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<u>**RESEARCH REPORT**</u>

<u>**An Exploratory Study of Black Women in Executive Positions and their Sense of Balance between Motherhood and Career.**</u>

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A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BA Masters in Clinical Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Abstract

Recent literature on women, motherhood and career suggests possible issues of conflict for women trying to negotiate these two roles. Contrary to recent times, traditional views dictated that women could not both work and have a family, while those women working outside the home were expected to occupy career positions that interfered less with their responsibilities within the home. However, women have entered fields of work previously reserved for men while still pursuing motherhood. Much research has looked at issues of motherhood and career, however very little research has looked at issues affecting black women. Given the historical racial inequalities and cultural differences, it is likely that black women will experience more conflict given gender, racial, and issues of social class. This study explored how a group of black women occupying executive positions achieve 'successful' balance between their high demanding careers and motherhood. The study explored issues that come into play when negotiating these two roles. The researcher interviewed six participants occupying varying executive positions in big business and corporate. The participants were from various cultural groups and had at least one child. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, ensuring strict adherence to ethical issues as stipulated by the University of the Witwatersrand Research Ethics Committee. The data was analysed using thematic content analysis. Findings suggest that while racial, cultural and socialisation can contribute to conflict in participants' negotiation of work and family, the participants are able to achieve a successful balance between these two roles. The difficulties seem to lie with men who through socialisation continue to oppress women by reinforcing traditional views.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Bachelor of Arts Masters in Clinical Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Itumeleng Mamabolo
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Introduction

> *"Women now are who they are. We have to earn a living because it's about me doing something that I wanna pursue, having something to pursue as opposed to just being a mother and all that. You can do all these things. Yes it's a struggle…"- Monica*

In recent times, society has slowly moved away from historical inequalities that saw work and family roles being distributed along gender lines. Prior to women entering the workplace, their responsibilities were mainly within the home. Traditionally, women were excluded from the paid labour force, especially those fields of work that were previously dominated and appropriated for men. Women stayed home and tended to household chores that included the primary role of childcare. Those women who were working occupied careers that did not interfere with their primary responsibilities of child care - "semi-professions" (Kasper, Meyer & Schmidt, 2005). The shift towards an "equal" distribution of work and family responsibilities has meant that women have become more visible within workplaces, and has also seen them slowly gaining presence in managerial and entrepreneurial positions. However, even with many women entering fields of work, there remains an expectation for women to maintain their traditional roles in the home. Beliefs about appropriate gender roles remain and women are expected to balance their traditional roles and their careers. This has resulted in conflict for some women, especially those occupying executive positions, as they find the demands of their careers in conflict with the expectations within the home. Women occupying executive positions are believed to have increased conflict unlike those women occupying what is referred to as "semi-professions" (those careers that are seen as enabling women to occupy career positions without neglecting their traditional roles within the home) (Kasper et al, 2005). Given the increase in the number of women entering executive positions, the following questions will form the basis of this research paper: Are women occupying executive positions experiencing conflict between motherhood and career? And also, how are women in executive positions negotiating their societal expectations, family and personal fulfilment while also holding up demanding occupational positions outside the home?

There have been many studies that have investigated issues affecting women at work and at home, however, very few studies have been dedicated to issues affecting black women. Black women have been oppressed along racial, gender and class lines. Additionally, Mathur-Helm (2004) believes that black women deal with a more engrained system of patriarchy because of their cultural heritage. Their cultural heritage does not see them as equal to men, which makes it harder for them to fuse their roles of motherhood and work (Mamabolo, 2007) as their positions within their culture expects them to be dependent on men. These ideologies about black women covertly perpetuate sexual divisions of labour and continue to create sexual inequalities for black women both in the home and in their workplaces. Although it could be argued that these ideologies equally affect black and white women, research findings suggest that western women are able to negotiate their family and career roles with very little conflict (Mamabolo, 2007). Finding a balance between executive career positions and motherhood can be challenging given the array of interplays between women and their environment - particularly in relation to their culture and their identity (which can be influenced by societal or environmental expectations). Societal expectations (gender roles) of women, black women in particular, and what they are doing (working) can cause cultural conflict and confusion about their identities as women. It is on the premise of working women and societal expectations that socialisation will form the theoretical framework of this research to understand women's social identities in relation to motherhood and work.

Research Aims:

- The main aim of this research is to explore how black women in executive positions balance motherhood and career. This research aims to also gain understanding of how cultural ideologies impact on black women's processes of negotiating and maintaining a balance between motherhood and their careers.

Research Rationale

In the last two decades, the relationship between motherhood and career has generated a considerable amount of research (see for example Gillespie, 2003; Hewlett, 2002; Meyers, 2001). Motherhood and career form integral parts of some women's identities. According to Meyers (2001), to be a mother is one that is likely to have more of a profound impact than any other decision. Because women have been socialised to see motherhood as natural and feminine, very few women are believed to be unlikely to sacrifice the role of motherhood (Parelius, 1975; Richardson, 1993). Equally so, many women are unwilling to sacrifice their careers, rather opting to balance their two roles, with some women postponing motherhood or choosing not to have children at all (Gillespie, 2003). Because women are expected to occupy the primary role in their children's development, there is an expectation of women to allocate sufficient time towards childcare. However, given work demands, women are not as freely available to their children as was traditionally the case. This can leave them feeling that they are neglecting their children. Added to this have been the voices behind developmental theories that often blame women for developmental problems in children. Women feeling inadequate can experience guilt, especially in relation to their children's psychological health. While part of the guilt can be attributed to the inherent society that places high demands on women to adhere to traditional gender roles, social and political issues related to gender inequalities and oppression can also contribute to the guilt that women might experience (Boonzaier, 2006). As mentioned earlier, executive career positions have higher demands and expectations that can limit the time they spend with their children.

Women have strong desires to find balance without having to give up their careers, or sacrificing motherhood. While some women do not want children, some have strong desires to be mothers. According to Hewlett (2002), these women do not want to put-off motherhood for later, or have to subject themselves to expensive medical treatments to have children at a time when it is most difficult or near impossible to fall pregnant. While women wanting to be mothers have been encouraged to pursue family-friendly careers, some women want to pursue executive positions. However, as previously mentioned, trying to balance the two roles can create conflict for some women, especially when they are expected to allocate sufficient time towards childcare and work without any (or little) assistance from men. Unlike fatherhood, Chodorow (1978) believes that

motherhood has an effect on the sexual division of labour. Men's roles both in the home and work are not in conflict because men are not expected to spend extended time with their children. While men are able to spend varying amounts of time with their children, women have to sustain their primary roles by spending more time with their children. Women want the same opportunities as men. Like men, women also want to hold senior positions and still be seen as good parents (Hewlett, 2002). Furthermore, findings by Hewlett (2002) suggest that women are happiest when they are able to work and pursue motherhood simultaneously.

There has been an increase in the number of women who currently occupy career positions that were previously dominated by men. However, given the expectations of women to continually occupy primary roles in their children's lives, it is possible that the added demands of work will impact on the pressures experienced by some women to find balance between work and family. It is the rationale of this study to gain an understanding of how women are negotiating executive career positions and motherhood. The researcher also aims to understand how mothering ideologies continue to perpetuate inequalities for women both in the home and the workplace. By gaining an understanding of women's pressures (if any) in finding balance, programmes aimed at assisting women manage the pressures of motherhood and work can be developed. Furthermore, there is a need to develop programmes that are aimed at erasing traditional gender roles that subject women, especially those in executive positions, to prejudice and discrimination, as this makes it even harder for women to pursue both motherhood and their choice of career. In order for companies to be able to respond to the changing needs of women within the workplace, they need to understand the issues that face women managers who are mothers working outside the home.

South Africa is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. The varying make-up of the country is likely to result in gender role differences along cultural and ethnic lines (see for example Mamabolo, 2007). It is the rationale of this study to establish whether social factors influence how black women negotiate their executive positions and motherhood. Given the powerful influence of socialisation, for some black women their views are likely to come into conflict with their generational-traditional cultures. Societal pressures and culture might pressurise women into complying with traditional gender roles, which might make it harder for

women to balance childcare and work. It is important to explore these issues so that women, whose identities lie within a culture that embraces traditional gender roles (taking care of the home), are not discriminated or subjected to unfairness in their pursuit of less traditional roles. This study is relevant as it will be used in the pursuit of the empowerment of women. Furthermore, this study is significant given that black women have been subjected to triple oppression in terms of race, class and gender (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006) and might benefit from the findings i.e. be empowered.

Many studies have looked at how women negotiate motherhood and career; however, very few studies have looked at the experiences of black women. Although black women have similar experiences to white women, their racial experiences create a difference that is likely to have an impact on their views and experiences. These views and experiences form part of an integral component of their identity as women. It is the rationale of this study that this research will contribute to the process of knowledge in understanding the experiences of black women in executive positions and how they are balancing their careers and motherhood.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1. Introduction

Social and cultural ideologies about gender roles can impact on women's abilities to balance motherhood and career. Women bear children, they are believed to have the natural instincts to care for children (Chodorow, 1978). As a result, women are expected to be primary caregivers who raise psychologically healthy children (Burman, 1994; Finchilescu, 1995; Kruger, 2006). Developmental theories – such as those by Winnicott, Bion and Klein amongst others – have largely been influenced by historical social inequalities that oppressed women and as a result place a great deal of children's psychological well-being on women i.e. mothers (Kruger, 2006). According to Burman (1994), women who are seen as not available to their children are thought to be neglectful and are blamed for their children's psychological problems. However, while these developmental theories can be helpful in understanding behavioural difficulties, they are largely based on nuclear families that had the father as the breadwinner and the mother as the caregiver (Burner, 1994). This makes their validity questionable as they fail to account for new types of single families, including gay families (Burman, 1994). Furthermore, they fail to account for the absence of fathers and the possible impact that this might have on the children's psychological development (Bozalek, 2006). However, because of socialisation, many women have bought into these developmental discourses. This leaves them feeling guilty at times when they have to allocate large amounts of time to work demands, and so leaving them feeling that their primary responsibilities within the home (as dictated by society and developmental theories) are short-charged (Boonzaier, 2006). Given the increase in the number of women not only entering the workplace, but also occupying executive career positions (BWASA, 2008; CEE, 2007/2008), it is important to look at the possible impact of the above issues.

Motherhood impacts on women's equality of work distribution within the workplace. Women who want to pursue executive careers might not be offered promotional opportunities because they might be seen as unable to manage both roles. The leadership role is gendered, which means that discourses related to work commitment and childcare responsibilities are seen as likely to interfere with women's work and vice-versa (Kasper et al., 2005). However, even with these pressures to maintain a successful balance between these two roles, many women continue to

work. While some women are experiencing little difficulty balancing their roles, some find themselves unable to manage.

Generational cultural beliefs have viewed black women as inferior to men. Along with the racial discrimination, these cultural beliefs are important in determining black women's self-esteem as self-esteem plays a role in their ability to develop positive self identities (Foster, 2006). If a woman has low self-esteem, she is unlikely to take on a role that has a positive identity. By understanding the above factors, the researcher will be able to explore how black executive women are achieving their sense of balance between their employment and their socialised roles within the household. This chapter locates important issues within a theoretical framework that will help explore the extent to which black women in executive positions are able to achieve a sense of balance between motherhood and career. The literature will guide the process and aid in the relevant questions that make up this study. The literature review problematises and seeks to understand the relationship between gender ideologies, time-based conflict, socialisation, and the context of black women.

1.2. 21st Century Women

Generational beliefs have largely seen women occupying roles within the home. While men went off to earn a living to provide for the family, women remained home and tended to household responsibilities that included childcare. According to O'Neil (1981), these expectations and roles (defined as either masculine or feminine) were embodied in men and women's behaviours and regarded as culturally appropriate. These traditional gender roles, however, limited women's opportunities and created social inequalities (Burn, 1996).

Referred to as the most outstanding phenomenon of this century (Suraj-Narayan, 2005), in recent years women have been experiencing a change that has slowly seen them gain visibility in the workforce. This began in first world countries such as the USA in the 1970s, moving to Western Europe in the 1980s, to Asia in the mid 1980s (Kim & Ling, 2001) and finally to third world countries such as South Africa - where the Employment Equity Act 55 was introduced in 1998 (RSA, 1998). The introduction of such measures of equality in South Africa has made it possible for women to occupy career positions that were previously reserved for men. According to

Westhuizen, Goga, Ncube and Oosthuizen (2007), since 1995-2005, employment has increased more rapidly for women than men, with most of these women believed to be African. The 2008 findings by the Business Women's Association of South Africa (BWASA) (2008) indicate that over 40% of South African women are employed. Of these 40%, half occupy senior positions (BWASA, 2008). Similar trends are evident in countries such as the United Kingdom that have also seen an increase in the number of women within the workforce. According to Joseph (2006), women in the United Kingdom constitute half of the working force. However, traditional roles continue to fuel pressure on mothers to stay at home or take on careers believed to be family friendly – such as teaching. Despite these social pressures for women not to move away from these oppressive traditional ideologies, women can be seen taking up opportunities and seeking employment outside the home. According to BWASA (2008), since 2004 South Africa has seen an increase of 14.7% of the number of women occupying executive management positions. Compared with the number of women in similar positions in 2004, there has been an increase from 7.1% to 7.6% (BWASA, 2008). These figures suggest that not only are women rapidly moving away from sole roles in the home, but they are entering fields of work previously not accessible to women. This is a change from the previous make-up of the boardroom that mostly consisted of white male executives (BWASA, 2008).

The change has however been very slow. Contrary to the figures above, the Employment Equity Report (EER) (CEE, 2007/2008) findings suggest that the changes in the percentage of women entering not only executive management positions have been very slow. The report findings conducted between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2008 have showed that there was an increase of only 3.9% for blacks in top management. This was a dramatic decrease of 14.9%. The figures are not encouraging especially when compared to the 8% increase for whites over the same period (CEE, 2007/2008). Even more alarming has been the findings of 4.1% difference between whites and blacks in top management (CEE, 2007/2008). This is alarming given the demographic make-up of the South African population - blacks make up a higher percentage of the South African population. While the BWASA (2008) findings showed a higher increase of women represented in the workplace, contrarily the CEE (2007/2008) findings have rather shown a decrease. The report showed that black women had an overall decrease of 3% with those in the professional management positions showing a decrease of 8.9%. The report showed an under-representation

of blacks (including other previously disadvantaged groups). The report further indicated an overall increase of 5% for blacks between the period of 2003 and 2007. This was almost 6 times below the Economically Active Population (EAP) decrease of 3.7% for women in top management (CEE, 2007/2008). These figures were especially low when compared with the increment of 9.8%, which is almost twice their EAP.

Even with policies in place and some findings (as mentioned above) suggesting an increase in gender equality, black women continue to be unequally represented in top managerial positions. Innes, Kentridge and Perold (1993), state that black women are subjected to prejudices that question their management abilities. Similar findings were evident in studies by Mathur-Helm (2004) who argued that black women are believed to lack management abilities not only because they are women, but also because they are seen as coming from a more patriarchal culture. They are seen as inferior to men and also white women. They continue to be marginalised as their traditional values are seen as likely to be in conflict with managerial expectations. This places them at a disadvantage for promotional opportunities. There has been a flood of black women in semi-professions as these are seen as better able to enable them to maintain their work outside the home without feeling that their traditional roles are neglected (Etzioni, 1969 as cited in Cinamon & Rich, 2005). Such professions, unlike executive career positions, are seen as requiring little investment, thus better able to allow women to combine their work and their socialised family roles with little conflict. Because women bear children, they are seen as having the natural instincts to care for children (Chodorow, 1978). This is despite no evidence or findings to support these beliefs. Women's mothering seems to negatively impact on their abilities to pursue more demanding positions that can offer fulfilment. Despite having had no opportunities for employment in managerial positions, studies and cultural beliefs deem women to be incapable of balancing motherhood and career. This seems to suggest a need to prevent women from entering fields of work that were previously dominated by men.

