach is defined differently by different authors as follows:

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Bouma (2000: 3) says that research approach is the systematic application of a family of methods that are employed to provide trustworthy information about problems. He goes further to explain research as an ongoing process, based on many accumulated understandings and explanations that, when taken together, lead to generalisations about educational issues and ultimately, to the development of theories.

Anderson (1998: 6) is of the opinion that research in education is a disciplined attempt to solve problems through the collection and analysis of primary data for the purpose of description, explanation, generalisation and prediction.

Cohen *et al.* (2000: 10) citing Mouly (1978), agree that research is best conceived as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. It is the most important tool for advancing knowledge, promoting progress, and enabling man to relate effectively to his environment, to accomplish his purposes, and to resolve his conflicts.

The above definitions have important implications for researchers because there is a continued interest in using a diversity of methods, depending on the type of the research problem, purpose and unit of analysis. The definitions also show that problems have been there before, for as long as men lives.

In order to explain why women in top management positions at the University of the North are underrepresented, a case study, limited to the University of the North, is conducted.

1.5.1 Case study

Yin (1994: 13) gives two part technical definitions of case study as follows:

1.   A case study is an empirical inquiry that:

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

2.   The case study inquiry:

- copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, as one result;
- relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result;
- benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

The case study method probes deeply and analyses intensively the interaction between factors that produce change or growth. The aim of case study in this research is to find out why women are under-represented in managerial positions at the University of the North. There will be observations and descriptions of events during job interviews where women are pitted with men.

1.5.2 Sample

A total number of 54 women (44 Black women and 10 White women) within the University of the North were selected by means of a purposive sampling strategy. The reason for choosing high number of Black women is that at the University of the North Black women are in majority.

The purpose of this is to get their views concerning the lack of representation of women in top management positions.

1.5.3 Collection of data

The information required for the whole study was collected through three methods of data collection, viz.

- Interviews of selected group of managers
- A study of documents such as Personnel Policy and Procedures (PPP), Memorandums, Circulars and letters issued by the University of the North, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Employment Equity Act., and the University draft policy on affirmative action to find out how promotion and recruitment of women in top positions proceeds.
- Observation techniques - the researcher attended one or two interviews to observe how women fair when pitted with men.

1.5.3.1   Interviews

In this study, interviews with selected group of managers were held. The quality of information served as guidelines on the problems encountered. For the researcher (interviewer), it is important to heed the suggestion by Peltzer and Ebigbo (1989: 186) that the initial interview should be brief, so that it does not confuse the interviewee with too much detail. The idea is to get an adequate general picture and not to be tempted to pursue certain aspects of the problem which may be interesting but not fruitful.

Powney and Watss (1987: 7) define an interview as a way of gathering data through direct oral interaction. It involves people talking and listening to people. It is a direct method of obtaining information in a face-to-face situation (Behr, 1988: 150).

Interviews, as Nisbet and Watt (1980: 13) point out, provide important data, but they reveal only how people perceive what happens, rather than what actually happens. According

to Brynard and Hanekom (1997: 32) interviewing as a method of collecting data allows the researcher to explain his or her questions if the respondent (interviewee) is not clear on what was asked. It also allows the researcher to probe deeper following the answer of a respondent.

The researcher, firstly secured appointments with the people she intended to interview. A total number of 54 respondents were interviewed. These were made up of the Deans of Faculties, Directors of Schools, Executive Directors, Heads of various Sections, Assistant Registrars, Principal Administrative Officers heading the Schools' Administration, Executive Secretaries and Personnel Officers.

1.5.3.2   Documents

Documents such as Personnel Policy and Procedures (PPP), Memorandums, Circulars, letters issued by the University of the North and the Employment Equity Act were looked into to find out if whatever appears on these documents is applicable in practice, particularly at the University of the North.

The researcher checked what does the University Personnel Policy and Procedures (PPP) and the University Draft Policy on affirmative action say to see if these documents are implemented at the University of the North where women are concerned.

1.5.3.3   Observations

Whatever the problem or approach, at the heart of every case study lies a method of observation (Cohen and Manion, 2000: 107). The value of observation lies in the fact that the University draft policy on affirmative action was observed on how promotion and recruitment of women in top positions, proceeds. The researcher attended two interviews to observe how women fair when pitted with men.

As regards this subject of observation, Bell (1993: 109) says that careful planning and piloting are essential, and it takes practice to get the most out of this technique. However, once mastered, it is a technique that can often reveal characteristics of groups or individuals which would have been impossible to discover by other means.

Brynard and Hanekom (1997: 39) say that observational techniques are used to determine how individuals or groups of persons react under specific circumstances, either natural or artificial.

There are different kinds of observations as a tool of data collection. According to Dane (1990: 158-160), Le Compte and Preissle (1993: 93-95), Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 99-109) there are different types of observer roles in the research setting. These include **complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant** and **complete observer**. The researcher in making a choice of the role which she would assume during observation, chose the **complete observer** role.

1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

For the sake of clarity, some of the concepts in this research deserve to be defined. To avoid confusion that often exists about what certain concepts mean, Jones (1997: 9) alerts that terminology is the dragon at simulation gate. The same applies to the various meanings available concerning the concepts: women, senior management/top management, role , PPP, IAG.

1.6.1 Women

Women in this research will refer to African women who are regarded as previously disadvantaged individuals. These will be women who are employed in the administrative and academic sections.

1.6.2 Senior Management/Top Management

Senior Management refers to Registrars, Directors, Portfolio Heads, Directors of Schools and Deans of Faculties.

1.6.3 Role

Role here will mean whether women occupy senior positions and or serve on established university structures such as IAG or Senate.

1.6.4 Personnel Policy and Procedures (PPP)

The University believes that its employees are of primary importance in achieving its overall mission and objectives. The University is, therefore, prepared to devote adequate time and resources to ensure that employees are developed to their full potential, used effectively and adequately rewarded for their contribution towards meeting these objectives.

The general policy of the University of the North is to define the University policy with regard to the provision of personnel and to ensure that professional methods and techniques of personnel provision are utilised by the University. Thus triple P as referred to by the university community simply mean Personnel Policy and Procedures. This is the university code of employment.

1.6.5 Interim Advisory Group (IAG)

This is an advisory group constituted by the Administrator to advise him on issues ranging from Finance, Academic and Human Resources. It is not a statutory body - but it serves as a clearing house for Senate and the Administrator. It is made up of the Administrator,

the Academic Advisor, Advisor on Finance, Advisor on Human Resources and the Executive Advisor to the Administrator.

1.6.6 Employment Equity

This will refer to the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act 55 of 1998). According to the Employment Equity Plan no person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds including race, gender, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility and others.

1.7 OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION

Chapter one gives a background and orientation to the study. This includes a broad introduction of the problem, the significance of the study, its purpose, and hypothesis. Related definitions of concepts are laid. Added, are the different methods which will be used to collect data.

Chapter two gives a literature review on the role of women. This will include a brief literature survey to acquaint oneself with the problem - are women underrepresented in top management posts at the University of the North - and for better conceptualisation thereof.

Chapter three will cover the methodology or research design. This will show an overview of the design to be adopted and how data will be collected and through which instruments/data will be collected.

Chapter four is reserved for presentation of results (Data Analysis). This will include an outlay of data and how it was analysed.

Chapter five will cover interpretation of the results or discussion of the findings in the light of the hypotheses.

Chapter six will cover conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter purposes to discuss the role of women in top management positions at various countries such as USA, UK, India and Africa. I will also discuss theories and policies around employment. These will include: feminism theories; policies such as the Constitution of the Republic of SA, (1996) and the Employment Equity Act, (1998). Lastly, I will discuss studies that have been conducted around this problem.

Women have been discriminated against for a long time in society. This does not only occur in the job situation, our culture also discriminates against women especially when girls are not allowed to be educated because they will be married and their husbands will look after them (Umanyano Media Service, 1999: 5). Statistics show that more than two-thirds of the world's 960 million non-literate adults are women. In South Africa non-literacy rates are estimated at 50% in rural areas where the majority of women are located, and 38% in urban areas (Umanyano Media Service, 1999: 5).

It is believed that most women in South Africa suffer from some kind of discrimination and that black working class and rural women are the main sufferers. The former South African Minister of Health, Dr Nkosazana Zuma, at the Beijing conference said:

> *Women in South Africa are definitely not free. The majority live in poverty and many cannot read or write. Millions do not have proper housing and no access to water, sanitation, education, or health services. They are marginalised economically with no right to own land. Under customary law they marry and live their lives as effective minors subject to the authority of a male*

relative (Report on Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995: v).

Fewer girls than boys get to school, and if they do, their scholastic performance is lower and their drop-out rate is higher than with boys. Girls undertake heavy domestic duties at an early age and are expected to manage domestic and educational responsibilities (Wolpe *et al.*, 1997: 56).

Lack of gender awareness by educators strengthens gender inequalities and undermines girls' self-esteem. Lack of sexual and reproductive education has a profound impact on girls' and young women's lives (Wolpe *et al.*, 1997: 55).

Educational materials reinforce traditional female and male roles that deny women opportunities for equal partnership in society (National Educare Forum, 1996: 24).

2.2   THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN TOP MANAGEMENT POSITION IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Women are better educated and hold more jobs worldwide than ever before. Yet most women continue to suffer from occupational segregation in the workplace and rarely break through the so-called "glass ceiling" separating them from top-level management and professional positions. A recent International Labour Organization (ILO) report says that while substantial progress has been made in closing the gender gap in managerial and professional jobs, for women in management it is still lonely at the top. (Wirth, 2001: 250.)

