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A South African perspective on work-life balance: a look at women in academia

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Appendix 3: Coding Framework for Thematic Analysis

Global Theme	Subtheme	Codes	Example Quotes
Balancing	**Promoters**	Assistance	"I'm in the fortunate position that I don't need to cook my own dinner, I've got a maid" "I have a full-time maid" "I have au pair, I forgot about that, who lifts the children in the afternoons; most afternoons. So I don't have to rush and lift children which was a huge interference. We've had one for about 3 years, 2 and a half/3 years which has made a huge difference." "I had a great administrator who was a personal secretary to me and she was fabulous. And I used to make her throw me out the office for tennis and yoga, I used to make her."
		Flexibility	"So that was part of my balance was to say 'ok, I'm not going to earn as much as I think I should be earning but I want to be flexible' but that's what annoys me every time they try to get rid of the flexibility within the system because it's, and it's a benefit for me to be able to bring my children onto campus and here there are no problems." "A lot of research, you know you have to play with it, it is often in our life, I mean I say my other career is taxi driving is actually quite funny because I keep picking up ideas and playing with them and then you drop it and then you pick it up again"
		Perspective on Work	"Research is something I love… and it takes a long time I think to come to a place in yourself where you see your research as having a conversation with yourself and the people in the field rather than having a scary outside figure judging it."
		Non-Work Activities	"And 2 dogs. Well they take up a lot of time… ya but that's the good part of my work-life balance, you know having to be home by a certain time to feed them and having to walk them, it's the same with kids I think you know, the corrective measure. So it's good." "I think I take more time out, I consciously don't work. I'll take a weekend where I do no work because you have to be with the children. Or because I'm just exhausted and I can't work. Uh, so ironically I think having a family and having children has

			made me better at taking time out.”
	Distracters	Technology	“I think the proliferation of internet technology has actually made life quite **difficult.** On the one hand quite easy but on the other hand quite difficult for everybody. So I never feel, there’s no sort of fine line so I could actually carry on working till 12 AM. I don’t because I need 8 hours sleep. Ok, but I think getting a balance between, because one actually **can work,** it’s not a finite issue of how much work you do.”
		Competition	“I don’t know, it’s a very competitive field because people get grants and people who do this, do this because they are passionate about it otherwise they would give up and go and get a job and earn 3 times more which I could but I don’t. So, anyway, I guess it’s kind of something that you learn to deal with and it’s fine and I don’t mind it. But I do need some more balance in my life.” “We are all self-funded this group… we fund about 30/40 people from the work we do in industry. So a lot of time is spend, like this last meeting you had wait for me, was working with industry, getting projects in.”
		Traffic	“…traffic in Johannesburg so it means that I have to leave home early to beat traffic and it also means that I have to leave work early to beat traffic or stay here until late. So I can’t find a balance I get home very late, I’m the last person to get home and the first person to leave the house because of the traffic.”
	Strategies	Time-Management	“You try and plan your week, to say I’m doing ‘x’ on this day and ‘y’ on this day. Also in terms of personal activities, you do a lot of diarising so that you commit to things beforehand so that you don’t, king of, use the excuse of work to not, you know do social meetings and that sort of things.” “I’ve tried to make lists and set myself deadlines; often things get in the way. Some of my strategy is actually to set deadlines, to put notes onto the computer, to try and diarise to make sure I know what’s going on. I also take the school calendar and put events in my diary so I know when things are happening.” “I’ve had to try and be very organised; I think I made sure I’m… I was more spontaneous and less organised but I’ve **become** more organised. You know if I needed to do shopping, I would either order it or I would stop on my way back from