However, despite these pressures for women to remain in the home, many women want to work outside the home. Studies suggest that college women want to have a career, marriage and motherhood (Goldin, 1995; Hoffnung, 2004). According to Hewlett (2002), women have been found to be happiest when they are able to work without sacrificing motherhood. Equally so

however, gender ideologies have socialised women to see mothering as central to their identity. Chodorow (1978), states that mothering has been given a strong social and psychological meaning. Women who do not want children are perceived negatively. Despite no findings linking mothering with instinctual and biological findings, women's mothering role has become very central for many women. Child care and childbearing are not separated. While men do not have the ability to breastfeed, according to Segal (1990), they have the same nurturing abilities as women. This means that men can equally be primary caregivers just like women; however the pressure continues to be on women to be the primary caregivers. Both men and women have been socialised to see their roles as part of their identities.

Motherhood impacts can impact on women's abilities to gain equal access within the workplace. According to Chodorow (1978), through women's mothering, unequal masculinity and sexual inequalities continue to exist. It perpetuates gender ideals that affect women's positions in the workplace. Women mothering are expected to be nurturing and freely available to their children. While men can spend varying amounts of time with their children without this impacting on their children's development, the same is not true for women. Men's roles at home and in the workplaces are not affected by fatherhood, while women's commitment to work is questioned because of their roles in the home. The home appears to continually serve as a form of oppression of women; conveniently benefiting men through continued overt inequalities. However, many women want to work. Because of the social and psychological significance of motherhood in many women's lives, many women want to combine work and childcare. These women do not want to postpone the time at which they have children or not have children at all (Gillespie, 2003). Many women want to pursue their choice of career and without being socially forced into family-friendly careers because they will not interfere with their primary roles.

In previous years, when women became mothers, they left work to stay at home with their children. However, with current economic necessities and women's career commitments, new trends have seen many women continue to work after childbirth (White & Rogers, 2000 as cited in Hoffnung, 2006). Since the 1980's, women's contribution has become an essential contribution to the family income (Hoffnung, 2006). However, given the significant influence of socialisation on women, it is their attitudes towards appropriate women's roles and

responsibilities that will likely influence their ability to balance work and family. According to Hoffnung (2004), career-oriented women expect more role sharing than women who are family-oriented. If childcare and other household responsibilities are equally shared between both partners, then the ability to achieve a balance between the two roles is achieved with more ease. Like men, career-oriented women view their careers as equally important as men's.

1.3. Ideology of Motherhood

Motherhood refers to a woman rearing a child or children (Richardson, 1993) that has been conceived biologically or attained through various other means – such as adoption, foster care etc. According to Christian (1994 as cited in Gillespie, 2003), the role of motherhood, the experience of having a child is significant in many women's definition of a "real" woman. Even though as mentioned earlier, there are no indications linking motherhood, instinct and biology, motherhood is seen as natural for women. Women who make the "wrong" decision are subjected to social scrutiny from those who deem motherhood as socially pivotal (Meyers, 2001). Having been socialised through various psychological and medical discourses, many women believe that through motherhood and mothering, they can find a purpose (Kruger, 2006; Richardson, 1993). Women are said to have the maternal instinct to want and to care for children (Richardson, 1993). It is through social approval and social acceptance that biological claims are used against women to explain social forms that reward women. Given the power of socialisation, women are likely to conform to social ideals to gain social acceptance, because their sense of self-concept has been developed through socialisation (Foster, 2006).

Developmental psychology sees women as objects and nurturers of children (Burman, 1994). Women are seen as essential providers for their children's psychological health (Woolet & Phoenix, 1993). Theorists such as Winnicott and Bowlby have formulated theories that suggest appropriate good-enough mothering requirements. According to Burman (1994), everyday understandings of parental roles and mothers, fathers and children's identities have featured in developmental psychology. Occupying library shelves and bookstores are publications offering women advice on "how to do it" (Woolet & Phoenix, 1993). Women have responded to the expectations of good mothering to maximise their children's development (Woolet & Phoenix, 1993). Theories such as Bowlby's attachment theory, theorise that good mothers need to provide

their children with secure attachment since the failure to establish such attachments will result in severe psychological problems. According to Burman (1994), Bowlby argued that like vitamins are needed for the body to grow, children need their mothers. His assumptions place enormous demands on mothers as the good mother must always be available for her child. There is great pressure for women to raise psychologically healthy children. The pressure has led to an increase in the number of women hunting for information related to child development. There is pressure to carry out mothering tasks with professionalism (Woolet & Phoenix, 1993). The assumption that a mother has the major, (if not exclusive) responsibility in child development implicitly (or explicitly) places the blame on mothers for their behavioural problems (Woolet & Phoenix, 1993). This is despite no evidence to suggest that children of employed mothers experience separation as stressful (Burman, 1994), as suggested by Bowlby. Because mothers are portrayed as central to their children's development, those asserting their power or independence are thought to be doing so at the expense of their children (Burman, 1994).

Because motherhood plays such a major social role in many women's lives, women that choose not to have children are perceived negatively. These women are seen as tragic and in a state of suffering (Strickler, 1992 as cited in Gillespie, 2003). Furthermore, because of the association between motherhood and femininity, women that choose to be childfree are seen as deviant, unfeminine, unhealthy, psychologically flawed and selfish (Gillespie, 2003). This places social pressure on women to put aside their intellectual and sexual identities for motherhood (Phoenix, Woollett & Lloyd, 1991). Feeling the social pressure to conform, women that are not able to naturally have children pursue other forms of parenting for the role of motherhood (Phoenix et al., 1991). Through motherhood, motherless women are able to gain a positive self identity. It is seen as a role that identifies women differently from men. When women do not parent, it is other women and not men that take on the parenting responsibility (Chodorow, 1978). Men parent by working and providing financially for the family, while women spend time with the children and help them develop into psychologically healthy children. Because men are assumed not to be able to care for children, women who work outside the home for personal reasons that are not related to the family are perceived negatively as they are seen as deviating from their primary role (Richardson, 1993). Mothers are expected to sacrifice their needs in order to provide care for their children. Women working for personal reasons are seen as selfish and bad mothers. The

focus has been placed on the mother-child relationship while men remain excluded from their roles in childcare.

Though motherhood can be experienced as a positive role, it can have negative experiences for women. It can profoundly impact on her identity and self-esteem. Ideologies created about women affect their equality both in the home and at work. Because women mother, they are discouraged from pursuing certain careers, and are at a disadvantage because they are expected to carry out more responsibilities in the home. This is likely to limit them to one role – that of a stay-at- home mother. This can be difficult for women who do not find motherhood as rewarding (Richardson, 1993). It can impact on their feelings towards their children (Richardson, 1993), causing them to develop an even more negative self-concept, hence also decreasing their self-esteem. According to Richardson (1993), not all women experience the natural aspects that are believed to be part of their instincts. It is an assumption that the experiences of pregnancy or lactation trigger mothering instincts (Chodorow, 1978), especially given that men are able to provide the same nurturance as women (Segal, 1990). Furthermore, women can also be affected by mothering as at times their identity can become synonymous with a social role. Mothers working are referred to as working mothers, while fathers are not referred to as working fathers. Even in the workplace, women are unable to shed this identity as it is assumed that their identity revolves around their motherhood (Richardson, 1993).

Despite society's move towards the idea of gender equality, inequalities continue to exist (Oakley, 1993). Women are expected to subordinate their own interests and primarily take care of their children. This leaves some women isolated and lonely because they are left to care for their children in their homes. Given the expectations for women to find motherhood rewarding, it becomes hard for many women to express their dissatisfaction, disappointment, anger or frustrations.

1.4. Women: Equal or Different

The South African government has implemented legislations to try and correct historical injustices that negatively affected women. The 1998 Employment Equity Act 55 (RSA, 2008) provides a framework that is aimed at assisting women who enter fields of employment. While

the act has been a positive step towards empowering women, it could however also be seen as negatively affecting women. Given that historically, traditional gender roles failed to take into account women's individual differences (now evident in studies (see for example Gillepsie, 2003) that suggest that some women have no desire to have children, while the opposite is true for other women) given the powerful influence of socialisation, it is important to acknowledge individual differences. Similar incidences of failures to acknowledge individual differences can be seen in the long continuing struggle for those women who wanted to both work and have children but were rather assumed to lack the abilities to balance these roles without having been given the opportunity to try. Like these generational oppressive gender ideals, the employment equity policy fails to take into account the infinite heterogeneity of women who have been socialised to equate their femininity with powerlessness and inequality. The effects of the socialisation of women and the hierarchies that have been assumed to be natural are not acknowledged as possibly having contributed negatively to women; but rather presupposes that all women will find the transition through the implementation of such policies easy to eradicate the socialised self beliefs. There is a presupposition that looks at women homogenously and so treats women as the same.

While programmes - such as the Skills Development Act 97 (RSA, 1998) - have been introduced to empower women with the skills that would enable them to compete in fields of employment that were previously reserved for men or white women; the 2008 Employment Equity Report shows lower percentages in the employment of black women in comparison to white women. The effects of the exclusion of women during the apartheid era and based on traditional ideals could be argued to have negatively affected black women. These women did not have access to the same quality education or financial means that were available to white women. Yet these women are expected to equally compete with white women. This is despite having had to deal with sophisticated covert gender discrimination and racism (see Mabokela, 2004; Potgieter &Moleko, 2004). While there are some women who have the abilities to compete on the same level as white women, or men, it is perhaps unreasonable to expect that all black women would benefit from Skills programmes without taking into account their heterogeneity.

The idea of equality presupposes that a comparison can be made between men and women (Irigaray, 1993). Even though women now have access to paid employment, socialised roles such as motherhood continue to create inequalities for women who are expected to continually rear children unassisted by men. Work policies continually perpetuate inequality as mothers have the benefits of longer maternity leave. While these "benefits" are being slowly extended to men, they however covertly perpetuate traditional roles, which will likely affect women's promotional opportunities in the workplace. It could be argued that not providing men with the same equal work benefits negatively affects their roles as fathers – not offering them support and opportunities to share childcare responsibilities (Hosking, 2006). Hosking (2006) argues that, fathers who want to embrace their role of fatherhood and participate in their children's lives could be seen as experiencing similar conflict to that experienced by women. There has been a slow shift of new generation men who are sharing in childcare and home responsibilities (Hosking, 2006; Segal, 1990). However, while this could be seen as disadvantaging men, unlike women, men can choose their level of involvement in childcare and when they do get involved in childcare roles they choose roles that are associated with masculinity (Segal, 1990) – such as playing with the child and not changing nappies. Through socialisation, masculinity offered men the power that enabled them, and continually enables them to place women in a position of greater childcare responsibilities (Chodorow, 1978). Men continue to use traditional roles to oppress women by choosing not to share in childcare responsibilities. These men are said to be part of "men's movement" that is reactive, antifeminist and committed to maintaining male power (Morrel, 2005, p 275). Women are not presented with a choice, but rather take on the full responsibility, yet are again expected to equally compete with men without taking into account these unequal responsibilities within the home. \

While many authors, including Morrel (2005); Ratele (2001), recognise and acknowledge the existence of masculine definitions that are based largely on men as economic providers; there have also been suggestions of men as heterogeneous. According to Morrel (2005), there is a new men's movement that supports gender justice and is profeminist. This movement has formed part of some men's response to changing gender conditions in South Africa. Given the oppressive history of Apartheid in South Africa, one might anticipate that given black men's fight against issues of race and class, that equally so black men are now fighting to defend their masculinity

(Morrel, 2005; Ratele, 2001). This has however not been the case. There have been support for heterogeneous masculinities with some of the black men supporting gender equality and supporting women in their pursuit of careers, while others continue to express oppressive views that put men in power (Morrel, 2005).

The concept of women's liberation has been deeply rooted in a culture that has for many centuries compared women to men. Women have always had to measure up to men, while men's positions have remained the same. This enabled them to shift with more ease without worrying about being negatively affected. A man can come and go in the workplace without it negatively affecting his image in the workplace. A man can come and go in the home and his absence is not assumed to have any negative impact on the child's development. The responsibility lies with the mother who needs to be available for the children, while she is also not allowed to come and go at work if she wants to be promoted or taken seriously.

Women have been exploited because of their sexual difference and it is only through this difference that equality with themselves can be achieved (Irigaray, 1993). Because of the social inequalities that can be seen to favour men, women should not have to be equated with men. While this could be seen as reinforcing the idea that women cannot measure up to men (perhaps that they do not have the same capabilities), it could also be argued that socialisation has created different power dynamics based on the same difference. Because these power dynamics were created by men and continue to favour men (if one takes into account the flexibility with which men can move between their different roles), women will constantly have to be defining their equality through the same traditional ideals. There is a need to rather define the values of belonging to a given sex genre, whilst still respecting both genres (Irigaray, 1993). Women should not have to measure up to social constructs of men, and vice-versa. Equality and difference are not compatible. Equality applies within the outside of the world: women allowed to do the same jobs for the same pay as men, women pursuing their choice of careers and educating girls as much as boys (Oakley, 1993).

While the above argument might be true, it is important to take into account that gender personalities were reinforced by differences in the processes that identified boys and girls

(Burman, 1994). Their differing capacities prepared them each to assume their suited gender roles, hence enforcing inequality. While difference can create equality, it can also be seen to promote gender role behaviour. While traditional roles saw women as powerless, it is important that in making arguments about differences and being unequal that woman's agency and changing transcultural universalism are taken into account. Women's primary responsibilities can change in response to organisations of production (Chodorow, 1978).

Within the home things remain unchanged and the difference seems to only flourishes, thus making the external equality "a mere vision" (Oakley, 1993, p 199). Unlike thirty years ago where women were expected to give up their jobs upon marriage, the number of women returning to do the same work is low (Oakley, 1993). Those women returning to work are offered work that is assumed to be more compatible with a mother's maternal duties (Oakley, 1993). It is hard for women to leave their children because children are universally seen as passive, needing stimulation and innocent (Burman, 1994). Children are seen as helpless and in need of education and socialisation to train their direction into 'appropriate' behaviour (Burman, 1994). These have largely been based on socio-political expectations of how children are supposed to behave. Even though the theories upon which most of these discourses are based are problematic, as they fail to recognise the child's subjective organisation and agency (Burman, 1994), most women can be seen as having bought into these discourses. It is hard for mothers who want to work, yet are faced with the "choice" of either providing their child with needed developmental care, or working and being led to believe that this could affect their child's psychological well-being. The rhetoric of freedom of choice can be seen as a subtle oppression that presupposes certain conditions and promotes inequality (Burman, 1994). This fails to embrace women's differences, which means that their development of multiple identities is hampered. Because of policies that are assumed to be offering equality, the subtle oppression that is driven by socialisation makes it hard for women who want to work not to experience conflict between their desires for paid work and possibly raising psychopaths.

1.5. Women and Work: Why Women Work
Careers can be seen as major sources of life satisfaction because they are believed to fulfil many individual needs, including: social needs, recognition, respect, status and stimulation (Burn,

1996). Paid work can meet needs that might be harder for some women if they stay at home full time (Burn, 1996). The satisfaction, however, depends on the meaning they give to their roles. For some women, the economic dependence on their partner gives them less power within the home because they do not feel that they have personal economic resources (Burn, 1996). Given the level of violence in South Africa, this can leave women vulnerable and also possibly feeling powerless as they might be forced to depend on men for their economic needs. If women are not financially independent, it makes it harder for them to negotiate issues such as condom use, which places them at a greater risk of contracting HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted infections. Because of gender roles that view men's sexuality as stronger than women's, it is acceptable for men to engage in sexual relations with multiple partners (Pauw & Brenner, 1997). Because sexual relations can be often linked to violence, with women being forced to engage in sexual relations, if women rely on men for their economic needs it becomes harder to leave abusive relationships (Pauw & Brenner, 1997).

Added to the above economic reasons, the life of the homemaker is not portrayed positively by the media (Burn, 1996), and it is therefore not attractive for women to stay at home. Jobs such as child caretakers are not paid as well as other kinds of jobs (Segal, 1990). However, work can equally be a source of stress (Cooper & Lewis, 1993). According to Cooper and Lewis (1993), causes of stress are usually described in terms of job demands even if the demands are not restricted to the work environment. The demands to balance multiple roles within the home and the workplace can be contributing factors of stress. This is more so for careers that have long hours of work – such as an executive position – because when met with the demands in the home it can create an overload (Cooper & Lewis, 1993). The two roles can result in conflict, especially when the roles of childcare and work are believed to be incompatible (Cooper & Lewis, 1993). When women experience conflict they can feel torn between their children's needs and the work demands, which can be experienced as distress (Cooper & Lewis, 1993). This is because the two roles are competing for scarce time and energy (Cooper & Lewis, 1993).