The term "glass ceiling" was coined in the 1970s in the United States to describe the invisible artificial barriers, created by attitudinal and organizational prejudices, barring women from top executive jobs. The title of the ILO report, "Breaking through the Glass Ceiling: Women in Management", is an apt definition for an ongoing problem. Despite

recent progress the glass ceiling is still relatively intact (ILO, 2002).

The report says most female managers are still barred from the top levels of organizations worldwide, whether in the private, public or political sectors. Women hold less than 5 percent of the top jobs in corporations. And even when they manage to rise to the top, female executives nearly always earn less than men (ILO, 2002).

"*Almost universally, women have failed to reach leading positions in major corporations and private sector organizations, irrespective of their abilities*", says ILO labour expert and report author Linda Wirth. "*Women represent more than 40 percent of the world's labour force. Yet their share of management positions remains unacceptably low, with just a tiny proportion succeeding in breaking through the glass ceiling to obtain top job*" (Wirth, 2001: 255).

The above topic will be discussed further from various countries hereunder:

2.2.1 In the United States of America (USA)

After years of corporate America repeatedly being chastised about the inequities of women in top positions and how important those women could be in the success of these companies, the message finally seems to have gotten through to the top. A new study in USA, according to Koss-Feder (2003: 1), shows an increase in the number of women holding corporate officer positions at Fortune 500 companies. She further avers that some say the data suggests women are rising above the proverbial glass ceiling.

Koss-Feder says that women now hold 15.7 percent of corporate officer positions in Fortune 500 companies from 12.5 percent in 2000. This is one of the largest increases in the past few years, according to a recent census report by Catalyst, a New York City-based organization that studies women and business trends. The numbers were just 8.7

percent in 1995, when Catalyst first began tracking them. (Koss-Feder, 2003: 1.)

While there is still room for more progress, it seems that the word has finally gotten out to corporate America and women are rising above the old glass ceiling, says Oklahoma City-based Terry Neese, former president of the National Association of Women Business Owners. She further says that companies are realizing that to best serve a mixed population of consumers, in which women often make household buying decisions, they need to have the same kind of diversity at their helms. (Neese, 2002: 1.)

However, according to Neese (2002: 2), the large corporations have not done as well in hiring and promoting women of colour. Women of colour only represent 1.6 percent of corporate officers, up from 1.3 percent in 2000, according to the study, which was released in November.

In the United States, according to Wirth (1997: 25), average female participation in management jobs remains at approximately 20 percent, with women significantly under-represented in senior positions and clustered in industries and occupations that are segregated by gender. Regarding women's corporate progress, she states that:

> *Almost universally, women have failed to reach leading positions in major corporations ... irrespective of their abilities ... Women generally fare best in industries employing large numbers of women, such as health and community services and the hotel and catering industries (Wirth, 1997: 26).*

Although women have generally made progress into management in recent years, aggregate figures mask varying degrees of success at the micro-level. Whilst women have gained increasing representation in middle management ranks, access to the most senior posts is very limited. Even in the Unites States, where a history of affirmative action and corporate efforts to promote diversity have improved female representation, women

accounted for just 11.2 percent of Fortune 500 corporate officers in 1997. A United Nations report in the same year stated that women held only two to three percent of top jobs worldwide (Wirth, 1997: 29).

Literature suggests that obstacles to women's progress into management derive from several sources: constraints are imposed upon them by society, by the family, by employers, and by women themselves. Observers present a number of different arguments to explain why women are not present in large numbers in executive positions. (Crampton *et al.*, 1999: 87-106.)

Crampton *et al.* (1999: 87-106) say that constraints on women's corporate advancement is caused by family responsibility and corporate discrimination:

- **Family Responsibility**

Behavioural expectations regarding women's role in the family represent a further obstacle to their corporate upward mobility. The majority of the burden of child-rearing is still placed on mothers, imposing additional responsibility on a career woman that is often not faced by a man.

- **Corporate Discrimination**

Discrimination occurs in the form of organisational structures and policies. Informal networks and cultures that are male-dominated often become barriers to women's progression. Corporate inequities and advancement opportunities and rewards discourage women from seeking top management positions.

2.2.2 In the United Kingdom (UK)

According to national surveys in the United Kingdom, women's overall share of management jobs rarely exceeds 20 percent. The higher the position, the more glaring

the gender gap, percentage of women in managerial positions is less than men's. In the largest and most powerful organizations the proportion of top positions going to women is generally 2 to 3 percent (World of Work, 1998).

2.2.3 In India

In mid 1999, Nik Aziz, the leader of PAS, the fundamentalist Islam party that made considerable gains in the election later in November 1999, confirmed an affirmative action program concerning women in the workforce. It is not one that many women would endorse however. His view was that "ugly" women should be given preference in public service recruitment in the PAS ruled Kelantan state, as "beautiful" women can easily find a husband (Women in Management Review, 2000: 5).

This is perhaps one of the most extreme examples of discrimination against women in the workforce, but is certainly not rare. It also underlines the view from many of the articles in this review that gender discrimination is related more to culture than any other factor. Cultures where the role of women is subservient and women are seen as the "lesser sex" reflect this also in the work context.

Accordingly, Hindu states and regions such as those in India where a caste system predominates are less likely to encourage the advancement of women in the workforce or in management (Women in Management Review, 2000: 7).

2.2.4 In Africa

African women have a long tradition of fighting against injustice and despotism. In terms of courage, they do not lag behind men and in the fight against colonialism and colonial hegemony some even took on positions of leadership. In Zimbabwe, Mbua Nehanda, who was a "spirit medium", led the first fight for independence which ended with victory over

the British and her own execution. In the Mau Mau movement in Kenya, there was a "female field marshall" called Muthoni Kirima who was ignored in official historiography until she was recently rehabilitated by the Kenyan women's movement. In the Casamance, in Senegal, Aline Sitoe fought against and organised the resistance when the French colonial masters requisitioned stocks of rice and recruited men by force for the war in Europe. She, too, had to pay with her life. (National Committee on the Status of Women, 1992: 1.)

The well-known heroines represent the numerous unknown women who were involved in the fight for independence: in Algeria in the fifties and sixties in the national liberation front FLN; in the second "chimurenga" which ended with the victory of ZANU and ZANLA; in Eritrea where women formed a third of the "fighters" of the EPLF; and not last in Namibia and South Africa where their heroic fight in the front line hit the headlines. (National Committee on the Status of Women, 1992: 2.)

But where are these women today? We can, with a few exceptions, look in vain for them in positions of leadership in politics or the economic sphere. In Algeria, after independence, they yielded, with a few exceptions, to the traditional role of women. They were not able to prevent the downfall of the encrusted and corrupt FLN supremacy and the victory of the Islamic Fundamentalists who decreed the veil and subjugation. In Zimbabwe, only the very few have managed to build up a secure existence, most manage to survive rather worse than better. (National Committee on the Status of Women, 1992: 3.)

Can The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) provide the basis for action on issues of gender inequality, and therefore can the newly formed African Union provide a new opportunity and mechanism for progress towards equal rights for women in Africa? The assessment of NEPAD's intention to address gender issues is analysed by looking at NEPAD as a planning sequence, from expression of principles and goals, through to the identification of the specific actions, proposed to achieve these goals. The interest is to

examine the attention to gender through the sequence of planning steps, looking specifically at the consistency of the logic in the treatment of gender issues as the planning sequence unfolds (Africa Action, 2002: 2).

According to Africa Action (2002: 3) NEPAD is found to begin with some fairly strong statements of principle on the need for gender equality. But this initial commitment fades away as the planning sequence proceeds, leading to no adequate identification of specific gender issues to be addressed, and no strategies and or proposed actions to address gender issues that are generally known to be important in the NEPAD priority areas of democracy, good governance and human rights.

This lack of intention to act on women's rights is seen in the context of the African Union, which is seen as a collection of patriarchal states with a record in this area of high level commitments and low level action. For action on gender issues, the NEPAD document is not seen as a new turning point, but rather as a continuation of the previous miserable record.

For good governance, it is axiomatic that all citizens should have equal rights in law and before the law. All publicly available opportunities and resources must be equally available to all, without discrimination. As far as women's rights are concerned, this means that there must be no discrimination against women. Specifically, this means women should not be subjected to different treatment on the basis of sex. And yet, contrary to such principles of democracy and good governance, women throughout the continent of Africa live in extremely patriarchal societies, where men control the decision making process in the government and in the home. Male domination of the decision making process serves to ensure that women get most of the work, and men collect most of the rewards arising from this work. (Africa Action, 2002: 4.)

The huge gender gaps in literacy, education, wealth and access to power are the result

of discriminatory practices. These practices do not exist only at the social and traditional level. To different degrees, in all African countries, these discriminatory practices are entrenched in law, in the administration of the law, and in the general regulations governing government and corporate bureaucratic practice. It is government who are the principle perpetrators of discrimination against women, and the enforcers of their continued oppression. (Africa Action, 2002: 4.)

From this brief survey the realises how the problem of women in high position is real a contentious issue across the world.

2.3 THEORIES AROUND EMPLOYMENT

Sustainable development and management of global and regional resources are neither ecological problems, nor economic, nor social ones. It is a combination of all three. And yet actions to integrate all three typically have short-changed one or more.

Sustainable designs driven by conservation interests often ignore the needs for an adaptive form of economic development that emphasizes human economic enterprise and institutional flexibility. Those driven by economic and industrial interests often act as if the uncertainty of nature can be replaced with human engineering and management controls, or ignored all together. Those driven by social interests can act as if community development and empowerment of individuals encounter no limits to the imagination and initiative of local groups. Each view captures its prescriptions in code words: regulation and control; get the prices right; empowerment; stakeholder ownership. These are not wrong, just too partial. Investments fail because they are partial. As a consequence, the policies of governments, private foundations, international agencies, and NGOs flop from emphasizing one kind of weakened solution to another. (Holling, 2000: 1.)