			work and have a list and know exactly what I needed to do.”
		Discipline	“So one can work very very very hard and use up all one’s hours so I actually discipline myself, for example I never work on Friday night and I never work on Saturday night, I **try** not to work on the weekends but inevitably I do have to.” “So you **have** to be disciplined in relation to due dates and you **can’t** leave work until late when you’re working with this kind of thing. So working early on is good for you.”
		Childbirth	“The other strategy and this is quite a drastic one is that I spread my children apart. I had them 5 years apart because if I’d had 3 small children born close to each other, I would never have been able to carry on working. And I **did** want to carry on working so that was a very definite strategy – which worked; fortunately it worked in my case.” “I would encourage them to, if they had not had children, to kind of to publish as much as they can I think because it slows down and to expect a gap or a slowing down when you have children.”
		Exercise and Classes	“…like I go to art classes once a week and I’m quite strict about almost nothing stops me doing that or the biokinetics to get the exercise in.” “I try and do regular exercise… So that’s one conscious strategy, to do exercises.”
		Holidays	“Well I try make sure that I spend some time at home with family. I try make sure we take more holidays together.” “I’m a very good holiday planner. I plan lots of weekends away and holiday. I’m quite good about doing that. Maybe not that frequently but at fairly regular intervals throughout the year, there will be some break organised.” “I suppose we go on holiday, a lot. We’re not very good at going away for weekends but we try take time off most school/university holidays. And we spend money on holidays because that’s the time when we have family time.”
		Professional Help	“I never thought that coaching would have worked. I mean I’ve been to a few workshops on it and I can see that it would have really helped me define where I want to go, how I can achieve it, instead of muddling along… And I think that’s ya, you’ve got to move and realise there are professionals out there that can really help.”

			"I actually had to go into quite serious psychoanalysis which I'm still in but not as intensely … I think the only way I've managed to hold them all together honestly, without having a psychic breakdown, is through therapy – is through psychic intervention. Honestly, it's been the thing that's allowed me to at least kind of see the whole picture and see where I'm you know acting out of something weird in myself rather than something clear in myself. I'm been able to manage the kind of authority around how I work."
	Negotiation	Deciding Work is Good Enough	"I also think that I have become much smarter than using time more effectively. I am able to cut to the chase more quickly. I'm a bit better at deciding when something is good enough, even if it's not perfect." "And also if you like the teaching, it is also one of those never ending things. You can make a lecture better and better and better but in the end you've got to actually say 'it's enough'."
		Earlier Career	"And that kind of thing, about how we make this work better, how do we create a better environment for our students, up the ante on their education. So I guess I'm quite motivated and driven by a sense of urgency, not only in the world but to be a further…" "… I'm not prepared to turn students away because my colleague [pause] if my colleague isn't supervising them very well, they come to speak to me, right. I'm not prepared to turn them away so but it does mean working harder. It means working harder. And that means figuring out a much more careful negotiation of that balance and I think that's crucial." "My biggest challenges… I suppose taking on too much, taking on more than I should, taking on more than I suppose is good from some objective measure. I can't say that such a terrible thing though because it's a choice. I mean I had taken on, I could say no to it, and it's also stimulating and interesting and exciting and that kind of thing. But it's also worthwhile to do that kind of stuff."
		Later Career – saying 'No'	"At the end of the day I partially only have myself to blame. [Pause] And don't take on too much, don't take on too much and I have been very bad at that but I'm getting better now. I am not taking on what I used to take on. And so you just take

			on what you can cope and if you decide this is what you can deal with – **just do that**" "To say no. I wanted one of those t-shirts in America they use for drugs, but you need it for work." "I always say to them, 'don't take on too much'. Particularly if they're good and they kind of are efficient and willing, I sit them down and I say 'you're going to be asked to do a lot things because you're good, efficient and willing and you're a woman so say no before you say yes and never say yes before you've given it 24 hours'.""
	Lack of Balance		"I don't think I'm very successful at striking a balance. I think I probably do work too much. Ya I do work too much so I don't think I've been successful." "I think I'm not successful at balancing but what it has meant is that I am successful in **my** career because I think that I take a lot of time that I think should be pleasure time, that should be family time, that should be time for me to do my gardening and cleaning my house you know. So I took a lot of that time and put it in my work and I don't think I am succeeding at doing that but I'm… I need to fine more balance…" "I have no balance. I'm a good example for your study of not what to be."
<u>Spillover</u>	**Positive**	Instrumental Positive Spillover	"My family life, I feel I have been a very good mother – I think my children would say that because whenever I got home from work I've given them my full attention, I never got impatient with them or bored of them because I see them for such short spaces of time. So and I think I've enriched their lives because I've brought into the home a whole world from outside so I think they've benefited. And I think my husband has benefited in that way too." "But the children have always grown up in a house where we read a lot, so reading is not odd to them. Where we are in front of computers a lot. So they're pretty used to that."
	Negative	Work-to-home Interference	"But I **think** that [my husband] has probably suffered the most and I know, he's verbalised it, he has felt sometimes that I devote too much time to my work and too little to him. In my own heart, I don't feel that I've sort of made a choice in favour of my work but I've made a choice in favour of what is **urgent** and has to be done