1.6. Managing Transitions: Mothers Leading

Even with equal opportunities between men and women, mothers in the same occupational level as fathers are less likely than men to achieve higher levels of occupation (Hewlett, 2002;

Schoon, Martin & Ross, 2007). Little has changed in the structures of women's employment as organisations function along gendered lines based on the male model of work (Suraj-Narayan, 2005). The ideal employee is to a large extent someone who works full-time and without breaks for childcare or allowing interference from family demands (Burn, 1994; Cooper & Lewis, 1993; Wood, 1994). This means there is no taking time-off for maternity leave or for child care. Even though male employees have the option of taking paternity leave, it is a much shorter period of time than that given to women (Hosking, 2007). Because of these gendered role inequalities created by men to benefit men, current organisational systems and work practices fail to accommodate women's professional and personal needs (da Silva Wells, 2004). Men enforce sexual divisions through social roles to defend against their threatened powerlessness in the workplace (Chodorow, 1978). By denying women's presence and their femininity in the workplace, men are guaranteed their masculinity (Chodorow, 1978). This makes it difficult for women to assume leadership positions while equally being expected to assume feminine roles that are not accommodated by male gendered norms.

According to da Silva Wells (2004), the model of management is gendered – it is based on the assumption that the managers' responsibilities lie within the organisation only. Leadership is associated with power and masculinity and not femininity. This can create conflict for women as they are seen as feminine and powerless. Because of their femininity, women are not believed to possess effective leadership qualities. Even though leadership qualities associated with women - such as supportiveness and collaboration have been found to be as valuable in leadership positions as the masculine assertiveness and instrumentality, women occupying senior positions are not believed to have good leadership qualities (Wood, 1994). Added to the gendered leadership role, has been the added responsibilities within the home. According to da Silva Wells (2004), a woman's two worlds compete for attention, time and energy. It is for this reason that da Silva Wells (2004), believes women managers often encounter feelings of inadequacy and burnout. There is a heavy load that comes with the position of manager and being expected to be constantly preoccupied with the organisation. Because of their primary roles in the home, women's dedication and commitment to work is questioned.

Traditional gender roles determine that men need to be more involved in work and leave family responsibilities of childcare to women (Cooper & Lewis, 1993). According to Hewlett (2002), women with high-achieving, earning power and employment outside the home continue to carry the larger share of household responsibilities. Research findings have found that only 9% of men help with the household responsibilities that involve children and household chores (Hewlett, 2002). When men do get involved in responsibilities in the home, it is usually at the request of women. Women will usually delegate work to men, but mothers remain the primary caregiver i.e. men "baby-sit" their own children, while women care for the children (Chodorow, 1978). Because long hours demonstrate commitment to employment, women mothering will experience considerable pressure especially those parenting young children (Cooper & Lewis, 1993). If women then take time off work to deal with family matters, this is taken as an indication of their lack of commitment to employment, which is likely to affect their promotional opportunities. However, it is important to remember that definitions of masculinity are changing and while some men continue to hold the above beliefs, there are some men who support gender equality (Morrel, 2005).

Males dominate organisational norms that require managers to be available or present at all hours (da Siva Wells, 2004). Fathers are able to be present at work for longer periods than women because both their roles offer more flexibility. Men are able to freely schedule meetings in a short period of time or during odd hours of the day - such as late at night or very early in the morning (da Silva Wells, 2004). These issues affect women's abilities to balance work and family, because they are expected to be home at sometime to take on their primary roles in the home.

Despite women's emancipation through work policies and legislations, women managers continue to battle unfamiliar and unfriendly working environments dominated by traditional patriarchal attitudes (da Silva Wells, 2004). Their difference is seen as a deficiency as it lacks control, rationality and actions that are associated with management and with men (da Silva Wells, 2004). Furthermore, their management position places them in a double bind as they are not feminine enough because they are managers, or they are not "proper" managers because they are feminine (da Silva Wells, 2004). When women are feminine, they are not perceived as

management material, while they are devalued if they are too masculine. Women in management struggle to be taken seriously. The relationship in the workplace between men and women reflects the society's understanding of gender roles (da Silva Wells, 2004). Women constantly have to establish and reassert their authority as leaders. For black women, this means overcoming racial preconceptions, attitudes and sexism.

There are expectations of women to balance the responsibilities of the family and the demands of their careers (Winn, 2004); or to make the decision between work and family (Priester, 2007). For some women, the roles of motherhood and career are interdependent and in conflict, while the same is not true for fathers, which makes it easier for men to combine work and fatherhood (Altucher & Williams, 2003 as cited in Schoon et al, 2007). Added to this, institutional arrangements fail to accommodate women's realities in the workplace (Altucher & Williams, 2003 as cited in Schoon et al, 2007). For women managers, their experiences and identities are constructed in dynamic and inter-actional gendered social contexts (Suraj-Narayan, 2005). Women continue to struggle as a result of traditional sex-roles that affect their achievements within the job market. The conflict of having to make the decision to maintain a balance between motherhood and career is a challenging one that is likely to result in higher levels of inter-role conflict among working mothers. Because of the demands on women in executive positions, the inter-role conflict is likely to be higher, making it more challenging for these women to balance work and family. Added to this are the cultural constraints of black women having to balance motherhood and careers as they negatively affect women's well being - resulting in stress and feelings of guilt (Suls, Alliger, Learner & Wan, 1991 as cited in Guendouzi, 2006; Zimmerman, Bowling & McBride, 2001). This guilt has been partly attributed to the inherent society that women inhabit (Holcomb, 1998 as cited in Guendouzi, 2006). In a study by Guendouzi (2006), women equated their own children's behaviours with a lack of attention that comes from having a working mother.

1.7. Stress and Guilt

In keeping up with employment equity policies, women are advancing to managerial positions. However the challenges that confront women often result in distress and greater challenges because of the pressures to find balance between work and family roles. Added to this is the role

overload and bi-cultural role conflict which results from societal expectations (Suraj-Narayan, 2005). The outcome of this is substantial stress for women managers, which are unique to women in management positions (Suraj-Narayan, 2005). These include logistical constraints: schedule inflexibility and incompatibility, long working hours and late night meetings are just some of the factors that serve as sources of stress that make it difficult for women managers to balance work and family responsibilities (Suraj-Narayan, 2005). These have been found to decrease with flexible work schedules, and to better enable women managers to balance their work and family roles with more ease, hence reducing the work-family conflict and stressors that result from trying to juggle the two roles simultaneously (Cooper & Lewis, 1993; Mattis, 1994 as cited in Suraj-Narayan, 2005).

Women's diagnosis of stress is however one clouded in controversies. Research findings that previously diagnosed women as being more stressed than men claimed that this was because women only occupied one role (childcare) in comparison to men who occupy two roles (work and family) (Gove & Tudor, 1973). Because women only had one role it was argued that if they were dissatisfied with their one role they did not have another role to take pleasure. Even though women now occupy two roles, research findings still claim that women are more stressed than men (Gove & Tudor, 1973). It is questionable that women, despite however many roles they occupy, are diagnosed more often with stress than men. While it could be argued that women have more responsibilities than men, very little research has looked at the impact of work and family on men (Gove & Tudor, 1973). Young men are slowly embracing their childcare roles in the home and because they are not offered the same benefits to spend more time with their children, they could experience stress because they are unable to be with their children (Hosking, 2006). While a lot of has changed since 1973, there are some who still believe that men have the privilege of defining women's nature in their own interests (West & Zimmerman, 1998). Power is conferred by society and science though believed to be objective; it is influenced by cultural values making it an invaluable tool in resolving human problems (Unger, 1998).

The DSM-IV is one of the most commonly used methods of diagnosis in psychology. Like studies mentioned above, more females than males have been diagnosed with stress using the DSM. Given the many criticisms levelled against the DSM, the validity of its findings are just as

equally questionable as the above study suggesting women are more stressed than men. There have been many criticisms related to the DSM-IV and its gender bias. According to Hartung & Widiger (1998), one of the most controversial issues against the DSM-IV is its differential sex prevalence. The DSM-IV is said to have been involved in controversies because of "their questionable application to one sex relative to the other" (Ross, Frances & Widiger, 1995 as cited in Hartung & Widiger, 1998, p. 261). Hartung & Widiger (1998) raise concerns over the conclusions of differential sex prevalence rates stating sources of error and bias. They believe that the information in the DSM-IV is based on inconclusive publications from different individuals (Hartung & Widiger, 1998). Furthermore, there are questions about having no probability samples obtained by convenience, which subjects these studies to selection bias (Sher & Trull, 1996 as cited in Hartung & Widiger, 1998). It is said that differential prevalence rates in clinical settings favour males, e.g. under-diagnosis of gambling in females resulting in under representation in treatment programs (Hartung & Widiger, 1998). Likewise, males have been found to be more likely to be diagnosed with Schizophrenia, while community surveys show an equal sex ratio (Hartung & Widiger, 1998) – showing discrepancies that raise questions of validity.

Of the 21 disorders diagnosed in infancy, childhood or adolescence (those with sex ratios), 17 were believed to be more common in boys than girls (Hartung & Widiger, 1998). This differs with the diagnoses in adulthood where the proportions are marginally different (by only 4 diagnoses more in men) (Hartung & Widiger, 1998). There are studies that have shown females and patients of minority groups to be more likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia (Nathan & Langenbucher, 2000). Diagnosis of certain illnesses such as schizophrenia is not static, because of factors that are specific to particular groups and interaction with clinical course (Nathan & Langenbucher, 2000). How can women be diagnosed using such tools that, like traditional ideals, can be seen as oppressive as they associated women with madness?

1.8. Time

Time is a valuable commodity that cannot be expanded as there are only so many hours in a day, so many days in a week and so many weeks in a year. It is only through multi-tasking that time can be intensified (van der Lippe & Peters, 2007). It is for this reason that time would be a

central factor in issues related to work-family. With women entering the workforce, coordinating work and home activities has become more difficult for women working outside the home. Time pressure is believed to be a contributing factor that can cause a conflictual relationship between family and career, especially executive career positions. There are time pressures that are related to different roles and these often come into conflict with each other as time spent at work can make it difficult to focus on issues concerning the family. Studies that have looked at entrepreneurs suggest that they spend longer hours at work than the employees (Jamal, 1997 as cited in Kim, 2001). This means that entrepreneurs like managers will spend more time at work, which will leave them with little time to spend with their children. Even though women are often seen as able to multitask, according to Carlson et al. (1995), an individual can only perform one role at a time and trying to perform many roles simultaneously can result in conflict because of overload. There is likely to be work-family conflict pressures that will simultaneously interfere with each other – at times work demands will interfere with the quality of family life while at other times family pressures will interfere with the responsibilities at work (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). Work-family conflicts have been found to bear stronger negative relationships with job and life satisfaction than the family-work conflict (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998 as cited in Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). However, when certain roles have are more important than others, individuals seek to reduce the conflict resulting from the high importance by allocating more time to that role (Foster, 2006). This helps individuals achieve equilibrium, hence reducing conflict. It is easy to adjust family issues as they do not run on deadlines.

Other factors that have been found to cause conflict include: inflexible work schedule, amount and frequency of overtime, irregular shift work and work lasting longer than 9 hours (Carlson et al., 1995). Because these factors are outside of the employees' control, they can cause even more conflict for employees. They increase the work-family conflict as there is a greater amount of time being spent at work (Carlson et al., 1995). Organisations demand more time and energy from the employees, and because work contributes economically to the family's well-being, work demands are more compelling than family demands (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). This will again increase the work-family conflict for women who want to be with their children, but are compelled to be at work. Furthermore, long working hours indicate commitment, and women are likely to work the longer hours to avoid being questioned about their level of

commitment to work. If there are more demands within the home, there is likely to be conflict because it makes it harder for women to meet the demands at work (Carlson et al., 1995). This is likely to be the case for working women, especially those occupying executive positions and having younger children, (van der Lippe & Peters, 2007) because women continue to take on more responsibilities within the home. This means that women have demands to perform not only at home, but also within the home. According to Carlson et al. (1995), members that take on the responsibility of childcare have greater work-family conflict.

Time and energy are fixed, and women who are involved in multiple roles will inevitably experience conflicts that will impair their well-being (Marks, 1977 as cited in Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). However, while work-family conflict can impair the well-being of women juggling multiple roles, it can also promote psychological health (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). These were identified by Sieber (1974 as cited in Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999) in mechanisms that include: status enhancement (applying resources derived from one role (work) to another (family) – which will promote their well-being) and personality enrichment (transferring skills, attitudes, or perspectives from one role to solve problems in other roles).

The way organisations provide support – such as family-friendly workplaces – can help women in balancing work and family life, while also improving feelings of satisfaction (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). The introduction of flexitime would enable women to arrive and depart from work at variable times set by the management. This would allow women the flexibility to combine work and family without having to compromise on their choice of career (Cooper & Lewis, 1993). By providing women with support, there will be more control over work schedules and work demands, which will help buffer the work-family conflict (Voydanoff, 1988). Women who have more flexible work times are more successful in balancing their work and family roles. These women do not have to deal with pressures of possibly losing their jobs, being promoted or having their commitment questioned if they miss work to meet family obligations (Treas & Hilgeman, 2007). Job insecurity increases work-family conflict (Voydanoff, 2004).

1.9. Socialisation of Gender Roles

Gender is a social construct that has largely been influenced by socio-politico and cultural norms that specify roles for males and females, and social information that tells the difference between males and females (Burn, 1996; Wood, 1994). Appropriate gender-roles (norms that communicate what is appropriate and the different sex) behaviour is rewarded, while the inappropriate gender-role behaviour is punished (Burn, 1996). Traditional roles that socially condition women through culture, deeply held beliefs and values can form part of one's identity (Hall, 1990). This is however not static and can be negotiated based on internal and external factors. Issues at stake for an individual's self-definition are valuable in negotiating one's identity (Franchi & Swart, 2003). According to Franchi and Swart (2003), culture plays a significant role in the psychological adjustment of an individual to his/her world. From a young age children experience their world through their social environment. It is in their social environment that they define themselves in terms of their group membership. Their definition of self affects their social behaviour (Bennett & Sani, 2004). Part of the socialisation lies within the culture that subscribes certain roles and behaviours from women who grew up in these social environments. It is, however, possible for women to shift and develop individualistic strategies that will help them develop more positive self-concepts if they find their prescribed identity negative (Foster & Louw-Potgieter, 1991; Foster, 2006). Women that find their cultural identities oppressive and non-progressive can shift and develop their own individualistic identities that portray them in a more positive light. It is however important to note that an individual creates and maintains sameness and continued sense of self by continually re-negotiating their self-identity to accommodate (or integrate) new experiences (Franchi & Swart, 2003). This means that black women might are likely to re-negotiate their identities of recent developments related to women's rights to maintain their identities. This however requires one to contest historical power, the power to ascribe identity definitions to others and the power to reject cultural conceptions (Franchi & Swart, 2003). Individuals have a sense of self, identity ("the essence of being, an affinity with one's most sacred values" - Hall, 1990, p.197) that is influenced by a collective as a result of social conditioning (Hall, 1990). Identity develops as a result of deeply held values and beliefs about oneself. Because of differing beliefs about oneself, individuals will have different aspects of their identities depending on their beliefs.

1.9.1. Individual Components

People will be socially categorised with similarities and category differences accentuated and exaggerated by their categorisation (Foster, 2006; Foster & Louw-Potgieter, 1991). Members of one's own group are seen as more similar than those of a different group – women see themselves as more similar to each other than they are to men. People compare themselves with other individuals, which results in the development of a positive or negative sense of self or self-esteem (Foster, 2006; Foster & Louw-Potgieter, 1991). Working women will see themselves as belonging to a group that identifies them differently from those women working full time as stay-at-home moms. Because people fear being socially rejected, they will conform to societal or group expectations to avoid being socially rejected. According to Corder & Stephen (1984), women working outside the home view women that stay-at-home with little prestige, just as women who are not able to have children, or choose to remain childless are seen as deviant, unfeminine and unhealthy (Gillespie, 2003). This will likely create pressure for those women staying at home to go out and work, just as those women not having children might feel more pressure to have children.