Each group builds its efforts on theory, although many would deny anything but the most

pragmatic and non-theoretical foundations. The conservationists depend on theories of ecology and evolution, the developers on variants of free-market models, the community activists on theories of community and social organization (Holling, 2000: 1). All these theories are correct, in the sense of being partially tested and credible representations of one part of reality. The problem is that the theories are partial and too simple. We lack an integrated theory that can serve as a foundation for sustainable futures, a theory that recognizes the synergies and constraints among nature, economic activities, and people, a theory that informs and emerges from thoughtful practice.

The application of these theories, according to Smith (1995: 55), led to the expectation that target variables such as employment could be stabilized and created a demand for a constant flow of product. These policies were successful initially, and profit and employment were, in fact, stabilized. But their very success resulted in slow changes in key ecological, social, and cultural components not captured in the management models: changes that typically led to the collapse of the entire system. The "economic extinction" of cod along the coast of eastern North America is a prime example. From a review of a wide range of failed sustainable development initiatives, a common pathology emerges. At the extreme, the ecological system loses resilience, the industries become dependent and inflexible, the management agencies become rigid and dysfunctional, and the public loses trust in governance (Smith, 1995: 50).

There are so many examples of this pathology that we have learned the lesson well in theory, if not entirely in practice. We recognize that human behaviour and nature's dynamic are linked in an evolving system. We realize that the seeming paradox of change and stability inherent in evolving systems is the essence of sustainable futures. We now know that to counteract the current pathology we need policies that are dynamic and evolutionary. We need policies that expect results that are inherently uncertain and explicity address that uncertainty through active probing, monitoring, and response. However, we cannot successfully implement these new policies because we have not

learned the politics and we ignore the public (Holling, 2000: 2).

2.4   FEMINISM THEORIES

What follows are different branches of feminism theory that are recognized by feminists and feminist scholars. These different theories of feminism are widely acknowledged and taught in women's studies courses, gender studies courses, and the like.

Feminism theory stands for the political, economical and social equality of men and women. This is the core of all feminism theories. Sometimes this definition is also referred as "core feminism" or "core feminist theory" (Marotta, 2000: 1). This theory does not subscribe to differences between men and women or similarities between men and women, nor does it refer to excluding men or only furthering women's causes. Most other branches of feminism do.

In my study I intend to be neutral because I also uphold the notion for the political, economical and social equality of men and woman like the core of all feminism theories. In my interviews, my observation from documents and from the observation of data I intend to find out if the feminism theories are employed or observed. The most feminism theory that I prefer is the Cultural Feminism because like the theory I realise that there are fundamental personality and biological differences between men and women.

2.4.1 Amazon Feminism

Segal (2001: 240) says that Amazon feminism is dedicated to the image of the female hero in Greek mythology, as it is expressed in art and literature, in the physiques and feats of female athletes, and in sexual values and practices.

Amazon feminism according to Segal (2001: 240) focuses on physical equality and is

opposed to gender role stereotypes and discrimination against women based on assumptions that women are supposed to be, look, or behave as if they are passive, weak and physically helpless. Amazon feminism rejects the idea that certain characteristics or interests are inherently masculine (or feminine), and upholds and explores a vision of heroic womanhood.

An Amazon feminist, for example, would argue that some people are not cut out physically to be a fire fighter, serve in combat, or work in construction. Whereas some people are physically capable of doing such jobs. No mention of gender is made, as the jobs should be open to all people regardless of gender. Those men and women who are physically capable and want, should pursue such jobs. Amazon feminists tend to view that all women are as physically capable as all men.

2.4.2 Cultural Feminism

This theory avers that there are fundamental personality difference between men and women, and that women's differences are special and should be celebrated. The theory also supports the notion that there are biological differences between men and women. For example, "women are kinder and more gentle than men", leading to the mentality that if women ruled the world there would be no wars. Cultural feminism is the theory that wants to overcome sexism by celebrating women's special qualities, women's way, and women's experiences, often believing that the "woman's way" is the better way (Friedman, 2002: 2).

2.4.3 Eco-feminism

Bronwyn (1997: 2) says that Ecofeminism is a theory that rests on the basic principle that patriarchial philosophies are harmful to women, children, and other living things. Parallels are drawn between society's treatment of the environment, animals, or resources and its

treatment of women. In resisting partriarchial culture, eco-feminists believe they are also resisting plundering and destroying of the Earth. They feel that the partriarchial philosophy emphasizes the need to dominate and control unruly females and the unruly wilderness.

Eco-feminism states that the partriarchial society is relatively new, something developed over the last 5,000 year or so and that the matriarchial society was the first society. In the matriarchial society, women were the center of society and people worshiped Goddesses. This is known as the Feminist Eden (Bronwyn, 1997: 2).

2.4.4 Individual or Libertarian Feminism

Individualist feminism is based upon individualism or libertarian (minimum government or anarchocapitalist) philosophies. The primary focus is individual autonomy, rights, liberty, independence and diversity. Individualist feminism tends to widely encompass men and focuses on barriers that men and women face due to their gender (McElroy, 1997: 2).

2.4.5 Radical Feminism

Radical feminism according to Atkinson (1998: 13) is the breeding ground for many of the ideas arising from feminism. Radical feminism was the cutting edge of feminist theory from approximately 1967 - 1975. It is no longer as universally accepted as it was then, and no longer serves to solely define the term, "feminism".

This group views the oppression of women as the most fundamental form of oppression, one that cuts across boundaries of race, culture, and economic class. This is a movement intent on social change, change of rather revolutionary proportions.

Radical feminism questions why women must adopt certain roles based on their biology,

just as it questions why men adopt certain other roles based on theirs. Radical feminism attempts to draw lines between biologically-determined behavior and culturally-determined behavior in order to free both men and women as much as possible from their previous narrow gender roles (Atkinson, 1998: 13).

2.5 MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

World experience shows that national machineries for the advancement of women are often marginalised in national government structures. These mechanisms are often hampered by unclear mandates, lack of staff and training data, and insufficient resources and support from national political leadership (Amanyano Media Service, 1999: 35).

South Africa, in its endeavour of setting up mechanisms to promote women's advancement, came up with legislations such as, among others, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) and the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act 55 of 1998).

2.5.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)

Most, if not all Constitutions seek to protect and promote equality as their guiding principles. Given the historical context in which the South African constitution came into being, it is not surprising that it exhibits the same general trend in giving pride of place to equality. Since affirmative action deals with different precepts of equality, which in turn are based on some pre-legal intuition of fairness, the equality and affirmative action provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 seem to be pre-eminently suited for this sort of interpretive endeavour.

Equality in the Constitution is limited to the quality provisions contained in Section 9 of the

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996). Section 9 reads as follows:

"Equality

1.   Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.

2.   Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all the rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination, may be taken.

3.   The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth."
(Constitution of RSA, 1996).

2.5.2 The Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act 55 of 1998)

The main purpose of the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998) is to achieve equity in the workplace, by promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.

The Act regards equity as necessary because of the past discrimination (as well as the present inequalities which have emanated from past discrimination) and to ensure diversity

in the workplace. Unfair discrimination based on race and gender is seen as the local areas of rectification. In view of the authors of the Green Paper (Dept of Labour, 1996: 6), employment equity centres on:

- The eradication of unfair discrimination of any kind in hiring, promotion, training, pay, benefits and retrenchments; and

- Measures to encourage employers to undertake institutional transformation to remove unjustified barriers to employment for all South African's and to accelerate training and promotion for individuals from historically disadvantaged groups.

The objective of achieving overall social and economic equality, if is acknowledged, can only be achieved if the interventions imposed on employers will enhance productivity, democracy and diversity.

Pons as **quoted** by Louw (2000: 26) is of the opinion that the core proposals for employment equity set forth in the Act are to aim at transformation of the workplace. They establish a continuous process of human resource development with ethos of equity for all. Ultimately, employment equity will form an integral part of the strategy and culture of every employing institution, and of the country as a whole. It becomes a leading goal in practices around human resource development.

Pons as **quoted** by Louw (2000: 26) also indicates that the policy proposals presented in the Act are aimed at the elimination of all forms of discrimination in the labour market.

Discrimination in the labour market occurs in the:

- Procedures for hiring, promotion, selection for training, transfers and retrenchments;

- Institution of work and training that ignores or punishes diversity;
- Inequalities in pay and benefits for equal work (Louw, 2000: 26).

Chapter two of this Act stipulates that no person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee in any employment policy or practice, one or more grounds including race, gender, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language, and birth (Employment Equity Act, 1998).

Chapter three of the Act talks about affirmative action measures. It says:

"(a)   Affirmative action measures are measures intended to ensure that suitably qualified employees from designated groups have equal employment opportunity and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels of the workplace.

(b)   Such measures must include:

- identification and elimination of barriers with an adverse impact on designated groups;
- measures which promote diversity;
- making reasonable accommodation for people from designated groups;
- retention, development and training of designated groups (including skills development); and
- preferential treatment and numerical goals to ensure equitable representation." (Employment Equity Act, 1998).