			for tomorrow or if I have to get up early tomorrow then I won't want to go out tonight. And he loves going out every night so he has suffered, I think he has suffered." "It's also the deadlines of marking in academics we have a lot of strange deadlines, I mean I think most careers do but we have that marking episode and not only are you bad tempered but you spend a lot of time on marking. And I have to take it home most times if I don't get it don't – well, if I marked here, I'd never get it done." "…therefore I go into uh, a meal or time with the children or spending time with the children when I'm bringing baggage from the office or I'm bringing tiredness from the office. Or the balance. So I think that that's the most invasive."
		Home-to-Work Interference	"At times, being much more hectic – not because I had more to do but… not because I had more to do professionally but because I had **children** to care for…" "I mean it's something you'll find if you… I mean, often working mothers' offices look like a dump because you drop things to go and fetch – you're in the middle of something and you can't finish it. You have to leave it behind or pick it up and I find that a bit disruptive – that every time I sit down to write a paper, I'm not very efficient at it and when I get into it, somehow I have to stop and do some other task." "Although I will say that sometimes when there is a crisis with family, friends, there are boyfriends that have come and gone as well – it can mean that you can't give 110% here. And what really is affected, when you have a crisis, is your research because you can't get the focus."
	Boundary Theory	Flexibility	"I mean I remember when my son was born, first born, I remember that I used to rush back home to do the 4 hour feed and then come back here you know and do that. Fortunately I've always lived very close to [the University] otherwise I wouldn't have been able to do that. So you know I used to obviously… and then when they were at school or growing up they sometimes had afternoon activities and I would have to dash sometimes if I had to (if I wasn't in a lift scheme or didn't have some other lift available) I would have to dash home and do that."

		Permeability of Role Boundary	"It's very difficult to draw the line. It's very difficult to 'I'm at work now'; I mean it's easy enough between half past 8 and late afternoon but because your work day is a bit truncated you know, you have to find ways of catching up… in other parts in the evening or the week. Although your work never really goes away from you actually and lets you say 'today's the day I'm actually not going to work'." "And so I try but you know I certainly cannot cope without working most nights. I work most nights during the week and during the weekend obviously I do take a bit of a break but I do work every weekend." "…even if I'm at friends sometimes, I take things to read, like I take things to mark, I take an article and then my friends are really bored and then they are like 'why are you always reading? You say you've come to visit me but you've brought something to read' you know because they just want to chat. So it is compromising the quality of friendships that I have."
		Boundary Blurring	"I live close to [the University] so I don't spend a lot of time commuting and I am able to pop home quite easily and quite quickly should a need to. So there is quite a strong physical relationship, spatial relationship… I think the boundaries aren't very clear at all… I mean we probably live in quite an artificially small world, mentally and physically. Because of being so University-oriented, it probably would have been different if one of us wasn't a [the University]'s person or wasn't a university person. One would probably have a bit more perspective on the extent to which everything is so muddled up, ya." "…this is what I started off by saying that in a way that if I didn't get email at home (now I could choose not to look but I sort of can't) and it seems almost **expected** that one has to almost be on duty 24hours a day."
		Career Centrality of Identity	"Because you know if you are really interested in your work, your work is partly your pleasure as well and it's hard to integrate the two out and think about it separately." "I think my love of career is that one that influences my work-life balance. I think maybe I value success that I was not aware of before today. Maybe I value success to the extent that it's actually pushing me to spend a lot more of my time on my