However, women working are expected to spend more time with their children, while those working are expected to contribute financially to the home. Women who want to work are being forced to spend less time at work, while those who might not want to work are being forced to spend less time at home with their children. Because people have multiple selves that are important at given times; people will spend more time or value a particular role at given times (Carlson et al., 1995). With saliency the conflict can be resolved as women in either position can spend more time on the role that has higher significance, while the other role with a lower significance will receive less time. This helps them avoid conflict as they are able to reach a state of equilibrium that is important for their individual sense of self (Carlson et al., 1995). However, for equilibrium to be achieved, one needs to have a clearly defined sense of self that is easy to order (Carlson et al., 1995) i.e. a woman needs to know if she would like to occupy an executive position while mothering, or be in the home full-time. The expectations of what society expects from women and what women are actually doing causes confusion for women about their identity. Women who reject traditional female roles are perceived negatively by those who continue to hold traditional ideals. Working mothers occupying executive positions will compare

their performance with those of mothers working within the home as full time mothers. This form of comparison can result in guilt and self-doubt (Cooper & Lewis, 1993). Social expectations of mothers to be the primary care-givers of children is influential and women occupying executive positions can feel guilty because they might feel that they are neglecting their children. Women are expected to be freely available to their children and if they are working, it becomes hard to be available for their children. Socialised from childhood, even as adults people conform to cultural pressures to avoid being socially rejected (Burn, 1996). Even though women could be seen as having relinquished traditional ideals because they occupy certain positions that do not conform to traditional female roles, at a conscious (or unconscious) level these women could be conforming to traditional roles. Women (even those seen as non-traditional) can continue to take responsibility for childcare as this was a traditional role historically allocated to them (Cooper & Lewis, 1993). It is the women who take on the role and responsibility of children's well-being and the duties related to the home.

1.9.2. Social Components

People draw their identities from groups that occur in hierarchies based on status, privileges, and opportunities available or attributed to some groups, or wealth (Foster, 2006; Foster & Louw-Potgieter, 1991). The hierarchies vary in different societies. If people perceive the hierarchies to be unfair (illegitimate), there will be cognitive alternatives that will make it possible for them to change (Foster, 2006; Foster & Louw-Potgieter, 1991). The converse will occur if the group hierarchies are seen as fixed. Social mobility makes it possible for people to permeate groups and move beyond boundaries that separate them along categories (Foster, 2006; Foster & Louw-Potgieter, 1991; Foster, 2006). Secure and insecure identities will occur where there is either an absence of cognitive alternatives or potential changeability. Women staying at home believe that they can work without sacrificing motherhood and will adopt more individualistic strategies. This is true even for black women who come from more community oriented cultural groups. If these black women believe that their culture negatively impacts on their identity that differs from the culturally gendered one, they will adopt a role that fits in with their sense of self.

From childhood, children grow up socially defining themselves according to the group that they belong to (Bennett & Sani, 2004). Through psychological effects, the social definitions along

which children define themselves influence their social behaviour. Women who value traditional gender roles are least likely to demand assistance with child-care than those women who shy away from gender roles and demand a share of child-care responsibilities. Women were expected to seek assistance not for their personal convenience, but to help them raise better children (Burman, 1994). With many women entering work however, there has been a shift within the home as women have delegated a substantial amount of work in the home to hired help (though it remains primarily the woman's responsibility to delegate work to reduce her workload - Cooper & Lewis, 1993). Women are using preschool to help them with childcare. Despite women's pleas for equality, there appears to be difficulty in rejecting masculine and feminine behaviour intellectually, especially within the home as women seem to have an easier time implementing equality in the workplace (Cooper & Lewis, 1993). Women occupy executive positions and lead men in the workplaces, but even though they want equality in the home, they find it harder to implement equality in the home. Realising the incongruence between their beliefs and their behaviour, they find themselves dealing with inner conflict

1.10 Black Women: Culture and Self-Concept

Like blacks in the United States, South African blacks have been historically described in a negative self-concept because of their inferior status during apartheid. They were seen as inferior to whites who marginalised their personal identities and self-esteem. Because of the oppression and discrimination, blacks developed a negative self-concept of themselves (Belgrave & Allison, 2006). Having grown up being taught that "white is right; black is bad" (Grambs, 1965 as cited in Belgrave & Allison, 2006, p 208), they internalised the oppression that continues to make it hard for them to be accepted in the new democratic South Africa. Like generational cultural traditions that make it hard for women to be fully empowered without oppressive gender ideals, blacks are dealing with racial discrimination that continues to impact on their performance in areas of employment (e.g. Employment Equity Report findings, 2008).

1.11. Double Jeopardy

According to Houston (2004), black women's womanhood is experienced within the context of their blackness. Houston states that black women (black women refers to black African women and does not include generic Coloureds and women of Asian descent - including Indian women)

do not experience their gender and racial identity as separate (Collins 1990 as cited in Houston, 2004). A black woman applying for a job at the same time as a white woman would not be seen just as a woman applying for the position, but associations with cultural ideals come into play as well. Even though white women (and those from various racial groups) can be seen as having the same experience of womanhood, black women have the added experience of racism and class (Houston, 2004). The triple concept of class, sexism and racism suggests that black women have been largely disadvantaged and marginalised. This places them at a risk of possible simultaneous, multiple, self- and group-affirming ways that influences how they see themselves in many aspects of their social lives (Houston, 2004). Like cultural roles, it is easy to internalise ideas and concepts about oneself as inferior and to believe that these concepts are true. However, while this may be the case, it is important that black women's experiences be accounted for in a heterogeneous way (Houston, 2004) as not all women continue to be affected by historical inequalities.

Because of historical inequalities, being black and female has its own frustrations and certain things were never intended for black women. Black women have positions that have been "appropriated" for them and with changes in equality; they find themselves dealing with new traditions, while still faced with historical un-acceptance. They are followed by their gender and their race (Abrahams, 2004). Black South African women have suffered the racial prejudice and discrimination based on their gender (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006). Added to black women's struggle has been the lack of opportunities to quality education (Mathur-Helm, 2004) and social class. Though there have been much concerted efforts to redress issues of past racial discrimination, gender issues have not received the same concerted efforts (Mabokela, 2004). Even with Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Bills, black women continue to be underrepresented in executive positions, and this is even more so when one takes into account the demographics of South Africa (Brown, 2006). According to the Business Women's Association of South Africa (2008) white women occupy up to 55.5% of executive positions in the work place, while black women occupy only 29.7% of executive positions.

Black women are oppressed by traditional belief systems, are not valued as much and are culturally treated as if they are unable to think for themselves; yet there is an expectation for

them to do the hard work of maintaining the family and communities (Mabokela, 2004). Their authorities and expertise are often challenged by men, with black women in some areas reporting incidences of scrutiny by their white and Indian female counterparts (Mabokela, 2004). In their study, Potgieter and Moleko (2004) looked at race, gender and culture in higher education. They found that black female intellectuals' abilities are challenged because they are deemed "suspect" (Hooks, 1991 as cited in Potgieter & Moleko, 2004). Black women in executive positions do not have positive experiences as these positions are believed not to have been intended for women, especially black women. Black women are seen as incompetent and given positions because of tokenism (Potgieter & Moleko, 2004). Because of their assumed cultural ideals, black women are seen as least likely to cope in the workplace unless they make transitions to the "white way of doing things" (Potgieter & Moleko, 2004, p. 88). They are seen as unlikely to exercise authority over men because their cultural roles do not allow them to question men. Even though traditional roles equally affect women as all women were seen as inferior, black women are not seen as able to change. Furthermore, they are not seen as individuals and their experiences are homogenised and seen as applicable to the experiences of all black women. This threatens the dissolution of their individual self-constructed identities. In the same way that white women are now able to lead men, while previously this was not the case, black women have the ability to change and be leaders.

There are numerous, conflicting and altogether absent definitions and meanings of leadership (Rost, 1991 as cited in Parker, 2004). In her definition of leadership, Parker (an African American feminist) believes that one cannot view leadership as a set of universal constructs derived from a few, and yet be generalised to many groups. Her experience has been that the generalisations of dominant-culture institutions do not fit her experience as a black woman. Leadership is socially constructed. Meaning-centred approaches view leadership as a symbolic and inter-active process that creates, sustains and changes meaning in organisations (Parker, 2004). Men and masculinity form the gendered model of leadership and women occupying leadership positions are expected to take on these qualities to be effective leaders. Parker believes that leadership is a "localized and negotiated process of mutual influence that would theoretically accommodate multiple view-points and diverse situational challenges" (Parker, 2004, p 220). The organisational meaning held by individuals and groups is rooted in cultural

norms and values that have symbolic importance (Biggart & Hamilton, 1984; Rost, 1991; as cited in Parker, 2004). And so leadership emerges as a result of the constructions of the leader and the followers. Within workplaces, like other dominant-cultural organisations, the expectations associated with leadership have traditionally been in conflict with individual stereotypes about women, black women in particular (Parker, 2004). For example, women taking on assumed masculine traits are seen as being aggressive, yet the same behaviour in males is seen as acceptable. There are expectations of women to behave in a certain way that is different from men (Cooper & Lewis, 1993). But how are women supposed to lead effectively if they are negatively perceived when they take on "effective" masculine leadership traits, but yet are expected to be feminine?

There are issues of conflict related to black women being in executive positions and their abilities that might impact on the amount of time allocated to doing their work with a feeling of wanting to prove their abilities. This might possibly have an impact on how a balance is maintained between work and family.

1.12. Culture

According to Matsumoto (1994; 2000), culture can be defined as a set of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours that are shared by a group of people and are communicated through generations via varying means of communication. The conceptualisation of one's self depends on one's culture and socialisation (Belgrave & Allison, 2006). Culture can be a collective where people share interdependent views of one's self, or it can be individualistic, where one takes on independent views of one's self (Belgrave & Allison, 2006).It is within culture that gender roles are embedded, and children are socialised to take on different roles. Social structures and practices within cultures reflect and promote meaning through discourses and communication (Wood, 1994). Social images of gender try to persuade people that the images presented are the natural and correct ways for men and women to behave (Wood, 1994). Women take up their husband's name upon marriage in most cases and are expected to depend on men; while males are encouraged to be independent and provide for their family.

Culture prescribes certain behaviours that are "appropriate" for men and women. According to Belgrave and Allison (2006), African, Asian and Latin American countries have interdependent cultures; while countries in Europe and the United States have more independent cultures. Many women in Africa are believed to be more likely to have interdependent self-conceptualisations (knowledge and beliefs about their self) (Belgrave & Allison, 2006). This means that African women are more likely to see their self as interdependent on their social context, i.e. in relation to others besides white women. If a woman is a member of an interdependent culture, she has to make the decision about employment while taking her family into consideration. Because these cultures are interdependent and families are seen as very important, to fit in and have harmonious relationships women pay attention to others (Belgrave & Allison, 2006).

The inverse is true for more individualistic cultures – western cultures. In these cultures, there is more emphasis on uniqueness, and self interest (Belgrave & Allison, 2006). One's thoughts and actions are directed by one's well-being and self interest (Belgrave & Allison, 2006). It is easy for men in such cultures to share childcare roles and home responsibilities with their partners, while the same this is not true for interdependent cultures. In interdependent cultures, men seen as taking up feminine roles are seen as less masculine (Segal, 1990). Men in interdependent cultures are discouraged from sharing 'feminine' responsibilities and, wanting to fit in, they maintain traditional roles (Segal, 1990). However, in more western cultures, men are able to make their own decisions about such 'feminine' roles. The consequences of one's actions are not influenced by how others will be affected. There is less emphasis for individualistic cultures on social groups.

1.13. Research Question
How do black women in executive career positions balance motherhood and career?

Chapter 2: Method

2.1. Research Design

This study used an exploratory method of data collection in order to explore whether the selected group of black South African women in executive positions are able to achieve a successful balance between their high demanding careers and motherhood. A qualitative research method was chosen by the researcher because it offered participants the opportunity to individually relay their experiences in more detail without manipulating the participants or their experiences. Qualitative research attempts (exploratory method) to describe phenomena as it is rather than manipulate the variables (Parker, 1999). This method of research is open to changes as the responses are open-ended and are not complete like stories (they change over time and do not have a set ending) (Parker, 1999). This means that the findings are richer, more detailed and contextually relevant (De Vos, 1998).

2.2. Participants

The researcher interviewed six black women all occupying executive positions in various fields of work. This was done so as to offer a varying array of data for more enriched results. Two of the six participants owned their own companies, while the remaining four participants occupied senior positions in their respective organisations. Of the six women, three were married, while the remaining participants were not married but had children. Three of the participants had one child, while two had two children and the remaining participant had one child and had been pregnant with her second child at the time of the interview.

Participant	Age	Marital Status
1	36	Single
2	40	Married
3	38	Married
4	35	Married
5	50+	Single
6	41	Single

2.3. Participants and Procedure

The participants were chosen using a snow-ball sampling technique. This technique consists of two stages: the researcher locates part of the desired participants that is conveniently available or possesses the characteristics required by the researcher, and the individuals help by recruiting other participants who might be interested in partaking in the study (Huck, 2004).

Prior to the commencement of the study, the researcher located two black women in executive career positions who had expressed interest in taking part in the study. These women then forwarded the research information sheet to other women, including the Business Women's Association of South Africa (BWASA), to help locate other women in similar positions. An information sheet (Appendix 1) was sent to the two women located by the researcher and to other women's organisations – including Black Lawyers Women's Association and BWASA. The information sheet included information on the research topic, method of instrument (semi-structured interviews) and the method that would be used to gather the information (recorded interviews). Other information that was included was the researcher's email address, which participants were encouraged to use for any further queries or to inform the researcher of their interest to partake in the study. Interested participants contacted the researcher following which suitable time was arranged to schedule the interview.

Following the time arrangement for the interview, the interviews were conducted at the participant's place of employment. Prior to the interviews, participants were given consent forms (Appendix 2) and a form (Appendix 3) giving the researcher permission to record the interviews. This was done to enable the researcher to analyse the data after the research had been completed. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour.

Finding participant proved to be very challenging. The initial plan was to interview 8 women, however given the difficulties encountered in locating participants the number was decreased to 6. Given the demands of the positions the participants occupy, time was a major factor. With one participant, the research had to be cut short given the participants unexpected work demands. The same was true with another participant who had to be interviewed telephonically because she had been unable to make it to her office as she had another commitment. There were lots of

unexpected situations that made the process of gathering data challenging. Through supervision however, these were resolved and accepted as the nature of the chosen sample.

2.4. Instrument

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews. The questions asked were structured based on the literature consulted within the areas of the proposed interest of study. The interview schedule (Appendix 4) contained questions that related to motherhood, career, identity and social influences. Some questions were unstructured and were asked following participants responses. Participants answered all questions posed to them. They seemed to value the interest in the area and expressing pleasure in being able to contribute to research in the field of study. One appeared emotional when some questions were posed to her. She later expressed finding the study interesting as she had been dealing with some of the issues that formed the core of this study.

2.5. Data Analysis

Thematic content analysis was used by the researcher as the method of analysis. Thematic content analysis is a form of qualitative research where the researcher forms the central element of the information gained. The researcher conducts the interviews and analyses the findings. It explores, elaborates and systematises the significance of identified phenomena. It can further be seen as an illuminative representation of the meaning of issues that are delimited. Thematic content analysis was used as it's a useful technique for identifying the focus, intentions or trends of communication of a group or individual (Neuman,1995). This is important given the focus of the research on the impact of cultural and social factors and their role in women's negotiations of motherhood and their careers. By using thematic content analysis, it will be easier to detect propaganda's and to determine psychological/emotional states of the participants as individuals and as groups (Neuman, 1995). The researcher will be better able to determine the trends and patterns of behaviour, while also making inferences from participants underlying or inferred responses.