This Act in the main affirms feminism theories. The core of all feminism theories articulates that men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially. Amazon feminism focuses on physical equality and is opposed to gender role stereotypes

and discrimination against women based on assumption that women are supposed to be, look, or behave as if they are passive, weak and physically helpless. Cultural feminism, on the other hand, is the theory that wants to overcome sexism by celebrating women's special qualities, women's way, and women's experiences, often believing that the "women's way" is the better way. Eco-feminism rests on the basic principle that patriarchial philosophies are harmful to women, and other living things. Individual feminism primary focus is individual autonomy, rights, liberty, independence and diversity. While radical feminism attempts to draw lines between biologically-determined behavior and cultural-determined behavior in order to free both men and women as much as possible from their previous narrow gender roles.

2.6   STUDIES THAT HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED AROUND THIS PROBLEM

Studies around the role of women in top management positions, found interesting discoveries and these will be discussed hereunder:

2.6.1 Inequality in women's access to, and participation in, economic structures and policies

In South Africa women are mainly absent from economic decision-making including the formulation of financial, monetary, commercial policies, and tax systems. Economic structures and policies have a direct impact on women and men's access to economic resources, their economic power, and consequently the extent of equality between them in the family and society as a whole. (South African Women on the Road to Development, Equality and Peace, 1995: 39.)

A survey in 1999 on the top 100 companies in South Africa found that women comprised 36.6% of the workforce but only 13% of management. In business, women tend to hold the less well-paid and less powerful administrative posts. Women make up 43% of all

administrative workers. (Umanyano Media Service, 1999: 24.)

In the public sector this is also the case. For example, in the police service the main criteria for advancement is experience in a number of assignments. Very often women officers are placed in administrative posts which place them on interior career paths. This means women are largely confined to the lower ranks. (Umanyano Media Service, 1999: 26.) Gender segregated employment is still the main pattern in the economy, and gaps between women and man's pay for work of equal value is the trend in the public and private sectors (Umanyano Media Service, 1999: 27). Women have the lowest paid and vast skilled jobs. Women are more likely to be employed in temporary, casual or part-time positions which are less well-paid, less secure and enjoy fewer benefits. (Umanyano Media Service, 1999: 28.)

Discrimination in education and training, hiring and pay, promotion, inflexible working conditions, lack of access to productive resources, lack of sharing of family responsibilities, and lack of child care services continue to restrict women in their economic opportunities and mobility (Umanyano Media Service, 1999:24).

Women's contributions and concerns, according to South African Women on the Road to Development, Equality and Peace (1995: 39), are often ignored in economic structures, such as financial markets and institutions, labour markets, the academic discipline of economics, taxation and social security systems. As a result many policies and programmes continue to contribute to the inequalities between men and women. Employment creation strategies have tended to focus on traditional male occupations and sectors.

Umanyano Media Service (1999: 25) further says that women are active in many economic areas ranging from wage labour, subsistence farming, to the informal sector. But legal and customary barriers to ownership of, and access to land, natural resources, capital, credit,

technology and other means of production, and wage differentials contribute to impeding women's economic progress.

2.6.2 Inequality between men and women in sharing of power and decision-making at all levels

South Africa has over a hundred women in Parliament and according to Umanyano Media Service (1999: 31) so has one of the highest percentages of women parliamentarians in the world. But in terms of government alone, women are under-represented among cabinet and deputy ministers. We have also only one woman Director-General and only one woman Provincial Premier (Free State Province) out of nine provinces. There are only four ambassadors. And yet women make up half of the electorate of the country. (Umanyano Media Service, 1999:31.)

There are at least as many women employed in the South African public service as men, but very few of these women are in the upper, decision-making and powerful echelons of bureaucracy, and there is a virtual absence of black women.

In civil society women are not organised or recognised as a political force like labour, business or the civics. Further, women are almost invisible and voiceless at the key leadership and policy-making levels within these sectors (South African Women on the Road to Development, Equality and Peace, 1995: 39).

Many factors contribute to women's invisibility at all leadership levels. The unequal division of domestic responsibilities limits women's potential to find the time and to develop the skills needed for participation in decision-making in wider public forums. Women's lack of confidence and public exposure due to interior education and training possibilities, and a lack of a supportive and encouraging environment to develop leadership qualities, all contribute to the lack of women leaders (Umanyano Media Service, 1999: 31).

2.6.3 Women and Human Rights in South Africa

The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Beijin in 1995, affirms that the human rights of women and the girl-child are an integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal enjoyment of all universal human rights and basic freedoms by women and girls is a requirement in international law and essential for the advancement of women. (South African Women on the Road to Development, Equality and Peace, 1995: 39).

Every person should be entitled to participate, enjoy and contribute to cultural, economic, political and social development. In South Africa women and girls suffer discrimination in the allocation of economic and social resources. This violates their economic, social and cultural rights.

In South Africa the girl-child is discriminated against from conception, through her childhood and into adulthood. Girls are often treated as inferior and socialised to put themselves last which undermines their self-esteem. Gender-biased education, including curricular, educational materials and practices, and teachers' attitudes all reinforce gender inequalities. (South African Women on the Road to Development, Equality and Peace, 1995: 50.)

The percentage of girls in secondary school is very low, and girls are not encouraged, or given the opportunity to pursue technological training and education. This limits the knowledge they need in their daily lives and in employment opportunities. (South African Women on the Road to Development, Equality and Peace, 1995: 50.)

Usually women are given middle and lower ranks in job situations because they are regarded as inferior to men. Even if given a higher position, they are not paid the same salary as their male counterparts. In the corporate world men are still regarded as

superior. (South African Women on the Road to Development, Equality and Peace, 1995: 51.)

2.6.4 The gender equity demands

The demand for gender equity should be located in an historical context. Women played a crucial role in the liberation movement through their own organisations, and obtained a degree of recognition regarding their right to do so. The presence of women in Parliament indicated this. Women struggled against unjust laws, and various aspects of segregation and the apartheid regime, but their efforts were largely subsumed under the national struggle. Today, their overall contribution has rightly been recognised.

More than 40 years ago, in April 1954, women of all ethnic groups who attended a meeting of the Federation of South African Women considered the Woman's Charter drawn up by the Federation's leaders. According to Cheryl Walker (1982: 157), the Charter:

> *"...made [it] clear that 'the struggle to emancipate women from discriminatory laws and freedom cannot be won for any one section or for the people as a whole as long as we women are in bondage'."*

Walker (1982: 158) asserted that the charter "was a more coherent and sophisticated statement... than many who endorsed it would have made themselves". She (Walker, 1982: 158) continued that:

> *"... at the same time most delegates accepted without question that women's primary identification would be with the home and issues related to that."*

In other words there was a lag between the way in which women identified their basic needs in relation to familial responsibilities and the demand for equality: their practical, familial interests and responsibilities were emphasised, and not their strategic needs.

Demands for equality were, however, reflected in the Freedom Charter of 1955, which called, among other things, for women's rights to education and jobs.

2.6.5 Recent political interventions

Moving to direct political interventions from 1990 onwards, regarding transformation of the education system, it is worth noting that the National Education Policy Initiatives (NEPI) published what has become known as the NEPI Reports in 1993. The reports were remarkable in their overall failure seriously to address issues related to sexism.

According to Report on the Gender Equity Task Team (1997: 25) this may well be the result of the enormity of NEPI's task, which involved deconstructing the legacy of systematic exclusion - particularly of Africans - from the education system and the devastation inflicted on the country by years of apartheid.

Unfortunately the specificity of the problems relating to girls and women became absorbed into the overall problem of most of the working parties, which probably assumed that working towards equity would somehow deal with the inequities that operate between the genders. A group of women examined gender differences, but their report was not included in the final NEPI publications. Eventually the findings by Kate Truscott were published separately by the University of the Witwatersrand and National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) (Wolpe *et al.*, 1997: 25).

This omission was partially redressed by the ANC's Education and Training Policy (CEPD 1994), which identified women as part of the "most neglected and marginalised group". In spite of this recognition, the document appeared bound by rhetoric. There was no clarity as to how issues would be addressed, as was apparent when notions regarding the development of skills and resources for learning, among other things, were discussed (African National Congress, 1990: 22).

2.7   CONCLUSION

Statutory intervention, to enforce affirmative action aimed at redressing past imbalances that were a direct result of past discrimination in South Africa and Employment Equity preventing future discrimination, is a reality in South African Public Service. Issues related to affirmative action and employment equity in terms of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, the Employment Equity Act, 1998 and the Occupational Equity Bill were also identified and discussed in this chapter.

The literature reviewed indicates that although there has been a substantial progress in closing the gap in managerial and professional jobs, the glass ceiling of women in management has not yet been aptly broken. That most female managers are still barred from the top levels of organizations worldwide, whether in the private, public or political sectors.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Since the researcher wanted to find out why is there lack of women in senior positions at the University of the north, a qualitative approach was adopted. Furthermore, since the researcher wanted to gain an in-depth and a holistic understanding of what the position of women in top management posts at the University of the North is, a case study design was chosen for use in this study.

3.2 DEFINITION OF RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design provides the glue that holds the research project together. A design is used to structure the research, to show how all of the major parts of the research project - the samples or groups, measures, treatments or programs, and methods of assignment - work together to try to address the central research questions (Trochim, 2000).

As LeCompte and Preissle (1993: 30) point out, a research design broadly conceived, involves issues like research questions and purpose, the information most appropriate to answer specific research questions, and most effective strategies for obtaining information. They are supported by Yin (1994: 20) who points out that *"Another way of thinking about a research design is as a 'blueprint' of research, dealing with at least four problems: what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect, and how to analyze the results"*.