			work than looking after myself because I want to succeed at work." "Not that I would stop doing what I'm doing. I'll do my research and teaching, I love it! And I love my students… I suppose it was in my early 30's maybe that I realised that I really do love my, you know, job and I am prepared to do this." "…it might not be your area that makes a difference, but in the end that whole area needs to be stored. And that does make, you know, sometimes that gives you the choice to parked in front of TV and switching off or turning that little energy barrier because it's often the barrier to get started." "So for me the classroom is also a political space, it's a way of affecting the world quite **powerfully** through generations of students."
<u>Conflict</u>	**Role Conflict**	Between Work and Non-work Boundaries	"I said those of us that are outside Gauteng actually it's not easy to work here because every other third weekend, you are asked to go home for one thing or the other- either it's a funeral or it's a wedding, or it's some ritual, this and that. So actually you spend a lot of time going away on weekends and that's the time you wish you were here and could finish that paper or mark your script or do that thing." "I take off 2 or 3 religious holidays per year and that is all… You know I feel with the kind of job that I've got; it's very difficult because then you'd have to make up lectures and whenever you have a make-up lecture half the class doesn't come. It's really problematic so I just take off 2 or 3 really important ones." "So I'm thinking I just want to be able to have some free time to do the things that I like, for example to go to yoga, to go swim more often, to go to an odd concert (not that I don't ever go – I do sometimes) but just you know and sometimes if I don't feel like working on the weekend, I don't have to. But every single weekend I have this pressure; should I accept this social arrangement, what is my work? So it comes that way instead of the other way around." "I think fitting kids in is a hugely difficult thing." "It's wonderful when you get it right, to figure out a way to balance teaching, engaging with students, supervising, your own research time and writing and a kind of family life. It's amazing. So if you get it right, I think it's the best job in the world. But it's quite hard to get it right…"

		Lack of Conflict Between Boundaries	"So actually all I need is just to be home on time but when I get home I still do some work, do this reading or mark or the other things that I wanted to do. But for colleagues who have children, I think it would be really difficult for them."
		Within Work Roles	"…on the one side there have been increases in student numbers and the other side the University, and I think rightly so, is pushing for more research. And for [the University] to become more of a research institute and that does mean you've got to spend more time on your research and it's difficult to balance that when you're dealing with these pressures, with increased student numbers and increased administrative load." "…but when you're off you have to be doing research if you want to be a good academic, you have to spend that time reading, writing, doing… and then my colleagues in the Department were a little bit pissed off with me because some of our colleagues are on sabbatical and so they felt that 'why was I leaving the department' because it meant that they had to deal with all the burden of enquiries from students. So there's a lot of work in University life that happens in free time like dealing with students, dealing with student queries, everyone wants letters of recommendation or their parents want to discuss their careers…" "So now everyone who is employed must be interested in doing a PhD. And then when you go that track – there's a conflict with teaching." "I suppose mostly what I would like is just to do research but of course there are these conflicting demands with the University of course only **really rewards** research… But it feels like research is a luxury on the one level – you can only do it when nothing else is demanding your time – at the same time that is what counts for advancement."
	Guilt		"…when the children were younger my husband worked from home so he was always at home when the kids came… So he was always at home which allowed me to spend longer at the office without feeling guilty. Although I did feel guilty because he was being the better parent so I had go [laugh] other than that." "And it is fitting them in, you know, trying to… make sure you don't feel too guilty. You know, some mothers a horribly involved and you have got to think that maybe