Five steps were followed by the researcher to help analyse the data. First the researcher familiarised himself with the data, i.e. immersed himself in the data. According to Terre Blanche

and Durrheim (1999), it is important to have a preliminary understanding of data and its meaning before analysing the data. This is important to do as it allows the researcher to familiarise him/herself with the data so as to know what interpretations will be supported by the data (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). This is also important as the researcher (narrator) has a voice. While it is important to maintain objectivity, reliability at times can depend on the visible participation of the researcher (Jarviluoma, Moisala & Vilkko, 2003). According to Jarviluoma et al (2003), recognising and acknowledging the researcher's participation recognises the reality of research and does not attempt to falsify it as objective. Following the first step, the researcher set general classes of the data from the specific instances (induced themes). The researcher looked at the material and tried to see which principles naturally correlated with the data (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The chosen themes were coded (3rd step) using different coloured highlighters. The coding was done by looking at the relevant themes that lay in lines, sentences and paragraphs (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). This is an important process as it breaks down the body of the data into meaningful pieces, which can be placed under code headings at a later stage (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) and Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall (1994), thematising and coding can be blended together because the themes change during coding.

Following the step-wise process (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999), the researcher spent some time elaborating on the data. This is because after selecting themes and coding, the researcher realised that some themes that had been grouped together could actually be put in different groups. This was done as a measure of precaution so as to structure the material to get a good account of the data (Banister et al., 1994; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The final step that the researcher followed was to interpret and check the data (Banister et al., 1994; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). This was done so as to eliminate any contradictory points that might have been made through some weak evidence (Banister et al., 1994; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

2.6. Ethical Consideration

All ethical issues were followed in the study as stipulated by the University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Research Committee. Interested participants took part in the study voluntarily and the

decision to participate or not in the study did not advantage or disadvantage them in any way. All participants' responses were kept confidential and no information that could identify participants is included in the research report. To protect the identity of the participants, participants have been given pseudonyms. The interview materials were not seen or heard by any person other than the researcher and the supervisor. Participants were informed of their right to refuse to answer question/s they deemed uncomfortable and were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any given time. The consent of all participants was obtained prior to participation in the study. The study did not pose any physical risks, but could pose some psychological ones. Participants were informed that should they experience any psychological problems resulting from their participation in the study, they are to seek telephonic counselling through Life-Line – the number was provided along with the information sheet. The participants were given the researcher and the supervisors details for any further questions and queries they might have about the research or for feedback on the findings. Ethical clearance was granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee (School of Human and Community Development - see Appendix 4)

CHAPTER 3: Findings and Discussion

In a country where racial and gender differences have dominated the social norms, largely influencing black women's identities both in the home and the workplace, trying to balance these two roles can be a challenge. Historically, white racial and gender domination was legitimised as a descending order was created to designate roles and positions. Black women did not feature as they had little or no degree of power. This is however changing as black women (as was the case with the participants in this study) are gaining independence and are negotiating new gender roles and embracing their multiple identities. Even though this has slowly been changing, the power dynamics have and continue to threaten women's emancipation as will be seen in the participants' detailed responses. Through the analysis of the participants' responses, four major themes were found in relation to participants' sense of balance between their executive careers and family. The findings demonstrate the contradictory nature of how women respond to the social changes that have enabled them to occupy executive positions, while also continually still being expected to primarily care for their children. While the participants can be seen struggling to negotiate their two roles, they are however able to find a balance. They have been able to move towards less traditional practices and are negotiating their multiple identities, contradicting many findings that have suggested otherwise.

To protect the identity of the participants, the participants have been given pseudonyms and certain information that could identify them has been omitted or changed.

3.1. The Balancing Act: Balancing Motherhood and Career

3.1.1. The Pressure to Balance Multiple-Roles

For the participants, the social construct of a woman as one whose sole role lay in the home, and the current trend of women both working and being primary caregivers was significant in this research. Given the demands placed on women working outside the home to both manage their roles in the home and in the workplace, there is immense pressure on participants to find a balance between their multiple demanding roles. This feeling of immense pressure was voiced by participants in relation to the difficulties around expectations in the workplace and in the home:

> *Researcher: If you could tell me about the pressures that you experience between your work and your role as a mother.*
>
> *Martha: So I think to answer your question more directly in terms of the pressures, it is the pressure in terms of trying to deliver in terms of the expectations of corporate… you need to be very client focused in terms of your delivery in terms of the expectations… the other side of course is with [the] children.*

It would seem that while women like Martha are dealing with the difficulties of delivering in the workplace, the implicit construct of women as responsible for their children's well-being places even more pressure on them to find a balance. The feeling of immense pressure by the participants means that women have partly accepted the notion of gender roles and work hard to live up to the expectations. Perhaps it is these feelings of pressure that have led to some research findings – such as those by Kossek and Ozeki (1998 as cited in Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999) – suggesting that women who try to balance multiple roles can experience conflict, especially when work is believed to interfere with family. Socialisation has been largely influential in getting women to buy into these constructs, making it harder for those women who choose not to conform to gender roles. It becomes very important to conform, however, despite feeling the need to conform, the desire to work remains, which means that women have to manage both roles without feeling that the children's well-being is jeopardised by their desires to work. As evident above however, striking a balance can be difficult:

> *Researcher: Do you think that you have been able to achieve the balance between your work and your family?*
>
> *Monica: It's a struggle, it's a struggle. Its something that I need to remind myself to do… it is a struggle, I'm managing it because I've made, not 100%, it will never be 100%.*

Women have been led to believe that they have the abilities to multi-task without this affecting their performances. However, some research findings by Cooper and Lewis (1993) suggest that an individual can only perform one role at a time. This means that it would be difficult to both work and be taking care of the children without the one interfering with the other. This means that Monica's difficulties around managing the balance should be expected. It would however, appear that she has bought into social constructs and compares herself to other women that have been set up as the model of how women ought to be managing their roles. This means that she

fails to fully acknowledge her abilities to find "her" sense of balance. She seems to be in a struggle, unable to accept her success at balancing her roles, and the expectations of how she ought to be. Despite her awareness of the impossible task of achieving 100% balance, the standard has been set and the pressure increased. Despite these difficulties Monica does however seem to be managing to find a balance. This is despite having to take on more responsibilities than the traditional woman who could not occupy an executive position:

> Monica: *I mean my mother worked, my dad worked but the pressures were not as high for them because I think they did their jobs and came home. I don't, I have to think about tomorrow, next month, the future, plan ahead, network. All those are just pressure, pressure, pressure!*

Monica's narrative above is a reflection of the increased pressures participants experience in relation to their occupational positions. Women occupying demanding positions are not given support to enable them to find a balance with more ease. Their demands seem to extend beyond the regular shifts or 9 hours suggested Carlson et al (1995), which means that they are expected to do more or the same as women working "regular" shifts despite having no free time to perform these roles. Monica seems to be expressing some sense of frustration at the level of biased and unfairness that contributes to her feeling such intense pressure. There is a feeling that perhaps the application of gender roles in current times is unfair as more is still expected from women as had been the case historically. Allocating enough time to ensuring that both roles receive adequate attention remains just as equally important. Findings by Greenhaus & Parasuraman (1999) suggest that if time pressures are not well managed, they can result in conflict between work and family time. To manage this, the participants seem to be spending more time at work as work does not appear to be as easily negotiable as family time:

> Judith: *the difference about being an executive woman is that you don't work subscribed hours… if a client calls it means you have to drop everything and attend to a clients needs. They can call anytime; they can call throughout the 7 days. Yes they might not call at certain hours, but you know sometimes… you can find a client does call you after hours and in that case I mean as an executive mother it could be breast feeding time, it could be time you allocated for your family…*

It would seem that participants, like Judith above, find the pressures in the workplace much more than the pressures within the home. The pressure in the home is there, but it is much harder to negotiate work time than it is to negotiate family time. This seems to again bring up some issues of difficulties around negotiating both roles and ensuring that neither role will suffer. One gets the feeling that while all women experience pressure, it is women occupying executive positions that perhaps experience more pressure as their time does not appear to be their own, but rather that of the company. There is a feeling of not wanting to disappoint clients, perhaps given the pressure to do well in the workplace. Mothers working are viewed very negatively, especially given that traditionally women were expected not to take up positions that interfered with their work. This could mean working extra time to ensure that the family is not seen as interfering with their responsibilities in the workplace. Furthermore, it would also seem that for the participants work is very important. It is something that they love to do and could experience greater conflict if they were not allowed to work. Their self-esteem and self-worth could be affected by their refusal to access the workplace.

Contrary to the above, working after hours or even during times allocated for the family can help reduce work-family conflict. Being able to work and take care of work demands at a given time means that one is able to fully focus on demands within the home with little conflict i.e. worrying about work. While the participants might be deemed unfit as they could be seen as neglecting their children, choosing their work over their family. This is quite the contrary as these women work to feed their children i.e. are providers (a gender role previously expected solely of men). Participants *"won't be able to feed her [child] if I'm [they] not working"*. It is often also the case that the family is seen as more understanding than clients. It's not always easy to negotiate the work-family time demands however. Having to work to provide for the family while also ensuring that the family is emotionally cared for can leave women in a double-bind:

> *Judith:* But balance is being able to make people around me understand; make myself number one understand if this is important for me. Because if it is important for me at that particular point in time, again everything moves with time, because right now it is important for me to be a mother. It's important for me to invest in my family and my own marriage. So right now you look at certain priorities at a given point in time, even whilst I'm chasing those priorities there will be one time when I have to get out my

house, leave my kids, leave my husband and get into the office and at that
particular time might be seen as imbalance.

Given the pressures experienced by women, the participants in particular, the ability to manage time is important. Judith above seems to manage her time by looking at the needs of a given role at a given time. This means that Judith is least likely to experience conflict as she will focus on the role that has higher saliency at a given time. This argument however could possibly be suggesting that women cannot both be working and have a family at the same time. It suggests that different roles have to be completed at different times to be able to manage. However, it also seems to agree with the findings mentioned earlier that one is able to achieve balance by managing one role at a time. This means that Judith will get to reduce her conflict without having to give up either role. She gets to fulfil her desires to be working, while also still being a mother. While society might see her as not coping and unable to meet her responsibilities in the home, on an individual level Judith is coping. She is able to negotiate her time and allocate it where she feels it is important at that given time.

Women had been previously kept out of executive positions because it was thought that these positions would affect their abilities in providing care for the children. These positions were seen as more demanding and likely to demand more time from women hence likely to decrease the amount of time women would spend with their children. However, quite the inverse seems to be true. Executive women seem to be benefiting from these positions. They feel more in control in these positions, which means that they are able to manage their time with more flexibility than women working "regular" hours. "*The most stressful job is the one where you have no control over; you know where somebody else pulls all the strings*" said one participant. This seems to contradict the study by Etzioni, (1969 as cited in Cinamon & Rich, 2005) that suggested that semi-professions offer maximum time for working mothers to work without feeling that they are neglecting their traditional roles. These studies seem to continually oppress women by trying t keep them out of senior positions as these two roles are presented as in conflict. Moving up the ladder can be advantageous and offer women more flexibility than other positions:

> Esther: *When you move up the ladder I want to assume that it is better because at*
> *least you can introduce some flexi-hours for yourself, obviously discussing*

it with your boss. But I can imagine if you are at the lower levels, where
there are so many people to report to, it becomes difficult.

Having to report to multiple people can be quite a laborious task. It means getting all the people to agree, which decreases the possibility of being able to take time-off when family matters arise. The inverse is however true for women occupying executive positions. These women have more flexibility and have to go through one person to negotiate their time. Furthermore, being in a non-executive position means that one does not have the advantage of control and power that someone in an executive position might have. These positions are however without challenges, especially given that the ideal employee is the one who works full-time without breaks for childcare or interference from the family demands (Burn, 1994; Cooper & Lewis, 1993; Wood, 1994). While being in an executive position might be an ideal position to negotiate time-off work, it could also possibly be hard for executive women to negotiate their hours in the workplace because of fear of possibly being seen as incompetent and/or not being promoted.

> *Researcher:* *So its motherhood, then work?*
> *Esther:* *It's motherhood then work, but obviously the demands for work, because also as a person you don't want to be associated with underperformance so that's when things become difficult. Not because you think work is more important, no! But you also want to build a reputation for yourself, a name for yourself, then you must try and be an over performer. You can't go for average, it doesn't work in life.*

So while it is possible for participants to negotiate their two roles, again the issue of time seems to be a factor. Traditionally women were prevented from occupying executive positions because unlike men, it was thought that the work demands would interfere with family. While women have gained access into these positions, these social constructs remain with participants like Esther having to rank the roles in order of priority. This seems to be something that has implicitly been sold to women as indicative of good mothering. Mothers are expected to place their personal aspirations ahead of the children, which mean that for women, childcare will determine how seriously she is taken in the workplace. This means mothers need to produce more results to feel like they are taken seriously. There seems to be an implicit suggestion by this that motherhood will impact on women's positions in the workplace. This leaves women in a double-bind because while they want to work (and have the abilities to fulfil their work) because

of the social constructs, it becomes harder for them to not be seen as not choosing their work over their children or vice-versa. In some cases, as was the case with some participants, maintaining boundaries while still maintaining their reputation, being taken seriously. *"Unless it's a do or die situation, you can't do it successively"*. Esther manages to negotiate her time even though it might seem to be quite the contrary. This is how she manages her work obligations and when she feels that the work interferes with her children's time she is able to speak up. This might however not always be the case for all women.

3.1.2. Work-Family Success: Making Time for the Family

Because work and family are seen as competing for the same fixed valuable commodity, time, how women manage their time becomes important if they are to achieve their sense of balance. So while *'clients [might] determine what you do with your time… at the same time you have to make sure that your family takes precedence over the things that you do'*. Participants seem to be managing to find a *'fine balance'* between their roles:

> *Mary:*   *I think making time for the family or my child after work, on weekends and we all go on holidays and it helps.*

Mary balances her career and family by making the time away from her work demands. Because she is able to work she has the financial means that enable her to go on holidays and spend time with her child. Even with the added demands of her career and not wanting to *'disappoint'* her clients, Mary does not have the raised concerns about not spending enough time with her child. Similar sentiments were evident in other participants' narratives:

> *Researcher:*   *How do you think you balancing the two [roles] because you said that there are things that you should do?*
> *Monica:*   *I balance… when you touch my family because of my background, my upbringing, family is very important. So what I will always make sure I do is spend time, spend time like on weekends. We have specific things that we plan for the weekends, or some evenings… we decide just to go and eat out; that kind of thing where now you have the time to focus.*

Even though Monica holds strong family values, this does not make it difficult for her to work. She manages to incorporate the family into her life. This means that she is able to have the family without having to give up her career. Together the family is able to plan family activities.

There does not appear to be conflict as has been suggested by other studies (see for example Cooper & Lewis, 1993). The same does not seem to be true for studies that suggest that women occupying managerial positions experience greater conflict because of work demands (see example Kasper et al., 2005). The findings seem to rather concur with those by Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1999) that suggest that juggling multiple roles can promote psychological health for some women. Like women in studies done by Sieber (1974 as cited in Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999), participants are applying the skills and resources from work to the family, which promotes their well-being.

> *Gillian:* *…You know yesterday she bumped, somebody hit her with a hockey ball here (indicating forehead) and she came home swollen and I'm like… 'But why didn't you call me?' She said if I had called you probably would have said, 'you know what girl, ask one-two-three-four-five and then the nurse must give you one-two-three-four-five and then…' Because I have such an orderly life and I want things to be done in a certain manner maybe that tends to translate in the way I mother my daughter. But it was in me trying to teach her how to be self-sufficient.*

Because women are working and have been successful in their work, they are able to confidently apply those skills that have enabled them to succeed at work in the home. This means that they are able to combine their two roles, hence decreasing issues of conflict that could possibly arise. This would seem to be the case for Gillian above as she translates her orderly nature into her mothering. With a self-sufficient child, she is able to manage her time better. Because of socialisation however, comparing herself to women who stay-at-home, she questions her adequacy in giving her child enough. Having partly been influenced by social discourses she wonders about having "*to juggle working because then the children get to benefit*". It is the expectation of how women are supposed to be that brings up issues of what role working mothers play and whether they are able to adequately fulfil these roles.