This study utilises a case study approach as already mentioned above. This is an

approach in which the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon (the case) bounded by time and activity and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time as suggested by Merriam (1997) and Yin (1989). This study is mainly qualitative in nature in the sense that I used open-ended interviews and semi-structured interviews. This is confirmed by Verma and Mallick (1998: 20) when they argue that a qualitative study has a focus but that focus is initially broad and open-ended, allowing for more important meanings to be discovered. Since qualitative research is interpretative in nature I was aware of the threats of biases such as self-fulfilling prophecy, values and judgement that may threaten the validity of the result. Qualitative research often requires fieldwork, that is, physically going to people in order to observe or record behaviour. In this case selected managers were interviewed.

The purpose of this study is to show that women are under-represented because of a perception of women as inferior human beings.

3.3   QUALITATIVE APPROACH

As LeCompte and Preissle (1993: 30) point out, the distinguishing features of a qualitative approach are that it is flexible and facilitates the developmental process of investigation. In this study it helped the researcher to be flexible both before and throughout the actual research process and be able to observe the participants in the setting (30 Black women within the University of the North) which is described in this chapter.

The researcher was therefore not bound by preconceived ideas which she had of the settings before entering the field as Taylor and Bogdan (1984: 16) point out "*Until we enter the field, we do not know what questions to ask or how to ask them*".

Furthermore, as Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 6) point out, this approach helps the researcher to interact with the participants in their context and in the process develop an

understanding of the particular setting. It also helps the researcher to interact with the participants, and in the process, develop rapport and trust with the participants. The participants therefore become more open and no longer treats the researcher as a complete stranger during field work.

The University of the North was selected as a case to be studied which makes a case study approach the most logical. In the section below, I will discuss the nature of the case study methodology with reference to recent studies.

3.3.1 Case study design

A case study is viewed differently by different authors, (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). Yin (1994: 12) reflects on these differences when he points out that some authors confuse case study with ethnographic studies while others confuse it with participant observation.

The differences are seen when looking at the explanations of a case study as given by the different authors. Dane (1990: 113) describes it as an intensive study which involves a single participant over an extended period of time, while Bell (1996: 8), sees it as a study which focuses on one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time scale. LeCompte and Preissle (1993: 32), when referring to Merriam and Stake, explain it by separating "*case*" and "*study*" where case is the number of units (which is one) to be studied.

Yin (1994: 13), unlike the other authors as stated above, adds another dimension by indicating that this kind of a study investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context, especially where the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. In other words, it enables the researcher to have an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon by going into the setting and interact with the participants in the setting so as to understand the meanings of their actions. For example, unless the researcher

attends an interview, she might not understand why certain decisions are taken by the panel.

Despite the differences involved in defining case study design, there are certain key features which distinguish it from other research designs.

3.3.1.1 Logic or structure of case study design

Yin (1993: 32-35) refers to the following features that characterise a case study design. He outlines them as: identifying the major unit of analysis for the case study, deciding whether a single case or multiple cases should be the subject of study, specifying how the single or multiple cases are to be selected and choosing between at least two different data collection strategies which are a one-time data collection effort and on-site observation for an extended period of time.

3.3.1.2 Different traditions of case study design

There are different traditions of case studies which are used in research. According to Yin (1994: 1):

> As a research strategy, the case study is used in many situations, including:
> * Policy, political science, and public administration research
> * Community psychology and sociology
> * Organizational and management studies
> * City and regional planning research, such as studies of plans, neighborhoods, or public agencies
> * The conduct of dissertations and theses in the social sciences - the academic disciplines as well as professional fields such as business administration, management science, and social work.

Other fields which use case studies, are Education, Law, Medicine and Economics. Some fields, especially in the social sciences as Yin (1994: 12) points out, initially did not

consider case studies as a formal research strategy, but due to some advantages (which have been outlined below) associated with case studies, they are gradually adopting case study approaches in their research.

It should, however, be pointed out, that there are some differences in these fields in terms of their use of case study methodology. Yin (1994: 45) refers to these as follows:

> *In some fields, multiple-case studies have been considered a different "methodology" than single-case studies. For example, both anthropology and political science have developed one set of rationales for doing single-case studies and a second set for doing what have been considered "comparative" (or multiple-case) studies.*

Single-case studies in anthropology are done in order to unravel what Fetterman (2000: 23) refers to as the *"Anthropological culture system"*, which has the following features, *"phenomenology"*, *"holism"*, *"non-judgemental orientation"* and *"contextualization"*. This means that the researcher is guided by the insider's view point while looking at the relationship between the minute and the whole in the setting. Furthermore, the researcher should avoid making preconceived value judgements and always attempt to put data in its context. It emphasises in-depth studies of single cultures in order to have detailed description of facts.

Multiple-case studies are an endeavour to move towards generalising the findings using the case study approach by comparing different sites. According to Firestone and Heriot in Fetterman (2000: 68), this endeavour to generalise has its own problem. The problem is that in trying to generalise, there is a temptation of paying less attention to the in-depth description of the setting. This is usually the tension which is found in case studies.

However, it should also be pointed out that there are several criticisms of the case study

approach. McClintock, Brannon and Maynard-Moody in Van Maanen (1999: 156) outline these criticisms by indicating that it is difficult "*to identify and sample a reasonable number of theoretically meaningful units of analysis within a case*". "*It sacrifices breadth for depth*". According to Smith and Robbins in Fetterman (2000: 115), its flexibility make it "*idiosyncratic and irrelevant to particular policy questions*". Furthermore, "*finished case-studies tend to be lengthy, detailed and cumbersome to read*". "*Few people are willing to invest their time to digest a case study when its generalizability and pertinence to immediate issues are uncertain*".

While referring to Atkinson and Delamont, McNiff (1993: 17) criticises the application of a case study approach in educational research by indicating that it does not have "*rigour and recognisable methodology*". "*The 'case' itself is often ill-defined*" and that it is "*more appropriate to sociological issues than educational*". It also "*does not encourage the teacher to review his own practice*".

Beside the above criticisms the case study design was found to be most appropriate for investigating the present problem because of the following reasons:

- ► It allowed the researcher to interact with the respondents more closely and thus being able to hear the views from their own perspective. It gave the researcher inside-view; which could not be possible by the survey design.

- ► It allowed the researcher to gather in-depth data because of the focus on a single entity. Had I used any other design, for example, survey, I could not have been able to reach to the depth of issues as I was able to do through this design.

- ► The nature of the problem, viz. the role of women in top management positions at the University of the North could not be easily tackled through any other design because it required building relationships with the respondents in order to

understand other dynamics and nuances that are unique to it (problem).

3.3.1.3   Multiple sources of evidence

Even though a case study has its criticisms, it also has advantages. Beside the advantages outlined below, it encourages triangulation as a methodological principle. It encourages the use of multiple sources of evidence which in turn contributes towards the validity and the reliability of the study. Hakim (1996: 63) emphasises this point when she writes:

> *Whether the case study is descriptive, explanatory, or is concerned with rigorous tests of received ideas, the use of multiple sources of evidence and, very often, multiple investigators makes the case study one of the most powerful research designs. The fieldwork for case studies may incorporate the analysis of administrative records and other documents, depth interviews ... participant and non-participant observation and collecting virtually any type of evidence that is relevant and available.*

This methodological principle guided the researcher in this study, to use different methods of data collection which have been explained below.

Beside the criticisms outlined above, I am also aware of some of the limitations of a case study design. The following are some of the weaknesses which the researcher took cognisance of.

3.3.1.4   Limitations of a case study

▶   The generalisation of findings to other cases is problematic;

▶   The researcher might give bias outcomes by using a case in which the findings can

be fairly predictable;

- ▸ Bias and distortion can also be introduced during observation and in the interpretation of data;
- ▸ Case studies may take too long and result in massive and unreadable documents. (Yin, 1994: 10).

Limitations notwithstanding, there are certain advantages which, according to me, far outweigh the limitations.

3.5.1.5 Advantages of a case study

There are a number of advantages of case study design, which make it one of the most used designs in research. Some of them are:

- ▸ It helps the researcher to cover the contextual conditions of the phenomenon under investigation (Yin, 1994: 13).
- ▸ It helps the researcher to have a holistic and an embedded investigation of the phenomenon (Yin, 1994: 41 - 42).
- ▸ Case studies can be used to form a database for further refining methodological and substantive issues (Yin, 1993: 41).
- ▸ It helps the researcher to be flexible during the research process (Yin, 1993: 41)
- ▸ It can be used as a tool to conduct evaluations (Yin, 1993: 55).
- ▸ It helps the researcher to use various methods of data collection (Hakim, 1987: 63).
- ▸ It helps the researcher to study one aspect of the problem in some depth within a limited time scale (Bell, 1993: 8).

3.4 THEORETICAL APPROACH

I used a critical feminist approach to the study. I used this approach specifically because

the impression is being created that equal opportunities are governing the employment field and that therefore men and women have equal access to management positions. In reality this seems to be not the case. I therefore used a feminist approach to find out what the real situation was.

Usher and Johnston (1997: 121) said that in their view "feminism's most important contribution has been to ask that we all recast the way we understand the nature and product of knowledge". I want to content that in the context of my study the nature of knowledge refers to recruitment and selection processes and that it is important not to take them as they are presented but to recast them as they are found to be in practice. To do this, feminist research proves to be a useful tool because, according to Usher (1998: 129) it:

> "has the potential both to express and to uncover relations of dominance. All types of feminism are attempting to show how gender relations operate in favour of a male hegemony"

3.5   SAMPLE

Because of Voluntary Severance Package (VSP) and retrenchments embarked-on by the University of the North, in the process of restructuring, the envisaged number (54) of women to be included in the study could not be reached. A total population of 30 women and 10 men within the University of the North was as a result sampled.

The focus in these black women was to acquire their views concerning the lack of representation of women in top management positions.