			it's too much or I can't." "I think there is always a bit of guilt, there is always something you take home. Sometimes at taking just one paper home that I have to read because otherwise there is always this pile that you can see [indicating pile in front of her] so there's always this guilt that you should be doing something and you've got to ignore it." "Perhaps I could on an odd Friday night because I'm not going to work the next day but I feel guilty on Friday if I'm unable to read and type and do things that are work-related you see." "…for me to not feel guilty and have fun at the baby shower – I should first do something in the morning that is work-related and then when I'm done 1 thing or 2 then I can go out – it's a **reward**, going out is a reward for work done [laugh]."
<u>Institutional Influence</u>	**Practices**	Promoters of Work-Life Balance	"Flexible means you determine your own pace. All they tell you is that these are the outputs and you know you decide the time you spend in order to meet your outputs. But I think that the flexibility then allows for you to create that work-life balance." "Perhaps the **only** time that I've heard that is perhaps in a project that I joined in 2002 which was called 'Wonder Women'. And I was very fortunate to be taken on to that project so occasionally over the years, once every 3 or 4 years, we've had a retreat and when we go on the retreat we discuss – we haven't ever discussed this directly – but there is an absolutely clear ethos there that women in the workplace should not only promote themselves but promote their own values and kind of reach their own satisfactory life within themselves and in that way they are more **productive**. That's the only kind of thing in my very long working life at [the University] that I've ever heard anyone promoting a work-life balance."
		Distractors of Work-life Balance	"I mean there is a lot of pressure on you if you do not have a PhD. But I think it has been a good thing to do them very valuable and useful, I don't regret it or resent it or anything like that, in a nice thing to do." "No, [the University]. No, I don't think they have a clue what we do on the ground… the kind of Old-Guard that I feel they kind of pile us with more and more and more because they know we'll do it and they know we'll do it well." "But it's also the backup, you know there really is very little backup if anything

			goes wrong. For example if something happens to a child and I have to rush off, there's no backup for someone to take my lectures. There's no backup to phone and say please cancel this lecture and there's no backup for us, I mean a lot of the women get more administrative jobs and there's no backup there. It's all been eroded." "No, I think, I mean one of the battles that I had with the University was to fight for adoption leave to be made the same as maternity leave. So adoption leave was 3 months and through various actions by myself and a couple of colleagues, we got it to be 4 months which is the same as biological maternity leave. That I had to fight for, right."
	Gendered roles		"I mean it is difficult for the University and the State to recognise forms of deep-routed sexism that accompany things like invisibilised labour in departments – how do you get at that? The best you can hope for is that you have colleagues that won't take advantage of that or who will step up…. I'm not prepared to clean up this disgusting kitchen that these guys leave because they leave filth, like rotting things in the sink for weeks… And I've noticed now that my female colleague is now back from sabbatical, there's a new sponge in the kitchen, there's a new towel, things are cleaner, dishes are washed and I'm wondering if she doesn't do it or if she organises for it to be done by one of the cleaning staff but **clearly** that's the kind of labour that women should be very careful not to get stuck into." "I mean I found for example, being a woman and professor and whatever all else, you know that they get you on the selection committee and kind of tick off two boxes at once and I have just said no."
<u>Governmental Influence</u>	Policies	Lack of Knowledge of Impact	"No I don't think I… not exactly no. I don't think they're really getting there." "I'm not sure… I don't really feel that I'm supported much there."
		Promoters of Work-Life Balance	"Not specifically for academics but I know their policies are very good in relation to women like the maternity is quite good, it's up to us to comply with that. So they've got really good policies." "I don't know, the government offers grants, child grants and those types of things. … only in very indirect ways would I see their support in training in Universities for