> *Mary:* *…while you are trying to be a provider, you also want to be a loving mother. So the challenge is knowing that you can balance the two…*
> *Researcher:* *Do you think that you have been able to achieve that balance?*
> *Mary:* *I think to a certain degree, but not always successfully".*

Traditionally men worked and provided for the families while women tended to household responsibilities. Now women and men are both working and providing for the families, but women are expected to still primarily tend to household responsibilities unaided. While the role of provider fulfils an important (and only) expected role of childcare for men, the same is not true for women. It is not enough for women to only be working and providing financially. Despite sharing the role of provider, women's role in the workplace appears to be separated from their primary role. Mary can't just provide financially for her child and be seen as being loving towards her child, but she has to extend herself and be a loving mother in the traditional sense. This can create doubt in women who though managing can question their abilities to successfully fulfil both roles. The beliefs about women not being able to successfully manage both roles are reinforced. Women then look at other women who are held up as good models of how women should be, which makes it harder to feel confident about their abilities. It becomes hard to be an individual, to be different. There is pressure to do more:

> Researcher: *what pressures do you experience between your work and your role as mother?*
> Esther: *an obvious is trying to balance the two roles because uh, without a doubt if you can't make that balance one suffers and it's always the children that suffer.*

The inability to find balance fuels worries about the children suffering. This can be hard to deal with when one takes into account the views held about children, e.g. innocent and needing protection (Burman, 1994). It is important that participants feel that they are being good mothers to feel successful, but like other issues raised earlier, they are all modelled on oppressive ideals. No one wants to feel like they have neglected their children. This hooks into their emotions, which can bring up feelings of guilt.

3.1.3. Distribution of Childcare and Household Duties

The division of traditional roles along gender lines is very important when looking at how women negotiate their roles. Because certain roles – such as mothering – have been socially constructed as appropriated for women, they create images about how women not only view themselves, but how they will negotiate their roles today. Gender roles can at times feel as if they contradict how women believe they ought to be:

> *Researcher: do you think that as a woman there are expectations of you that would not be expected of men?*
>
> *Esther: ... expectations I don't know, but practice is that women must work and look after children. but in my case I wouldn't call it expectations because I'm a single parent, so I have to do it in any event because the children stay with me. But I know that with other married women, even though their partners are free to do anything that they want to do, women must juggle between work and home.*

In the above narrative, there is a strong link made between tradition and motherhood. Women working must tend to responsibilities within the home. While perhaps acceptable for some women, for other women like Esther it is hard to understand why it remains a woman's responsibility to care for the child. Some participants find it hard to understand why men are not taking on more responsibilities within the home. It could be argued that men are now getting help in fulfilling their gender roles; the inverse is not true for women. Women seem to be more adversely affected by childbearing than men, even those men aspiring for parenthood at the same time as women (Hewlett, 2002; Schoon et al., 2007). Studies by Segal (1990) suggest that women are happiest and able to balance their roles when their partners share their responsibilities. Despite these findings, very few men choose to get involved in roles seen as appropriated for women. Even though Esther argues that because she is a single mother, the sole responsibility of childcare lies with her, it would be interesting to find out how much the father is involved in childcare responsibilities. But also given how Esther personally feels about gender role inequalities, it would be hard for her to acknowledge feeling powerless. Studies by Cooper and Lewis (1993) have suggested that it can be uncomfortable for an individual who feels that his/her beliefs are incongruent with the general views, yet conforming to these views despite their beliefs. At times it's not a question of feeling powerless, but rather that women are forced into these positions because the partner might refuse to take the child or leave without informing the mother. In some cases, as discussed by Esther, there is reluctance from the partner to be involved. It would seem that men choose to oppress women by not sharing in responsibilities within the home (Segal, 1990).

It is not all men who are choosing not to share in childcare responsibilities. Research findings by Hewlett (2002) have shown that 9% of men share in childcare responsibilities and household

chores. Segal (1990) believes that there has been a slow increase in the number of men challenging conventional modes of authority. These men are changing gender relations from the traditionally fixed principles that guided social roles the modern young generation of fathers want to share in childcare responsibilities (Hosking, 2007):

> *Researcher:*   *… tell me about the pressures that you experience between your work and your role as a mother.*
>
> *Martha:*   *… juggling in terms of one: the direct part of it in terms of their needs of having to pick my daughter and take her to school, although I must say I have huge, huge support from my husband so we are able to together juggle that… its not sorely on me… there are times when for me there is a meeting that I cannot move or what have you then I'll call him and he'll say, 'no problem, sure'. He'll pick up the kids and it actually; it's back and forth between us: who'll pick her up, who'll take her to school, depending on our schedule".*

Because of new opportunities available to women, men have been stripped-off their false power. Women like Martha above are juggling the responsibilities of childcare with help from their partners. Martha's husband has become an important supportive feature in Martha's balance of her work and family role i.e. picking up the kids at school when she is not able to do so. This seems to be the case for all participants who are married. The participant's seem to be married to men who are equally involved in responsibilities within the home. Those participants who are not married seem to find it difficult to find partners who would be as equally involved in childcare as the other participants. This was clearly expressed by both Esther and Monica who remain single and they attribute part of this difficulty to men feeling threatened by their success. However, just as women can struggle with issues of socialisation, men can also find it hard to be involved in childcare. It can be hard for men to feel that they can take on roles believed to be appropriated for women without it impacting their sense of self (Segal, 1990). It is Burn's (1996) belief that people conform to social expectations to avoid being rejected. This however does not mean that people are unable to make their own decision even when there is the possibility of being rejected. Men who feel that by not getting involved in their children's development will shift to accommodate their children. This can be very difficult:

> *Judith:*   *…society still shuns down men who are seen to be women friendly, friendly in the sense of a man who supports his wife, a brother who supports his sister is not seen to be a strong enough man… I do believe*

that it's moving very slowly, so its still expected. It is frowned upon if a man is assisting a woman in doing some of those family chores. As I say, there is nothing bad about the woman going home and doing some of these chores that are feminine. There are certain family duties that would seem to be done better by women, I can't expect my husband to breastfeed, but I will expect him to help me in bottle feeding.

It is very hard for women to feel supported by men because men taking on more responsibilities in the home have to deal with unsupportive social structures. While Judith wants her husband to be involved and help her with *'chores that are feminine',* she wants to be able to perform these chores because *'there are some of those [chores] that some of us women enjoy doing and as much as we enjoy doing them, we also don't want to be doing them because it's a must'*. Judith would like to do the chores because she wants to, she wants *'to take joy in cooking'* for her husband. At both a conscious and unconscious level, Judith wants her husband to take responsibility in childcare. However, it becomes hard for her to fully implement this change because of the social pressures on both men and women. She also seems to have some ambivalence as she does not want to let go of gender roles that she perceives as feminine. She does however value equality and this makes it hard for her to feel like she has to perform certain roles because society expects her to. Her experience seems to be that society fails to embrace and support women who value equality, but rather seems to follow ideals that seek to continually oppress women. This could be attributed to men feeling threatened by women. These men seem to find these women threatening and bringing up questions on their feelings on masculinity that seems to be brought into question by changing gender roles. Men do not initiate the help within the home, but rather women have to delegate responsibilities to their partners (Chodorow, 1978).

3.1.4. Working Mothers and Pre-school

Given the added responsibilities women now have to manage, to help ease the pressure many women have sought help from childminders. Even for those women whose partners share in childcare responsibilities, a substantial amount of the work remains the woman's responsibility and it is the woman who delegates work to hired help (Cooper & Lewis, 1993).

> Gillian: *...as a single parent I have to make sure that I have a helper, I've got a driver, I've got an extra car... so that not everything is on me... when you*

at work you also have to delegate… and you only concentrate on what needs to be done… otherwise it will be too much.

As an executive woman, Gillian has to deal with added pressures in the workplace, while also having to manage childcare responsibilities. While it might be easy to delegate responsibilities to partners, it is however difficult for Gillian to do so as a single parent. The added help however enables her to manage in the same way that a woman with a partner who shares the responsibilities in the home might be managing. This reduces the level of conflict for Gillian and will mean less pressure on her to do everything. Added resources such as pre-school offer these women extra support to help them provide better care for their children. These resources make it easier for women who have little time to spare to manage more important priorities, like work, without having to worry about less important things. Even though women working were previously seen as morally reprehensible (Burman, 1994) because they were not primarily available for their children, it has become very common today for women to use preschools while they are at work. Previously women who sought to use such resources were seen as inadequate and unable to provide for their children. However this would seem to have been more about maintaining power dynamics and not allow women to compete for the same positions with men. Having help however, does not mean that women have completely stopped performing those tasks allocated to their helpers:

> *Researcher:*   *Do you still do the house duties?*
> *Monica:*   *I cook… I will clean - I grew up cleaning, I grew up cooking, we grew up doing those things. I still do them, not to the extent that I used to do them. Because my mother used to want her stoep red, I don't have a red stoep. Its because I don't wanna do it. I have AMC pots because they always shiny, I don't have to steel-wool them like I grew up… I am domesticated but I am not fanatic".*

Because of high demands and time constraints, still feeling some obligation to perform certain role women have now found ways to continue these roles without having to spend the same amount of time as had been the case for women working mainly in the home. They however, as is the case with Monica above, are not as heavily invested in their traditional roles.

3.2. The Good-Enough Mother: The Pressure of Raising Psychologically Healthy Children

While participants do not explicitly speak about the pressures of developmental psychology discourses, they are however very clear about their fears of raising socially and psychologically unhealthy children. For some participants, there are pressures to be good-enough parents who are able to be with their children to offer them what they need to develop into psychologically healthy adults:

> Martha: uh, I'd say success at home would be twofold, one creating a loving and supportive environment for my children, and two, them knowing right from wrong, bringing up morally grounded children… a success from work would be my contribution on a developmental level…
> Researcher: So would you say you have been able to achieve the success both at home and at work?
> Martha: Well I would say there's a lot still to be done…

Drawing on pressures to raise psychologically healthy children, many women take on the responsibilities of their children's ill psychological health, blaming themselves for having not been good-enough mothers to their children (Burman, 1994). Developmental theories that have developed constructs of good-enough mothers place enormous responsibility on women for their children's healthy development. Even though it's possible that Martha is raising a psychologically healthy child who might not be affected by her absence, there are fears of possibly having failed because she was not as involved as has been dictated by society. Martha is preoccupied with how her children will grow and does not seem to be focused on how they are doing now. Her concerns seem to be related more to the future and how they will develop. Her children's needs have become inviolable categories and she treats their behaviour as evidence for her good mothering skills and does not see how her focus on their behaviour is a reflection of powerful socio-political preoccupations of the culture that is placing the pressure on her to be a 'good-enough' mother (Woodhead, 1990 as cited in Burman, 1994). One wonders if she is also worried that her children might develop psychological problems as a result of lack of good-enough mothering experience.

> Researcher: And what does [that] success mean in your own sense?

> *Gillian:*   *I'm happy… when I look at my daughter I know that I'm a successful mother because I see how she behaves, very quiet, very reserved uh but extremely intelligent.*

Raising healthy children is a powerful and important discourse for the participants. Taking on socialised definitions of healthy children, for Gillian how her child behaves and how she sees her child are mutually dependent (Burman, 1994). Her daughter's behaviour indicates her success at having fulfilled the pressure of being a good mother. Because of psychological arguments that unfairly place mothers as essential providers for their children (Woolet & Phoenix, 1993), raising psychologically healthy children is accompanied by pride and joy as is the case for Gillian. Because of women's primary role in their child's development, there is explicit pressure on participants to get it right, failure to do so can lead to blame, which could negatively affect women's view of themselves as mothers.

Women are told that they have the freedom to choose, however the freedom of choice is a rhetoric that subtly oppresses women by failing to recognise the inequality of developmental theories that blame them for children's ill mental health. This makes the desire for participants to maintain a significant balance as women's mothering role is seen as important. It is hard for participants to express satisfaction in professional achievement as the measure of success tends to be in their ability to have succeeded in raising children.

> *Gillian:*   *… I would say I'm very successful because that project of mine, which is motherhood, has yielded something that I'm very proud of… out of a score of 10 I would give myself a score of 8 1/2".*

Being able to raise healthy children (as a single mother) serves as an important measure of her overall success. In the example above, Gillian feels very proud that she has managed to raise an intelligent daughter despite having to juggle multiple roles as a single mother and a career woman. Developmental psychology has mostly focused on nuclear families with the mother as the caregiver and the father as the breadwinner. Women who were unmarried were morally expected to give up their children for adoption so that they would have the opportunity to live within a secure stable family (Burman, 1994). Bowlby's developmental theory supported such notions adding that the mother needs to be present in the home. He argued that in cases where mothers were not able to be fully present because they needed to work, their children's

development would be negatively impacted (Burman, 1994). Women were portrayed as objects and sources of their children's affection means that mothers who fail to provide their children with affection will fail their children. These beliefs seem to have been very influential in Gillian's life. Having been a single parent fighting the odds of possibly failing her child and yet having been able to raise a child that she can be proud of is very important for her. She has been able to defy theories that have argued against mothers working and not being fully present. It would appear that the pressure to perform this role well has been good for Gillian. Despite experiencing pressure between her two roles, she is happy to work.

3.3. Motherhood and Meaning: What Motherhood Means for Women and their Identities

Single or married, all six participants expressed the desire to work without having to give up motherhood. Similar findings were evident in studies by Hewlett (2002). The findings also indicated that women are happiest when they do not have to sacrifice motherhood. Motherhood seems to be significant for many women, especially given how it can shape their lives and how they perceive themselves:

> *Researcher:*   *And your views on women who choose to remain childless?*
> *Gillian:*   *I think it's a loss, I think so. I think there is no satisfaction than knowing that there is little thing that loves you unconditionally number one. Number two: that looks up to you for everything, guidance, protection, everything, entertainment, you name it. And they model themselves according to you. So for me really I don't think I would be very happy if I didn't have a child; and also I'm responsible for my company but the responsibility for another human-being is different. It extends beyond just paying rent and making sure that load-shedding doesn't damage your equipment and so on. Its about somebody in, there is no second chance actually. The thin is its not something that you trained to do… so if a woman would say, 'I don't want children' I would advice them against it. I would think secondly from a medical point of view, if you have given birth to a child there are some benefits, like breast cancer – there is a protection against breast cancer – and so forth and so forth. Would I have another baby child? In another life I think I would still have two.*

Here it is very clear that motherhood plays a very significant role in Gillian's life. Socialised through psychological and medical discourses, Gillian holds very strong views on motherhood and believes that only through motherhood and mothering has she been able to find purpose and

meaning (Kruger, 2006; Richardson, 1993). For Gillian this is an important social norm that she believes other women ought to share. Her views of women who do not have children are negative and resemble those in a study by Gillepsie (2003). Gillepsie's (2003) study showed that childless women were seen as unhealthy and lacking as they are unable to share in the significance of motherhood. For Gillian while people can be taught to work, being a mother is something driven by instincts and lots of responsibility. There is the responsibility to get it right, especially since they do not get a *'second chance'*. Added to the responsibility has been the rewards some women have found through motherhood. It offers them a feeling of self-importance and value, being able to care for the child can help women with their self-esteem as they are able to feel like they are contributing to something. Developmental psychology has socialised women to see value in mothering, especially given it's importance in shaping children's lives. Their roles are given more value than men's because men can come and go without it impacting on their child's development, while the same is not true for women. Even though work is important for Gillian, being a mother is an important role that she would not be willing to give up for her career.

3.4. Young Ones: Managing the Pressures of an Executive Position and Young Children

Given the enormous social and psychological pressures and responsibilities that come with being a mother, women mothering young children experience increased pressure. As mentioned earlier, women have been led to believe that their roles in shaping children's development are a significant one without any *'second chance[s]'*. There is a feeling of greater need from children as they are seen as dependent on mothers. They are seen as lacking in knowledge, hence the need to be educated and socialised to train them in the appropriate direction (Burman, 1994).