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3.6 COLLECTION OF DATA

Data were collected by means of three methods, viz. from documents, from people through interviews and from people by Observation.

3.6.1 Collection of data from documents

The first and a major part of the investigation involved the studying of documents. I perused the following documents: Advertisements, Person and Job Specifications, Personnel Policy and Procedures (PPP), Memorandums, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Employment Equity Act by means of content analysis. The purpose for this was to find out if whatever appears in these documents is applicable in practice, particularly at the University of the North.

Content analysis was used because of its "potential to disclose many 'hidden' aspects of what is being communicated through the written text" (Neuendorf, 2001: 324). May (1997: 164) supports this view by observing "documents might be interesting for what they leave out, as well as what they contain". Looking at what was in the text as well as possible omission, was my first guiding principle. The second was based on Anderson's assertion that one of the uses of content analysis is "to evaluate bias, prejudice or progress in printed material" **quoted** in Verma and Mallick, 1999: 114). I wanted to look at bias against women in the documents I studied.

I scanned the documents I collected for specific themes and words that in my understanding, gained from reading the literature, signified some form of discrimination against women. I set out to see whether or not the selection process discriminates against women in management positions and there was a chance that I would "read" discrimination in every document that I looked at. I tried to counter the possibility of bias by taking not into consideration Blaxter *et al.*'s cautioning that "*document, whatever their nature, cannot*

*be taken on face value. They are artificial and partial accounts, which need to be **critically assessed** for research purposes*" (Blaxter, *et al.*, 2001: 187).

3.6.2 Collection of data from people through interviews

The second part of the study comprised interviews. I used the interview because Blaxter, *et al.* (1996: 153) convinced me that "*it can be a very useful technique for collecting data which would be unlikely to be accessible using techniques such as observation or questionnaires*". I was also guided by Descombe's (1990: 110) observation that "*the research would be better served by getting material which provides more of an in-depth insight into the topic, drawing on information provided by fewer informants*". I was able to explore, in detail and in-depth, specific issues related to recruitment and selection practices. I used a semi-structured interview, asking questions around issues related to the gender make-up of senior management at the University of the North, advertisements, selection committees, selection procedures and selection tests. (See annexure A).

I approached all the interviewees, the Deans of Faculties, Directors of Schools, Executive Directors, Heads of various Sections, Assistant Registrars and Principal Administrative Officers heading the Schools' Administration. The problem I encountered at this point was that most of these people were occupied with some other obligations. The Executive Deans, the Directors of Schools, the Executive Directors, the Assistant Registrars and the heads of various sections were constantly in meetings while the Principal Administrative Officers were busy with registration. I ultimately managed to make appointments with them for the interviews. The purpose was to get their feelings with regard to the lack of women in senior positions. The other reason was to get some inputs from them on how this problem can be resolved.

3.6.3 Collection of data by observation

The University Draft Policy on Affirmative action was observed. The purpose for this was to see how promotion and recruitment of women in top positions unfolded. The researcher attended one interview to observe how women faired when pitted with men. The main purpose for this was to look into the selection practices for senior management appointments at the University of the North and their impact on the position of women.

The researcher also checked the University Personnel Policy and Procedures (PPP) to see if this document is implemented where women are concerned. The main purpose of this perusal was to check if the document caters for promotions of women into top management positions at Unin.

3.7   CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the methodology strategy that was followed in this study. The chapter indicated the design, sampling and data collection methods that was used. Both design and methods of data collection were found to be appropriate to the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter links with the previous chapter on the investigation of women's under-representation in managerial positions. Relevant literature was reviewed. At this stage, the empirical research will provide a presentation of the findings based on the data.

4.2   PRESENTATION OF DATA

The main focus here will be on the analysis and presentation of the responses obtained from the research participants. This analysis and presentation of data will be done in sections, namely:

4.2.1 Analysis and presentation of data from documents;
4.2.2 Analysis and presentation of data from interviews; and
4.2.3 Analysis and presentation of data by observation.

4.2.1 Analysis and presentation of data from documents

Advertisements are the first indication that institutions are looking to fill vacant top positions. They are published internally and in newspapers and are thus public documents. Everyone has access to them and the accompanying documents. The assumption is that all people attached to educational or education related institutions and others in the job market will read and interpret them in the same way. This is so because the language is taken to be neutral and universal.

I looked at advertisements for vacant positions for senior management appointments at the University of the North, i.e. Executive Deans (three posts) and Executive Directors of School (eleven posts).

Using my theoretical approach, namely, critical feminism based on standpoint theory, I tried to understand the hidden meanings of the advertisements. I also looked at what was left out of the advertisements. I looked specifically at the post advertised, the person specification and the stated salary. I further looked at what the advertisements said they were expecting the persons to do. Lastly, I looked at responsibilities, qualifications and experience, application procedures and whether or not the advertisements and/or documents mention that the institution was an equal opportunity employer. My first aim was to build up a picture of the kind of person the institution seems to be looking for when trying to fill vacant senior positions; in other words what message(s) are sent out by advertisements for senior management appointments. Gray's (2001: 80) observation that "procedures are seen as neutral, independent and abstract, but in practice, they exclude and devalue some behaviours and experiences while including and valuing others", guided my interrogation of these documents. Like him, I felt that these procedures require closer scrutiny in order to establish their fairness or not.

My observation and contention regarding the documents is that the language is not neutral and universal. Feminism helped me to make this observation. It was particularly feminism's exposition of deconstruction that was helpful in this regard. Hekman and Flax, for example, observed that:

> *"in deconstruction of notions of reason, knowledge and self, their gendered nature is revealed and concepts which had been seemingly neutral and universal are by association masculine" (Usher, 1998: 126).*

I used the observation, substituted "reason, knowledge and self" with language and deconstructed the language.

I believe that it is important to focus on language in this dissertation for as Spender (1998) observes that it is through language *"that the world becomes comprehensible and meaningful, that we bring into existence the world in which we live"* (Spender, 1998: 3).

The other reason is to ensure that the language used in the documents is of a standard nature in the context of recruitment. This became clear to me while reading the advertisements although this was confusing at times. Some passages seemed repetitive, often the differences could be located in their contexts. An example of this can be seen on Annexures C and D. Second paragraph, first sentence of Annexure C and the last sentence on Annexure D, referring to the ideal candidates, says: *"... should be established scholars in an appropriate discipline, who enjoy credibility with their peers"*.

The advertisement also states that *"among the qualities sought, are high-level managerial skills and proven ability to provide leadership in a complex environment"* (Annexure C, second paragraph). As it is known that women are still acquiring experience where managerial skills are concerned, the wording to me has a decidedly masculine undertone.

Gold (1998: 20) suggests that when language is from a powerful discourse, it may disempower *"the very people you would like to encourage to apply"*. She gives as example of words, from a powerful discourse, e.g. *"'thrusting and dynamic', intelligent', 'high-archiving', 'proven record of success', and 'good track record'"* (Gold, 1998: 20), which are very similar to the ones I have painted out here.

I want to argue that this masculinity can work against women in various ways. In recruitment and selection for example it works in a particular way.

The second document that I perused was the University's Personnel Policy and Procedures (PPP). The PPP discriminates against women in that C2.6 (a) stipulates that "*a married woman shall be appointed in a temporary capacity and an unmarried female officer, whose services are retained after marriage, shall be re-appointed in a temporary capacity*" (The Act of the University of the North, 1997). This clause indicates that the university does not recognise married women as potential service providers, that is why they can only be appointed on temporary basis. When an unmarried woman gets married she loses her permanent position. The reality is in contrary with what PPP says.

PPP further stipulates on C2.8 and 9 that "*in filling a post or making an appointment, proper account shall be taken of the qualifications, relative meritoriousness, ability and suitability of the persons considered for promotion, transfer in terms of regulation C4 or appointment*" (The Act of the University of the North, 1997). C2.9 says: "*notwithstanding the provisions of sub-regulations 7 and 8 a post can be filled by:*

a) *the promotion of an officer or employee or **his** transfer in terms of regulation C4*" (The Act of the University of the North, 1997).

When one reads C2.8 one gets the impression that the University, when making appointments, looks at one's qualifications, relative meritoriousness, ability and suitability of the incumbent and not the sex of a person. But if one read further on C2.9 then the clause clearly indicates that the clauses refers to males (**his**) and not females.

The PPP does not come up clearly or indicate the University stance on women and affirmative action.

The third document I perused was the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). The Constitution emphasizes equality for all. According to Section 9 of the Constitution, equality includes full and equal enjoyment of all the rights and freedoms. It

promotes the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.

Although the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is clear where equality is concerned, the University of the North still have to make effort to eradicate inequality, particularly where women are concerned.

I also perused the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998). The purpose of this Act is to promote equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination. In order to redress the disadvantaged in employment, the Act further encourages the implementation of affirmative action to ensure that the designated groups are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workplace.

The University of the North (Unin) has to try by all means to implement the Employment Equity Act. At Unin there is no equity in the top management because the top management is composed of men only. Although the University drafted a policy/plan on Equity, it is amazing to note that during its recent restructuring process, women were not represented at executive posts of directors and deans. From the configured three faculties none of the deans is a women, and from the eleven schools that the University now boost of only two women were appointed to the positions of directors of schools. This poses a challenge to the University. Post of the said executives were advertised and it was the responsibility of the University to make sure that when appointments were made women should be considered. Unless women are given equal opportunities as their male counterparts the struggle for equity will never be overcomed.