			people that can assist." "…other than a kind of regulatory framework which I think is reasonably positive, I think there's nothing else."
		Distractors of Work-life Balance	"But you know I spend a lot over time fetching and carrying, it is absolutely daft. If you had public transport systems and school buses, it would really help." "I mean and I think the big absence is child care which doesn't worry me because I don't need it."
<u>Personal Aspects</u>	**Perspectives on Work-Life Balance**	Bifurcation of Work and Non-work	"So like being a good colleague, doing a decent job of teaching and supervising, you know focusing on your research – and research means doing fieldwork, reading **and** writing. So really work is bifurcated to all **kinds** of different things. Which is interesting but complicated to manage I think. There's also the admin of all of it. And then on the home-side, it's about the relationship between spending enough time one-on-one with your child, as a family, with your partner, your friends, with new people like with new friends [laugh], doing things on my own."
		Lack of Distinction	"I mean, ya just in the way of having a family but I think a lot of people don't have work-life balance just as life… And I assume that particularly for academics." "I will just say that there is an assumption in all your question that, the two can be differentiated and should be, there is the normative assumption that balance is a good thing and that it's desirable or whatever and I think in my case it's quite hard to separate the two so one could see that as a negative thing or one can see that as a very positive thing but I have an interest in my job and I'm enjoying my life so much that it isn't much of a problem."
		Choice	"And at the end of the day, I **know** that I can make a decision not to do this. It's actually up to me in the end." "And that does make, you know, sometimes that gives you the choice to parked in front of TV and switching off or turning that little energy barrier because it's often the barrier to get started." "And often it's that they're going to have to make a choice. It's hard to be a brilliant scientist or a high-flying scientist and have a functional family."
		Ideal	"It's an image. It's kind of a protection – 'Here I am, I am successful with

			everything'. So that you'll think that I'm better and I don't think that this is just for women… and that's why you have to be honest with yourself and realise that you're doing it your way and not necessarily that you can't achieve that some of these others are achieving and they say 'oh no, you couldn't do it'." "I think I would describe it as… it's ideal really. I don't know whether it can be realised. A situation where you feel although your work is demanding, you can cope with it and you have enough time to do it. If not perfectly – at least in a constant way and the same applying to your family that everybody is satisfied with it. You and the people around you are satisfied with the amount of time, energy and effort you are spending with them or putting into family life or work."
	Values	Philanthropy	"I suppose my values are humanist… that I do feel very responsible for lots of things and people; I take too much responsibility upon myself, I sort of know this but I do and that's sometimes why I feel obliged to return and reply to emails at night and on the weekends etc. … And I suppose I do feel that duty given the history of South Africa, I do have a sense of one…in some sense I do need to be (how can I…I'm trying to think of the right word) **mentor** people – more than perhaps one would need to in a country with a more normal history." "…treating people in a humane way, trying to work towards social justice in my professional life and in my daily life. And so quite a lot of my research goes towards putting those values into practice." "I suppose that to be able to make a difference. So that you know if you can do something to improve the quality of life that people, I think that would my long term aim. And I suppose your family and kids presumably you have to do some good more than you do harm. But in general but you can actually go and make a difference. But at the same time to be able to draw the boundaries and kind of say 'I've done enough now, I'm going to creep back into my shell'." "I feel a very strong commitment to being a good citizen, of the university and of my society and so if things are not working as they should I feel a very strong obligation to try and assist with strategies for changing that."
	Partner Support	Promoters	"…I absolutely consider co-parenting my key strategy [laugh] in achieving the work

			balance. I could not do it, I mean I really couldn't do it if I didn't have a partner who would do it. Although you then, I mean that has its own problems because you can, you kind of get into a bit of 'check book accounting' in your relationship." "And I also have an extremely supportive partner who's very good with admin and helps with that kind of stuff. She's there, she's amazing, she does things like files bills and organises taxes and that kind of thing so, if I were doing this on my own, I just don't think it would be possible or at least I would have to step back from a great number of things…So the partnership has been a good thing."
		Distractors	"I suppose with my partner, if I was not with him I would have been more frivolous. I'm definitely blaming him. This is interesting, I'm going to have to face what it is. No, I think that he's more disciplined and more productive than I am so I'm sort of measuring up to that example that has been set which I probably wouldn't be doing that he was not around."
	Personality	Work behaviour	"I'd rather work, I'll work… but it's also my personality. I like to work intensely; I work much better in big chunks- 10 hours, 8 hours without a break. Rather than a little bit half hour here, half hour there." "I think also, I think it has something to do with the person that I am because I just love to do my work, I just love to. I'm sure other people don't have the same problem as me because they are able to put their work on the side and have fun." "Perhaps it has to do with my character, it might well be that I choose to throw myself in, ya, maybe." "I mean, no I think, that a lot of the issues with work-life balance are determined by obviously by who you are and how you approach work actually but I suppose how you approach family."