> Gillian: *I would never sacrifice my life at home for my career. I think it would have to always be done in par… when my daughter got older I took a risky job, which is being an executive, and I think when she grows much older I probably will do things that I would have wanted to do when she was much younger but I couldn't because I had to take care of her.*

Like developmental theory, in the extract above, Gillian sees children as moving through various stages of development. Developmental psychology sees children and their development as

unilear and fixed and fails to recognise their subjectivity and agency (Burman, 1994). Like the body needing vitamins to grow, Burman (1994) believes that when her child was younger she needed her more for her development; Gillian was unable to take jobs that were risky. One can imagine that for Gillian even brief separation would feel like death for a child and had far reaching consequences. Because many women like Gillian have bought into the psychological and social discourses, even though they would like to be working in *'risky jobs'*, it becomes difficult for them to take these roles as they fear possibly neglecting young innocent children. However, contrary to these beliefs, children of employed mothers have not been found to experience separation as stressful as has been suggested by Bowlby (Burman, 1994).

3.4.1. Job Satisfaction

There has been an increase in the number of women that are entering executive career positions. Even though research findings seem to suggest that women occupying these demanding careers experience conflict between their work and family roles, many women are still opting to work and continue to fill these positions. The desire to work forms an important part of participants' life satisfaction:

Researcher: *Would you change your career for the sake of marriage?*
Gillian: *Well if that person pays me R70 000 a month maybe (laughs). I think it would be something to discuss. I'm not one person to sit at home… I strive on constant stimulation. If my mind does not work, I get easily bored so I don't see myself staying at home and doing nothing. That I cannot do! I have to get involved in something, and something very challenging…I don't have anything against women that stay at home, I don't. As long as it works for them. For me it wouldn't work, I need intellectual stimulation and I don't think I'll find it at home".*

Judith: *…do I have to work? No I don't have to work. I don't have to work, but it is a natural stimulus that I would need because I would like to be stimulated and I believe I would be frustrated if I didn't go out there and be active and do something…*

Women like Gillian and Judith above, find being at home isolating and not intellectually stimulating. While there are financial benefits to being able to work, for Gillian, being able to work offers more constant stimulation that she does not believe can be found in childcare. The

participants would rather combine their work with motherhood. Rather than having to choose, for participants combining both roles presents as the ideal. In studies that looked at men who stayed home with the children full-time, it was found that these men (despite taking pleasure in childcare responsibilities) would rather be working than staying at home (Segal, 1990). It would seem that while the same is true for women, there is not as much encouragement for women to work, certainly no freedom to choose any career. Because women are expected to find mothering as naturally stimulating as the level of pleasure men find in the work. This does not seem to be true for Judith and other participants. It is however possible to find women whose pleasure lies in being stay-at-home moms just as there are fathers who would take pleasure in being full-time dads. However, given the low status attributed to stay-at-home moms, its unlikely that these women would stay home. While historical it was socially acceptable for women not to work and to rely on their partners for financial support, in recent times it has become a necessity for women to contribute financially to the household, especially for participants and women who are single parents. While it might have been the social norm for mothers to encourage their daughter to stay home with their children, this seems to have changed. There seems to be more value in being able to provide for one's own financial needs. This has partly been influenced by the increasing rate of violence against women in South Africa. When women don't have to rely on their partners for their financial well-being, they are least likely to remain in abusive relationships.

> Researcher: *What does it mean for you to work?*
> Martha: *It means independence more than anything… my mom said, when I was growing up which is kind of ingrained, is never to rely on a man for money.*

Given the positive outcomes of being able to work as mentioned above, hence giving them more power at home. Because women, like Martha are able to work, they do not have to rely on their partners for financial support.

> Gillian: *…When you are a less educated black woman, the challenges become more because if you cannot afford to put food on the table, men tend to be abusive. The scorch of HIV for women there is more women than men that have got HIV and if you are in a relationship you can't say no. you don't*

> *negotiate that sexual relationship you get HIV. I think it's a fair thing and it's common amongst young black women, HIV.*

Men have been socially constructed as different from women. This has allowed them greater freedom to have multiple sexual relationships partners. Because men have been socially constructed as different from women, they have been allowed greater freedom that allowed them to have multiple sexual relationship partners. Added to the high rate of violence has been the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. If men are socially encouraged to engage in sexual relations with multiple partners, this can have negative consequences for women, especially since they are encouraged to be subservient to men. If women don't earn a living and have to depend on their partners for support, they can find themselves in powerless positions as they are unable to negotiate condom use because they fear that their partners might leave them without any financial support. Women are at a higher risk of HIV/AIDS (Pauw & Brenner, 1997). At times men use violence and threats to get women to comply. When women have the financial resources they are however in a powerful position to exercise their independence (Pauw & Brenner, 1997).

Given women's increased equality in the workplace, their financial independence has threatened men's social power over them. Previously men maintained their power in the workplaces by preventing women from entering certain career positions, however this has changed and women have entered fields that had previously been reserved for men, hence further threatening men's power. However, never the less, the home has become the place where men maintain power over women by enforcing traditional roles and not partaking in childcare responsibilities or chores deemed feminine.

> *Researcher:*   *What are the challenges that you face as a black woman?*
> *Gillian:*   *...I think personally the challenge has been people. Men get scared of you when you are a black executive. When you black, you drive a big black Mercedes they look at you and say, 'ooh, she must be very domineering; uh, she must be a control freak'. To get a partner becomes very, you need a very mature person.*

Men refuse to accept women who threaten their power. They prefer to sustain their power in relationships and see executive women who *'drive a big black Mercedes'* as a threat. Black women are expected to be more traditional and subservient to men. Black women who challenge

these beliefs are portrayed negatively and seen as defying this position, disrespecting and dishonouring men. Gillian struggles to find a partner who does not feel threatened by her independence. The fact that she works and can afford to do things for herself threatens some men's identities as they see their roles as redundant. Men value patriarchy because it enables them to continue to be dominant over women. These men want to continue to define their masculinity based on their oppression of women:

> Researcher: *Do you think that there are certain expectations of women that would not otherwise be expected of men?*
>
> Monica: *I think Ja! It's a man's world my dad actually told me that. I know that and I believe that. He always said to me, 'the sky is the limit, this is a man's world you've got to make it your own' and it's true. All the laws are made by men. There is one simple thing that always makes me understand that, and it's very simple, nothing fancy. Even if I'm flying SAA, they tell you, 'you know the rules, please watch this, when this happens do this'. There is a part where when you have to evacuate the plane, women are supposed to take off their high-heels and the men go through, and I'm like I run in these things. Why do they think remove all high-heels and the men are sitting with their shoes? Of course it would be women! So who made the rules, who made that rule? Some man safety officer somewhere decided that's it!*

There are expectations of women to manage. There is pressure on women to manage issues of equality and socialisation. Women are expected to shift their liberalist discourses and to fit in with men's *'laws'*. Having been brought up in a patriarchal society, in the above narrative Monica is caught in a binary position where she expresses her awareness of how society has been largely governed by men, and her difficulties with living in a world that does not accommodate women and rather expects them to shift their views to fit in a *'man's world'*. Women's abilities continue to be measured by men using men's standards.

It would seem that though gender roles and men's measure of what is normal, women continue to be treated unequally. This is to the benefit of men. The participants are challenging patriarchal discourses, while men remain resistant to changes and create ways to keep women in patriarchal roles. It would seem that its men who are struggling to adjust to women.

While women can and do shift along groups if they feel that their group identities are in conflict with their identity, the shift becomes difficult for women when they are continually being oppressed through the internalised psychological and social discourses to prevent them from gaining equality. Furthermore, they take pride in their abilities to manage work and family. Men seem to be struggling with their identities because they have defined themselves along with their traditional roles. Their identities have now come under threat, and because of their historical powerful influences on women, they are trying to portray women as unable to find balance, not coping when the inverse is actually true. Given the implications of how these findings challenge studies and arguments made about women, there needs to be more engagement with men and their discourses so that rather than continue to oppress women through traditional roles, they can engage with perceived threats to their identities.

3.5. Being a Woman in a Men's World

3.5.1. Women and Leadership: Expectations of Women in the Workplace

Being a woman and occupying an executive position can be very challenging. While men are able to occupy senior positions without their gender impacting on their integrity in the workplace, the same is not true for women. Womanhood seems to interfere with women's position in the workplace and affects their work experiences:

> *Researcher:* *Do you think that there are expectations of you as a woman that are not expected of men?*
> *Mary:* *I think in the workplace the woman is supposed, you can't put a foot wrong as a woman. There is no room for error, and failure is not an option. Because simply by taking on that leading role it means that you actually saying that you capable and you need to prove your capabilities. Uh, there is no room for error. I don't think that women are forgiven lightly because it becomes pretty, there exceptions to say, 'well, women can't really do it. They don't get it right all the time' yet we can. We are pushed harder to get results for the things that we do.*

There is pressure on women to do things right all the time. Because of social ideals that have kept women out of the workplace, executive positions have been predominantly occupied by men. Women were not and are continually not seen as competent executives. The ideal employee

is based on the male model whose historical role has had very little interference from the family or gender role. This has created immense pressure for women occupying executive positions. Because they are equated to men who are thought to be perfect and capable, women have to work harder than men to earn the same approval as men i.e. be seen as competent and able. While men might be seen as having made an error of judgement in the workplace, women's mistakes are taken as reflections of their inabilities. Women are expected to exceed human expectations and complete their work without any errors. Mary above seems to have internalised this pressure and is pushing herself to be seen as perfect. There is immense pressure on women to compete at a level that is beyond men's expected level of performance. The pressure creates the impression of the executive position as an unattractive one that will prevent many women entering it. Women have been presented as incompetent when clearly they have the abilities and work harder than men. Not only doe women work harder, but unlike men they have the added responsibilities of childcare:

> *Judith:*   *...being an executive mother where you work with other professionals who are men who don't have the added responsibility of having to look after families. Men go home expecting that they will find everything in order. Even if there is a crisis, generally the female figure in the family is expected to take care of that, even if you going to have emergency travelling. The female executives, one of the challenges you have is that you cannot like how man would be, for a man its easy to leave from the office and say, 'I have to now get to Cape Town or to London for the next 3 days'. Because the wife is going to bring his, is going to pack his bag and bring them to the office; whereas as a mother and the wife you don't have a wife who is going to do that for you, which then makes a male executive much more mobile and flexible which then means he might then be given much more, much better opportunities than women. because he seems to be flexible, he'd be readily available.*

Being able to balance work and family can be challenging. Because women are still expected to be primary caregivers, assuming leadership positions can be hard for women, especially if they are expected to take time-off for the family yet cant work over weekends as they cant be seen missing time out with their children. This makes it difficult for women to compete equally with men given these added demands placed on them. Executive women are expected to check-in with their children, which mean that they might not be given opportunities to travel as often as executive men. Women's childbearing negatively affects their executive positions in a way that

male executives are not impacted (Hewlett, 2002; Schoon et al., 2007). Because women's traditional roles include doing chores within the home, and because executive women have to pack their own bags they don't have men's luxury of having a female do the 'feminine' chores that will make it easier for them to work and travel. Because motherhood is seen as impacting on women's commitment in the workplace, they are least likely to be given more responsibilities. Women's competencies and abilities are then brought into question without it being taken into account that women are dealing with more pressures and demands than men. Organisational systems and work practices that have been influenced by patriarchy fail to benefit men and also fail to accommodate women's professional and personal needs (da Silva Wells, 2004). Gender role ideals continue to be employed to undermine women's equality in the workplace, which means that men retain their executive powers and their dominance over women. While there have been some changes with men now able to get paternity leave, the duration of the leave is not the same as that given to women. This continues to perpetuate the idea that children need women more than they do men, which in-turn means that women are away from work for longer periods, hence again impacting on their promotional opportunities. Policies of equality are ineffective as women continue to be oppressed because of gender roles that are continually being used to make women doubt their abilities in the workplace:

> *Researcher:*   *Do you think that as a woman there are expectations of you that would not otherwise be expected of men?*
> *Gillian:*   *I think sometimes your employees believe just because you a woman you supposed to be soft. When you become hard they say you becoming a man. It becomes a bit of a challenge in a work environment because you want to try and understand, you know, the dynamics of other people's lives from a woman's perspective. But then when you try and instil discipline then you seen as a villain. Uh, I think men don't expect women to be very aggressive in business. If you are very aggressive then they have other things they call you. But I think women have a role in business, I think our management style is very different. We tend to be multi-tasking, very orderly, bringing what I would call the estrogenic effects, the emotional way of looking at things.*

Gillian raises questions about how women and expectations in the workplace and society. Because women have been traditionally defined as feminine, they are expected to behave in a particular way. They are expected to be *'soft'* as Gillian says both socially and in the workplace.

This leaves women in a double-bind because they are expected to be soft even in leadership positions, even though masculinity remains the definition of good leadership. Those women who display these masculine traits when enforcing leadership in the workplace, rather than be seen as good leaders they are thought to be trying to be men. This makes the managing task difficult because women are seen as incompetent if you not authoritative and managing. Similar contradictions were found in other studies that looked at women dealing with the conflicts of managerial positions (Burn, 1996; da Silva Wells, 2004). Women are not seen as individuals with their own histories, but are rather seen as a group and so are expected to behave in a particular way that is associated with the group. It would however also seem that women themselves have partly internalised these socialised behaviours in the way they manage. Gillian tries to implement some of things that she has been socialised to believe about women.

> Researcher: And women relate well to you when you more assertive?
> Esther: Women find it difficult because you know aggressive behaviour is associated with men, so even men they tend to, 'okay, is this what is happening here?' because they expect you to be this sweet woman who knows her place, and when you take them head-on, they will call you names. You're no longer assertive, but you are aggressive. JA, assertiveness is something that must be reserved for them as it will and women also, I mean I think sometimes we are own worst enemies because we have taken this approach that for us to be acceptable we must be sweet, we must be weak, we must be extra-nice. You see it doesn't work that way, it doest work that way!

Men are finding it very difficult to deal with women who challenge their positions in the workplace. Because of patriarchy, men in the workplace expect women to continually be subservient and to maintain their gender roles in their conduct with them. Like certain positions that had previously been reserved for men, certain behaviour is reserved for men. Men and women have been socialised along these ideals and not only are men reacting negatively towards women taking up their authority in the workplace, but women look upon these women negatively. Pressured by the desire to fit-in, women conform to the social expectations out of fear of being seen as outcasts and viewed as bad women. While this is acceptable for other women, Esther perceives this as illegitimate and she has made alternative cognitive changes that have enabled her to carry out her position at work with success. Not wanting to be defined exclusively along traditional ideals of femininity, Esther has shifted and has confidently taken on

alternative behaviours that have socially been associated with men. Because of equality, women have been enabled to seek alternatives to secure their identities.

However the pressure to be equal means that women are working hard because they are *'expected probably to be in-par with men, [as] that will always be a level above'*. This partly denies the significance of women's diversity. While equality runs the risk of continually enforcing power and social value over others, women's experiences have been socially different and their different experiences will likely influence how they behave. Rather than look at women homogeneously as has been the case in how women are treated in the workplaces, more focus could be placed on looking at the difference and diversity of women, (Maynard, 2001), this means that they can be true to themselves. Women instead of being subjected to male oppression because they threaten their power and identity can express diversity without worrying about being labelled as wanting to be male. While women have traditionally been defined as different and had been and continue to be oppressed because of their difference, there needs to be focus on the analysis of social relations that have influenced the oppressive traditional ideals (Maynard, 2001).

3.6. Black Working Women and The Burden of Culture

For black women, their lives have been structured through the dominant order of racial oppression, gender oppression and also through the effects of class division. Their lives have been marked by double oppression – by males and other women - to maintain their own supremacy (Maynard & Winn, 1997). The participants, there was very little said about their racial oppression, rather a lot was said about their cultural differences and their class inequalities. The participants spoke about how they were expected to do more as in comparison to other women from varying racial groups. Participants also mentioned how they were deprived of the same opportunities that white women had been privileged to have and continue to have. However given the recent developments in South Africa as far as social policies that encourage equality and affirmative action, participants also spoke about the opportunities that are now accessible to women and how it was up to women to now access them.