4.2.2 Analysis and presentation of data from interviews

For interviews I constructed an interview schedule (See annexure A and B). The interview schedule consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The closed-ended

ones were mainly aimed at gathering information, such as how many people serve on selection committees. The majority of the questions were open-ended, giving me the chance to get the respondents "*to answer in as much detail as he or she wishes without any excessive probing*" (Verma and Mallick, 1999: 118). All the interviews took place in the offices of the interviewees. Each interview was divided into two parts, general and institutional. The general section tried to obtain data on the interviewees' awareness of the situation related to women in senior management at the University of the North around areas such as advertisements of the positions, the selection procedures, the gender make-up of selection committees and the role of external agencies in the recruitment and selection processes. I asked the same questions regarding the institution's practices and where I was aware that the institution had just completed the selection of a senior manager, I based the questions on the filling of such post. There was also a section for people to add additional comments regarding the study.

My aim with the interviews was to establish the people's perceptions of the representation of women in senior management at the University of the North as well as the recruitment and selection process for senior management appointments.

The presence of women on selection committees can have a real impact on peoples' perceptions of the selection processes. The respondent in favour of a gender balance or selection committees brought this issue out.

It was interesting to note that three male respondents out of five did not think that it mattered how many men and women served on selection committees. I think this might point out to their perception that these processes are gender neutral. One did, however, concede that it was a good public relations exercise to put women on the committee. But the majority of the interviewees indicated that selection is quite objective even though they did not say so.

I gained the impression from this discussion that most respondents are aware of the under-representation of women in senior management within the University of the North. I detected a gender difference in the perceptions about this under-representation. Men thought that women had made much more progress than what the statistics prove. Women, on the other hand, seemed to be much more concerned about the situation.

This discussion also seems to imply that recruitment and selection processes as well as culture might be the major reason for women's under-representation in senior management. This may be so but I want to argue that this is just part of the explanation.

At this point I want to emphasise that expectations in terms of experience are high according to some of the interviewees. It seems candidates are expected to have managed at senior levels, to have published extensively, to have controlled large budgets (mostly research related). To gain this experience, turns out to be a difficult task. Some of the interviewees pointed out that women tend to be in part-time positions, have career breaks for family reasons and are not promoted easily for the same reason. Their contention was echoed by Britton's (1999) assertion that women's "careers are more likely to be built around part-time, flexible working patterns" (Britton, 1999: 73). It is clear that to gain the experience, people need specific skills. These are skills that have to be developed over a long time. And if women do take career breaks and have to work part-time, they would not have had the time to develop these skills.

Although women are seen as lacking where skills are concerned and are not promoted easily, cultural feminism believe that women have special qualities and that women's way is the better way. This theory asserts that there are fundamental personality difference between men and women, and that women's differences are special and should be celebrated. This theory believe that sexism could be subdued and women be treated equally as their counterparts.

Experience also comes from occupying specific positions. Walton (1992) reported Baroness Perry as having said that professorships are "the natural breeding ground for the post of vice-chancellor" (Walton, 1992: 78). To reach the position of professor requires that academics get the necessary promotions at the right time. With women being in part-time positions and having career breaks, they are not easily promoted.

4.2.3 Analysis and presentation of data by observation

What I observed was that most women are discouraged from applying for higher position because of the composition of the adverts. The University has not come up with mechanism of encouraging women to apply and compete for managerial positions.

I also observed that the University of the North interview panels were composed mainly of men. Although most women have not long been exposed to top managerial positions, what I observed from the behaviour of the two women executive directors of schools, about how they go about their business, made me realise that they are very professional and can hold their turf when matched with their male counterparts. I also noticed the same from the executive director: Public Affairs. She is also a professional where her work is concerned. This is based on the fact that after she took over the position many changes that benefit the university were observed, for example, recruitment of students, participation in the Polokwane Show, career exhibitions within the university to acquire students, and many others.

Another observation was that most of middle management positions are occupied by women. In the three Dean's offices there are three Assistant Registrars. Two are females while one is a male. The highest position of a senior person in the eleven Schools administration is held by a Principal Administrative Officer. Of these eleven Principal Administrative Officers only two are held by males.

The most important observation I made is that the University of the North is still far from redressing the imbalance of the previously disadvantaged groups, particularly women. Wirth (2001:255) says that International Labour Organization examined the range of jobs where women are in demand. It found few women in senior positions that involve revenue-generating responsibilities usually leading to executive posts. In 1999, men held 93,8% of such positions. That although women are often better qualified than men, their average pay is invariably less. In the US, a gab of 16% exists between the earnings of the average male and female. The divide is 15% in the UK, 12% in Australia and 35% in Finland while the gap is 0% in South Africa (Wirth, 2001: 256).

Recently the University configured eight Faculties into three Faculties and eleven Schools. From the configured three Faculties not even a single woman was appointed for deanship position. This was because women were afraid to apply because they thought they lacked experience required for the position as stated in the advertisement. Furthermore, from the eleven Schools that the University now boosts of, only two are headed by women. Further, from four administrative executive directors, only one is a female.

4.3   CONCLUSION

The data collected support the view that women are less represented when coming to executive posts. The data therefore fully indicate that men do in fact outnumber women in high positions.

Analysing data from documents one realise that the language is not neutral and universal. Observing the PPP I realised that the document does not come up clearly regarding the University stance on women and affirmative action.

When analysing data from interviews the impression I gained was that most respondents were aware of the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions. I also

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detected a gender difference in the perceptions about the underrepresentation. Men were of the opinion that women had made much more progress than what the statistics provide. Women, on the other hand, seemed to be much more concerned about the situation.

When I analysed data by observation the most important observation was that the University of the North is still far from redressing the imbalance of the previously disadvantaged groups, particularly women. This conclusion was made when I realise that although the University had recently configured eight Faculties into three Faculties no woman was appointed for deanship position. Furthermore, from the eleven Schools that the University now boosts of, only two are headed by women.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter intends to discuss the interpretation of data after the research undertaken. There is depressing evidence to suggest that many institutions including the University of the North still regard women as unequal to men.

Research shows that although women are catching up with and overtaking men in educational attainment and constitute a growing proportion of the workforce, the gap is widening when it comes to promotion to Chief Executive Officer's and boardroom posts.

The interpretation of data will be presented under the following headings:

5.2.   Leadership qualities are gendered;
5.3   Stereotypes gender roles; and
5.4   Women experience oppression in different ways in the society.

5.2   LEADERSHIP QUALITIES ARE GENDERED

Leadership qualities are gendered because I detected a gender difference about the underrepresentation during interviews. Men were of the opinion that women had made much more progress than what the statistics supply and they still think that leadership belongs to them and not women. While on the other hand, women seemed to be much more concerned about the prevailing situation.

The gender stereotypes of women as warm, nurturing, and caring and the corresponding stereotype of men as cold, competitive, and authoritarian may contribute to a popular myth that women are less effective than men in leadership positions. However, this is just a myth. Women are equally effective as both they possess qualifications equaled to both, unless the leadership role is gendered social and people allow traditional social roles to influence leaders effectiveness.

With regard to how leadership qualities are gendered, according to Masizwa (2000: 6), research has shown that traditional managerial roles are sex-typed as masculine. Traits associated with leadership are stereotypically deemed to be handed by man. These findings support the claim that managerial positions are widely perceived as being aligned with stereotypical characteristics (Masizwa, 2000: 6).

According to my observations, some of the most common barriers that prevent women from advancing into top management positions are:

▸   Gender stereotyping (beliefs about gender)
▸   Gendered leadership roles
▸   Culture trap (living in a patriarchal society)

Some of the interviewees say that in cases where women occupy highly male-dominated leadership roles, they become vulnerable to prejudiced evaluations and lowered effectiveness. In contrast, that perhaps as a result becomes strongly associated with male characteristics, women may display masculine characteristics, women may display with male characteristics to be seen as effective.

Despite recent legislation on Employment Equity (1998) that prohibits discrimination on the side of women, women in the workplace continue to face many problems. Some of the obstacles that hinder the advancement of women into top positions are partly due to the

following as indicated by Masizwa (2000: 8):

▸ Lack of recruitment procedures to specifically attract women;
▸ Lack of corporate development experiences for women; and
▸ Negative attitudes towards women executives by their male colleagues.

5.3   STEREOTYPES GENDER ROLES

Concerning stereotypes gender roles my observation was that the University of the North is still far from redressing the imbalances of the previously disadvantaged groups, particularly women. I came to this observation because during the restructuring of new Faculties no woman was appointed for deanship position. Moreover, from the eleven Schools that the University now boosts of, only two are headed by women.

The research, under men's attitudes in the workplace, revealed that leadership traits are mostly male-dominated (Masizwa, 2000: 7). Women are not taken seriously and are often given boring and unrewarding jobs. They are also ignored and treated as if they are not there. While everyone claims to support gender issues, there is a general lack of sensitivity to women's needs. Equally important is that men often do not see women as equals and many face sexual harassment. Men also feel threatened by women who are assertive and are able to speak their mind. They (men) try to undermine these women because they are afraid of 'losing power'. (Masizwa, 2000: 17.)

When talking about stereotypes gender roles, Masizwa (2000: 19) says that men often have fixed attitudes about what roles men and women should play. He further says that in many cases men do not see women as 'natural leaders'. They use special criteria to exclude women from the main decision making structures simply because they are women. As a result, women often do not develop confidence and are not supported and encouraged leaders (Masizwa, 2000: 19).

When one discusses internal oppression, often women believe that they are not natural leaders. This is because they have accepted the lies and stereotypes about themselves as a group. Women are often divided, do not support each other, and have no confidence. Seldom or not they put themselves forward for leadership positions (Umanyano Media Service, 1999: 32).