3.6.1. Being Black: How Culture Oppresses Black Women

Gender roles are embedded within culture and how one sees oneself is dependent on their culture and socialisation (Belgrave & Allison, 2006). Cultural images have been presented to women as natural and correct and women have taken these images for their own identities:

> Researcher: *Does that mean you would perform certain roles that are expected of you?*
> Gillian: *I told you I'm a Pedi woman, so I know what my role is as a Pedi woman – even though I'm a business person.*
> Researcher: *What is that role?*
> Gillian: *You know in our culture uh, you have to serve a man. You know in my house they know I serve. I'm in the service industry so I take this from my boardroom to home. Come to my house, be a guest and you will be served perfect star treatment… yes I mean doing household chores, cook (I mean I love cooking), I bake every Thursday. So those are the things that I despite being a business woman, the Pedi woman in me still remains. It's not something that I would trade my high-heels or my suits and I become a woman.*

While Gillian occupies an executive position and has relinquished her traditional role by being in the workplace, she remains steadfast and unwilling to relinquish her cultural role in the home. She is aware of the cultural expectations of her as a Pedi woman and takes pride in being able to meet these cultural expectations. While things have changed in the workplace, things remain largely unchanged in the home (Oakley, 1993). Cultural beliefs remain embedded in women who see gender roles as natural and correct. Women such as Gillian feel that taking up different roles would be trading their cultural identities as women for something that is not woman. Because Gillian performs a role that traditionally has been associated with a man, when in the home there is a feeling that she needs to leave the oppositional part of her at work to take on the more subservient role in the home that is culturally acceptable and that appropriates her as a woman. It is hard for Gillian to merge her multiple roles, and she has rather separated them so that she is able to deal with the conflict in the workplace. While ensuring that socially she gains approval from her cultural group that sees her partly as conforming. It is particularly challenging when one belongs to an interdependent culture to make decisions without paying attention to others (Belgrave & Allison, 2006). It is important that one maintains harmonious relationships and fits-in, which at times might mean compromising one's beliefs or behaviour. It becomes difficult to

merge personal beliefs with cultural beliefs when one feels that cultural beliefs are oppressive (Cooper & Lewis, 1993):

> *Researcher:*   *And at home, when you go and visit his family is there an expectation of you to…*
>
> *Martha:*   *Well there is an expectation yes, but I'd say I also can't complain in the sense that its also stuff that he is expected to do. The thing that used to irk me the most growing up is that as a girl you must do this, therefore my brother didn't really have that many chores; whereas when I go to my in-laws, fine yes there is an expectation that I help with breakfast and I help with dinner and all that… so there are expectations as a makoti (bride), whereas at my home, I'm just like whatever. If someone else hasn't cooked then we'll get Nandos and we're good.*

To deal with the conflict of having to perform tasks and chores that are culturally expected but contradict their personal views, women seem to rationalise their behaviour. There is the dilemma of having been culturally brought up to believe that certain behaviours are appropriated for particular genders. There is a feeling that women are expected to do more around the home than are men. Given the cultural ideals that designated men's roles to be solely within the workplace and only partly in the home, it is easy to see how this might be true. There is an uneven distribution of work within the home for Martha. While in her own home she is able to share the responsibilities with her husband, the same is not true when she visits her in-laws. At her in-laws she is expected to perform the roles that go against her beliefs. The mother-in-law could be seen as someone who enforces the cultural beliefs and hence perpetuates gender inequality (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006). While she is able to not observe these cultural practices in her home, even when her mother-in-law visits, she is however unable to do so when she is at her in-laws. Being a 'makoti' means that there are requirements that she has to fulfil and these are rooted in culturally oppressive powers. It is difficult for women to break away from these oppressive cultural practices and women often perform these roles to maintain harmony and not to be isolated. There are pressures for women to conform to cultural beliefs in order to be accepted and not be seen as modern women who have no respect for culture. Given that Martha, Gillian and all the other participants occupy executive positions, because these positions contradict cultural roles of women as subservient and inferior to men, it is easy to blame their careers for their changing beliefs and attitudes. There is the fear of being perceived as bad by one's cultural group and

being isolated, being perceived as not evolved enough by the western feminists (Long & Zietkiewicz, 2006).

> *Researcher:*   *So do you think there are those [expectations] that are added on by the fact that you are a black woman?*
> *Judith:*   *Certainly! There are a number of things that are happening in black societies that don't happen in white societies. For example: a number of family gatherings, black societies put much more pressure on women from a planning preparation point of view. As a black woman you not expected to come to a family function and just sit and have your meal and socialise and leave, which then means you have to put more time in the week leading up to preparation of the family gathering and even afterwards. So which means the way we juggle time is actually, we expected to actually do more as black women that what other races are expected to do…*

There are pressures on black women, culturally to perform given tasks that require lots of time. As black executive women, this means that women have to take time out of their work to be able to perform these cultural roles. There are higher expectations of black women to do more. Black women are going back-and-forth trying to find ways of living up to oppressive cultural practices, while also dealing with liberal ideals of trying to be modern women. It becomes difficult for black women to be seen as modern if they are seen practicing their cultural roles. Black women are believed to possibly only succeed in their executive positions if they adopt western ideals (Potgieter & Moleko, 2004). It becomes harder for black women seen practicing cultural beliefs to be taken seriously in the workplace and they have to work harder to prove their abilities:

> *Judith:*   *…we also have much more to prove because any mistakes that are made by black women unfortunately become a generalisation more than a specific issue; a specific set back pertaining to that person or even the marketing circumstances around a particular professional set back. Every black woman gets painted the same to say, 'you see you can't trust these people, you can't rely on these people'. so as a black woman executive, there is much more pressure on you not just for yourself but for the broader society, for other black women who also rely and look up to you.*

Black women are not only dealing with the pressures of having to prove their abilities as women in the workplace, but have to prove their abilities as black women. They have the added pressures that have largely been influenced by cultural beliefs about black women, and historical

racial inequalities that deemed black women inferior. Black women are more scrutinised than women in other racial groups (Mabokela, 2004). Their intellectual abilities are questioned (Potgieter & Moleko, 2004). When they make mistakes, rather than this being seen as an error, it is seen as an indication of black women's incompetency. This places enormous pressure on women to perform not only for themselves, but to maintain a racial image of other black women. Black women are not seen as individuals, but their experiences are homogenised and believed to be applicable to experiences of all black women. Their identity is defined on a group level. This is significant as it threatens the dissolution of their individual self-constructed identities. Because identity is about having a sense of belonging, this means that black women will continually be oppressed by the racial and gender ideals because all black women will be constructed in the same way. They will take on the responsibility that has been placed on them by men and women from other racial groups. It is quite extreme that one has to take on the responsibility of representing other women as this adds extreme pressure on women to perform because they do not want to disappoint other women.

Given South Africa's apartheid history, the atrocities that appropriated certain benefits for white meant that black women were deprived of the privileges that white women had. While equality policies have given black and white women opportunities to perform in the same arena, there are descriptions of differing experiences that place white women at a higher performance level than black women:

> *Researcher:*   *and in the workplace do you feel that there is different treatment that might not be similar to that of white women?*
>
> *Gillian:*   *I don't, you know what? I actually don't even have a white woman friend so I don't know if I were able to compare myself with them. But I think they come from a very strong background, academically, financially, socially. So if you look at a 36 year old white woman and you look at me, we probably, I'm far behind in terms of achievement because they had families who support them or they had fathers that were in business so they've hooked them up with whomever and they've managed to travel, they probably exposed. I probably would not fare the same with another white woman. But I think I would score lower than a white woman. But I think now if you a black woman and you skilled, you know what you want, this is the time to be in South Africa. The sky is the limit.*

It is harder for black women to find support from their cultural groups because changing roles threaten their cultural practices. White women because of their cultural groups that are more individual enable them to gain easier access to various positions in the workplaces. Black women, like Gillian, are expected to perform on the same level as white women despite what Gillian sees as an advantageous position given their access to more opportunities. This she believes will enable them to fare better than black women. However it is hard to reflect on these differences and inequalities and Gillian quickly shifts her thought and focuses on the current opportunities that are available for black women. She dismisses the inequalities that black women have been subjected to because of apartheid and rather sees current women's inabilities to access these opportunities as a consequence of their own doing. She does not fully acknowledge the historical impact of apartheid on women, the subject to class inequalities and the cultural ideals that have oppressed women. South Africa has been democratic since 1994; however, women continue to be subjected to racial discriminations in the workplace:

> *Martha:*   *...in terms of some of the client, just blatantly racist things and you sort of take it in your stride.*

Women seem to dismiss the racial oppression and its significance on their lives and their experiences in the workplace. The changes in the workplaces possibly make it hard for women to acknowledge their histories because it seems as if the focus remains on the past and they are doing little to look at the opportunities available to them.

Racial and cultural discourses are oppressive and continually make working challenging for black women. It is impossible for black women to discard the image of the culturally black woman who is seen as inferior and not competent. Because of affirmative action, it is easy to see black women as occupying these positions to meet quotas and not because they deserve these positions. This adds more pressure on black women to prove their abilities. Added to this, it is difficult for black women to develop their own identity because they are seen as a group rather than individuals. While apartheid has had an impact on many women, there are some who have been able to overcome racial discrimination and cultural oppression and are negotiating their own personal identities. This certainly seems to be case for the participants. Though there are

pressures for the participants to fit certain cultural identities, they are negotiating their culture and their changing beliefs and are not experiencing extreme conflict.

3.7. Strengths and Limitations of the Study

3.7.1. Strengths

The qualitative nature of this study enabled the researcher to closely engage with the participants' personal experiences and gain more insight into this area of study. Having used a qualitative method of research, the findings, though not generalised, contradicts quantitative research findings that possibly failed to engage with personal views. While there is lots of research in this area, very little has focused on black South African women, but have rather tried to generalise findings from white women without taking into account various factors that can affect black women's abilities to negotiate social roles. This research has added to the accumulation of knowledge in this under-researched area in South Africa.

Given the level of participants' positions, anonymity was a critical issue for the participants. It was very important that they feel that their responses would remain anonymous and assuring them about the anonymity and confidentiality as per ethics code ensured that participants were able to express themselves freely. These were issues that participants related to closely and were able to connect with the critical question that formed the core of this study.

3.7.2. Limitations

While the researcher was able to gather six participants, finding participants proved to be quite challenging which meant that a much smaller number of participants were used. Time proved to be of major concern for the participants, which meant that at times interviews were a bit more rushed or took part under circumstances that would not otherwise provide the best raw data.

Some of the participants were well known and it's likely that their status might have led to responses being closely monitored. Other factors that might have been factors of concern include the participants' gender. It is possible that participants might have felt uncomfortable being interviewed by a male on issues that affect women. It is however also possible that having a male

felt less threatening and judgemental, which would make it easier for the participants to freely express their views.

<u>3.7.3. Researcher's Reflections</u>

Following on the honours research that formed the base of this masters research, the research approached this research project clouded with personal judgements. This included feeling that participants would be unable to manage to find balance given literature gathered and other research findings. The research did not critically look at these findings and rather expected to add to the literature available that suggests contrary findings to those found by this study.

Given the difficulties finding participants for this study and having to travel to the participants areas of employment, this proved to be a challenge that at times raised doubts about the success of the research. Added to this were the power dynamics favouring participants, which meant that at times participants would make appointment times but change these when work demands arose. The relationships felt fragile and trying not to break the relationship meant having to repress negative feelings that might have possibly interfered with the interview process.

The interview process was mostly positive with most participants taking a keen interest into the area of study. While they all had varying reasons for taking part in the study, most were happy to share their stories because of what they hoped would come from the findings. It is however unclear what impact having a male interviewer had on the participants' responses. For the researcher, the interview process was enlightening and informative. While one might expect a level of discomfort for the participants, this was not the case. The interview process was relaxed and the good rapport was easily established between the participants and the researcher. The participants appeared to take as much pleasure in the interview process as the researcher in interviewing them. Transcribing the data was however laborious though it enabled the researcher to engage with the data even more.

Given the researcher's lack of ability to critically look at the data meant that the analysis was mostly superficial with most of its basis on other findings. The researcher did not initially look at the data with an open mind, but rather the judgement formed the binoculars for this research.

However through supervision and engaging with more critical literature the researcher was able to change focus and analyse the data as is without trying to fit the findings into research that presented women as pathological and unable to manage. While the attempt was made to bring in a theory, this seems to have not worked adequately and perhaps looking at other literature that applied the theory directly with issues in this area of study would have been more beneficial.

3.7.4. Conclusion

This research report offered more insight into the issues affecting black executive mothers and their sense of balance between work and family. The researcher was able to explore the social, cultural, and racial issues that have influenced the participants' views. Using thematic content analysis, the researcher was able to establish that participants hold very strong views related to work and family. Work is very important for the participants, however equally so is their work. Despite research findings that suggest that women experience conflict between work and family, the participants while struggling have been able to achieve a sense of balance. Married participants are able to get help from their partners, while those participants not married find it hard to find partners who are supportive of their career aspirations. Socialisation seems to have largely influenced the participants and their views on gender roles. It would seem that participants' struggle with these issues, however given their changed views on gender roles find it hard to admit feeling the pressure to adhere to traditional roles. However men seem to have difficulties accepting women as equal and holding the same positions as the participants. This seems to threaten their sense of identity and as a result they have continued to oppress women by maintaining traditional gender roles. They have made it difficult for women to feel like they can work and be mothers, however even though they struggle and feel immense pressure to do things right, they are managing. Working women are compared to stay-at-home moms and made to believe that they are not doing enough. It would appear that the participants with younger children have more difficulties given the enormous pressure to raise psychologically healthy children.

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Appendix 1: Subject Information Sheet

Hi,

My name is Itumeleng Mamabolo. I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am conducting research on Black women in executive career positions and their ability to achieve a "successful" balance between their work and family. I am interested in looking at how black women with a child/children balance motherhood and career. I, under the supervision of Mr. Malose Langa (qualified psychologist), would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Participation in this research will entail an interview by me at a venue most suitable for you. The interview will last approximately one hour. With your permission this interview will be recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Participation is voluntary, and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. All of your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you would be included in the research report. The interview materials (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person other than the researcher (me) and my supervisor. Although direct quotes will be used in the final report, any information that may identify you will be emitted. You may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point. After the study has been completed and results obtained, you will be contacted for feedback on the findings. The study does not pose any physical or psychological distress, but you are advised to seek psychological counselling telephonically or face-to-face through Life Line (011) 728 1347.

Volunteers interested in participating in the study are welcome to approach the researcher, or contact me at 072 786 9366 or via e-mail at grizzlytumi@gmail.com. All respondents will be contacted, and participants will be selected based on order of response.

Your participation in this study would be appreciated. This research will contribute both to a larger body of knowledge on developing programs that help women balance work and career, and developing

university programs for females in maintaining balance between university work and social issues within the university environment.

Yours sincerely

Itumeleng Mamabolo

Appendix 2: Consent form

Consent to be interviewed

I, _____ consent to being interviewed by Itumeleng Mamabolo for his exploratory study on black women in executive positions, and their sense of balance in their careers and motherhood.

I understand that:

- Participation in this interview is voluntary.
- That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time without personal consequence.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.
- The researcher is permitted to include direct quotes as long as no identifying information is revealed.

Signature of interviewee

Signature of researcher

Appendix 2: Consent for the interview to be audio-taped

I, _____ consent to have my interview with Itumeleng Mamabolo for his exploratory study of Black women in executive positions, and their sense of balance in their careers and motherhood to be audio-taped.

I understand that:

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any other person at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher.
- Tapes will be kept in a locked cupboard that only the researcher has access to.
- All tape recordings will be destroyed after the research is examined.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

Signature of interviewee

Signature of researcher

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

1. What pressure/s do you experience between your work and your role as a mother?
2. How would you define success at home and at work?
3. How well do you manage to achieve a balance between work demands and your family?
4. Do you think that as a woman there are expectations of you that would not be otherwise expected of men?
5. Does your position in your career impact on cultural expectations that are expected from you as woman?