Most women workers perform two jobs. One is to earn a living and the other to run a family/home. This is known as a double shift. There is also a sexual division of labour in the workplace. Women are mostly administrators. These bears reference from the eleven Schools where nine Principal Administrative Officers of these Schools are women.

5.4 WOMEN EXPERIENCE OPPRESSION IN DIFFERENT WAYS IN THE SOCIETY

Men still occupy powerful positions in the economy, despite the struggle for gender equality. Women still experience oppression in different ways in the society. Among others is the workplace discrimination. Institutions of higher learning are part of society and are therefore not free from these attitudes and practices. Men need to take up the challenge to transform the system they are part of. (Umanyano Media Service, 1999: 32.)

To be considered for top positions, ideal candidates would have to be successful scholars with extensive publications records and very well connected in national and international academic circles. Women normally do not fit this bill. One needs to stress that women do have experience but that it is different from the male norm, gained through different career paths. Therefore, women, whose career pattens typically differ from those of men, will be placed at a disadvantage.

It also seems that women do not always have the confidence, on the basis of their experience, to apply for top positions. This was observed recently when posts of new deans were advertised at the University of the North and not even one women applied.

The interviewees seemed to stress the fact that women are not there to apply for the advertised positions. One can only guess that it is because women do not deem their experience appropriate. I want to propose that it is not only a matter of women not having the confidence to apply for top posts but also their awareness that their experience is not necessarily valued in the same way as the typical male experience gained through continuous, full-time employment. Women are aware that men's career patterns and experience are taken as the norm and therefore "adopt a certain caution in applying for new jobs or promotion".

The time has arrived for women's experience to be validated and considered appropriate when positions becomes available. At least two respondents out of ten thought that selection procedure might work against women. They referred specifically to the practice of the two-day interview consisting of different activities. They cited activities such as group work where candidates are observed for their contributions and roles in the groups. They felt that women at that stage are at a disadvantage because as said, men tend to dominate in these environments and women are not necessarily confident in these circumstances.

The majority of the interviewees indicated that selection is quite objective even though they did not say so. The respondents generally felt that objectivity in the selection process is manifested in the presence of external resource persons on selection committees. External resource persons are leading professionals in the field of the position for which selection is taking place. The respondents felt that external resource persons bring objectivity to the process because not only do they come with specific expertise but they also bring an outside perspective, and as one respondent put it "they do not have the private baggage of the institution". One needs to be aware that these external persons are experts in their fields or professions, but bearing in mind that men make it easier to the top than women, one has to question what impact the presence of these (mostly male) experts on selection committees have for women aspiring to senior management positions.

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What the interviewees seem to be saying was that the selection process is objective and neutral in that a specific job is advertised and all who meet the objective criteria will be considered for the position. My analysis of the language used in advertisements and the expectations of the candidates, seen as the objective criteria, seem to indicate a different picture.

This study shows that women are still discriminated against. This does not happen only in the job situation but that our culture, black culture, also contributes to discrimination of women. The study shows that women in South Africa are not free. The majority of them live in poverty while many cannot read or write. Discrimination in education and training, hiring and pay, promotion, inflexible working conditions and lack of access to productive resources continue to restrict women in their economic opportunities and mobility.

The study also shows that South Africa has one of the highest percentages of women parliamentarians in the world. There are many women employed in the public service as men, but that very few of these women are in the upper, decision-making and powerful echelons of bureaucracy.

Time has come that the University of the North, like most institutions of Higher Education, should start to comply with the South African legislations such as the Constitution of the Republic of SA (1996) and the Employment Equity Act (1998). These legislations clearly promote women's advancement.

5.5   CONCLUSION

This study implies that men still occupy powerful positions in the economy. Another implication is that women, on the basis of their experience, do not have the confidence to apply for top positions. This seems to be a global problem. It poses a challenge to institutions to redress these imbalances, both in the number of women employed at top management level and the number of women appointed for academic executive posts.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study's purpose was to find out why women were under-represented in top management posts at the University of the North. "Perception of women as inferior human beings is the cause of lack of women in senior positions at Unin" is the hypothesis generated from this study. Conclusion and recommendations will be afforded here under.

6.2 CONCLUSION

This study attempted to investigate whether women were under-represented in top management posts.

In assuming whether woman are underrepresented in top management posts, the hypothesis "women are underrepresented in top management posts at the University of the North due to the perception of women as being inferior human beings" was formulated. The hypothesis could not be rejected. Despite the present legislation, i.e. Employment Equity, women at the University of the North are still under-represented in top management posts although they have the same qualifications as their male counterparts. For example, the current restructuring of the University failed dismally to address the problem of employment equity in terms of gender. Therefore, the researcher came to this conclusion: the University of the North is not yet ready to address the imbalances caused by the stereotyped gender roles.

There is a need for commitment from the top in order to effect changes. This has

essentially to do with addressing the issue of the underrepresentation of women. I think that it is necessary that the issue of underrepresentation of women in management, at the University of the North start to get the attention that it deserves. There are a number of reasons why this is important, such as:

- the recruitment and retention of women will be essential to the development of an energetic and effective sector over the next decades;

- institutions should be committed to broadening access and equality of opportunity to both males and females employees.

But for institutions to develop in ways in which to meet these goals they must also:

- demonstrate that they can attract and develop a full range of staff in the same way;

- show that stereotypes gender roles are striped;

- proof that women are not under-represented because of the perception of them being inferior human beings;

- make sure that there are constitutional concerns of fairness and mutual justice.

6.2   RECOMMENDATIONS

The University of the North should advocate a new partnership (where males and females are given the same opportunities for advancement) between men and women, based on mutual respect and the sharing of responsibilities. A society locks up half its potentials when it marginalises women.

Institutions' policies can help, but hope lies in a recognition by employers that affording women the same opportunities for advancement as men by sheer ability and expertise will be good for them. Adopting measures of equality and affirmative action is also recommended.

It takes brave persons to say that they match the specifications outlined for the sought-after candidates in senior management. I have indicated throughout this study that it is easier for men than women to do that. Men are more likely to take a risk and apply for jobs where they have relatively lower required qualifications, whereas women more often expect to be able to fill the required qualifications. Women's self-doubt about self-promotion arises from entrenched patterns of socialisation and is hard to overcome. It is therefore imperative that women should redefine their place and status in society on the basis of equality with men.

We live and work in a world full of diversity. University of the North as a specific part of that world prides itself on its tendency to embrace diversity. But this study has shown that diversity at Unin is still very much a theoretical concept than a reality, especially where the staff profile in the top layers is concerned. Part of the reason why I did this dissertation was to look at good practice in recruitment and selection. By good practice I mean practice that has the potential to change the staff profile.

What became abundantly clear from the data is that people need to reflect critically on what they are doing and make a concerted effort to change the situation for women by being creative. For me it means, among other things:

▸   It is necessary to keep records of appointment and promotions but also of the staff as a whole reflecting positions, seniority and gender;

▸   There is a need for institutional training programmes and institutional

encouragement of women's increased participation;

- ► Specialized strategies for the active recruitment of women must be formulated;

- ► Placement of advertisements to be given new consideration;

- ► The way job advertisements are worded should also be reviewed, eg. on the advertisement you will find "among the qualities sought, are high-level managerial skills and proven ability to provide leadership in a complex environment", these qualities are lacking in women;

- ► To re-think selection criteria such as experience and qualifications;

- ► All the factors that disadvantage women should be identified and acted upon.

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ANNEXURES

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: SENIOR MANAGERS

The researcher first of all introduced herself and then explained the purpose of the interview. She further explained that the interview would be kept confidential. She then went on with the interview.

1.   Do you think that women are treated the same as their male counterparts as far as promotions to managerial positions are concerned?

2.   What about the Personnel Policy and Procedures (PPP)? Do you think it covers the women who are in top positions?

3.   Do you think that the University applies the Employment Equity as far as affirmative action is concerned?

4.   We have few women managers compared to male managers. What could be the reason for this?

5.   What about the adverts for senior positions? Do you think they have any influence in the application by women?

6.   Have you ever attended an interview? How many females serve on the selection committee?

7. Usually most of the interview panels consist mostly of men. Do you think this has a negative effect in the appointment of women managers?

8. Can you give me possible suggestions regarding appropriate recruitment and selection procedures to change the situation of lack of women in senior management position here at the University of the North.

9. Do you think that culture also contribute to women being overlooked where managerial positions are concerned. Please state in what way.

10. Do you think that lack of training for women is another contributing factor for women not being appointed in top managerial positions?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: WOMEN WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY

The researcher first of all introduced herself and then explained the purpose of the interview. She further explained that the interview would be kept confidential. She then went on with the interview.

1. As a woman are you satisfied with the situation prevailing within the University where we have only three women in top management?

2. What do you think lead to women being overlooked where managerial positions are concerned?

3. Do you regard men as superior to women irrespective of the latter's qualifications and experience?

4. Do you think that the advertisements of top position posts encourage women to apply?

5. How do you feel about the gender make-up of selection committees and the role of external agencies in the recruitment and selection process?

6. Have you ever attend an interview? How many females serve on the selection on the committee?

7. What is your opinion regarding the recent appointment of the three executive deans? Do you the think the advertisement of the posts afforded women a fair chance to apply for those posts?

8. What about the posts for executive Directors? Out of eleven posts only two women were appointed for those positions. Do you think women were given a fair chance when competing for those posts?

9. Do you think that women have enough experience to occupy top managerial positions? If not what remedy do you recommend to redress this situation?

10. How do you see culture contributing to women being seen or regarded as inferior to men where leadership is concerned?

11. Can you come up with suggestions that will help to resolve this situation?