A STUDY EXPLORING THE CAREER ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN LIBRARIANS IN SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

BY

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Library and Information Science

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Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.
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ABSTRACT

The lowly status of female librarians has been noted in libraries in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. Contrary to the position overseas, little has been written on it in South Africa and even less on how women librarians themselves perceive their position. This aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of women librarians in certain tertiary institutions regarding the following questions:

1) To what extent has gender/sex impacted on the career positioning of female librarians?

2) Have any other obstacles impeded the career advancement of female librarians and if so, what were they?

3) When female librarians apply for promotion, what are their actual experiences?

4) To what extent has race impacted on the career positioning of female librarians?

A feminist constructionist methodology was used to explore perceptions of female librarians at four Western Cape tertiary institutions. Using thematic analysis the following categories and themes emerged:

The category obstacles to advancement which includes the themes patriarchy across race and class, patriarchy and male attitudes, gender discrimination in recruitment and selection, affirmative action and employment equity, exclusion from networks, support, socialisation and lack
of confidence, socialisation and adherence to traditional gender roles, socialisation and the importance of family responsibilities, socialisation and IT training, ageism as a result of socialisation, double proof, socialisation and institutional culture.

The category strategies for advancement which include the themes mentors, role models, membership of professional organisations, aggression (being pushy), higher qualifications and promotion.

The category women's view of the future.

The findings indicate that sex segregation is the norm and that women librarians perceive themselves to be oppressed by patriarchal social relations and the consequent unequal power relations that are transferred and replicated in the workplace. Institutional culture, exclusion from networks, socialization, lack of mentors and role models all play a role in marginalising women librarians.

Recent political and legislative changes that could be to their advantage, the election of a feminine leadership for LIASA and the appointment of female directors have led to optimism. While most are encouraged, the results show that white women in some instances feel threatened by affirmative action. Black (African) female librarians appear to be almost totally marginalised as shown by their absence from the sample and institutional staffing patterns still reflect the effects of apartheid.
Recent changes are encouraging, but generally the research finds that women librarians lack a feminist analysis of their situation that is essential to challenge existing power relations in libraries.

The final part of the dissertation provides practical suggestions for the present study as well as areas for future study.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Women represent roughly 80% of all library workers (Beck, 1992:30; Martin, 1983:243), but research has shown that women do not achieve managerial positions in proportion to their representation in the profession (Harris, 1986:31; Heim, 1982:3; Murgai, 1991: 681). Studies overseas have further documented salary discrepancies with male librarians in North America earning more than their female counterparts in various categories of jobs (Braunagel, 1979:643; Harris, 1986:31).

Several studies attributed the difference in achievement and career advancement between male and female librarians to women falling short on certain criteria (Martin, 1983:244; Moran, 1983:334). Based on these studies, it was assumed that women only had to match men in publishing, participation in professional organisations as well as other factors commonly associated with career success, to reach managerial positions in libraries.
In contrast to this assumption, other studies argued for a causal link between women’s subjugated position in society and in the workplace (Beck, 1992:30; Harris, 1992:12). The argument was that working women, just like women in society in general, are subject to patriarchy and sex-role stereotyping. It would therefore follow that the low status of women in society at large would be reflected in the workplace. In the same way that women’s work is denigrated in society, so will it be devalued in the workplace. Feminists in turn point out that women’s work is devalued because it is women doing the work (Harris, 1992:36).

Various feminist writers also postulate a relationship between patriarchy and capitalism. There is no consensus on the nature of the relationship, but it is agreed that patriarchy engenders roles both in the family and in the workplace. It creates certain expectations of both males and females in terms of roles and institutionalises power in male hands whether in the home, society, or the political and economic sphere (Kemp, 1994:107). These stereotypical ideas held by both men and women of what roles each sex is supposed to fulfil constrain both sexes and therefore limits women’s achievement and ambition.

Another feature of the relationship is that capitalism benefits from the patriarchal devaluation of women’s work in the home and the workplace.
Women, because they are women, can therefore be paid lower wages on the assumption that men are the main breadwinners. Women, by means of their unpaid labour in the domestic sphere, sustain capitalism's labour force without costing capitalism anything. Kemp, 1994:106) writes that the fact that most women still assume the bulk of housework proves that women have not been able to benefit from formal employment by negotiating a trade-off for less domestic labour.

Women are channelled into certain types of work and into certain occupations reflective of their low status and lack of power in society. To illustrate this point, writers refer to the large numbers of women in professions like nursing, teaching, librarianship and social work. Within these professions, the workplace is structured in such a fashion that most women are further relegated to lower status, low paying job categories and sectors, and never achieve managerial positions in proportion to their numbers in the professions.

Men in librarianship, for example, show a preference for sectors perceived to have a higher status, like university librarianship and rare book librarianship, leaving children and school librarianship to women (Hildenbrand, 1985:191). Consequently the relatively few men in these professions generally advance to senior positions quite quickly. Several feminists have pointed out that men
in many cases enter these professions precisely because they know that they would move quickly through the ranks (Harris, 1992: 27). Institutional cultures, that value and reward masculinity, have further played a role in devaluing the contribution of working women.

It is thus concluded that the features outlined above have caused librarianship, along with nursing, social work and teaching, to be identified as a sex-segregated profession that is characterised by a predominantly female workforce with the minority male population concentrated at senior managerial levels (Irvine, 1985:235; Luck, 1991:25; McDermott, 1998a).

Postmodern and black feminists have warned, however, that women’s situations differ depending on the specificity of historical forces bearing on the situation. This makes it difficult to generalise about women and to find global solutions. Regardless of the opinion on where discrimination against working women originated, most women find their worth undervalued and underpaid. This has been the subject of many books and articles (Sinclair, 1991:1; Rees, 1992:12). In librarianship, most studies have tended to be comparative surveys quantifying the relative positions of men and women in libraries. Very few studies allowed women librarians the opportunity to articulate their own opinions on the matter, and even fewer studies have investigated the situation in South Africa.
Relatively little, generally speaking, has been written in South Africa about the position of female librarians. Only one study by Anna Louw (1989) published in the *South African Journal of Library and Information Science* could be located. The study established that women librarians in South Africa, like their counterparts abroad, also suffer the same low status. Louw (1989:308) attributed it to women’s lower achievement in terms of three indicators commonly linked to career success namely rate of publication, participation in professional activities and qualifications.

Furthermore, the library associations in the country like LIASA, and its predecessor, SAILIS, have never been used as a platform for activism around women’s subjective position in libraries. This is in stark contrast to the situation in other countries like the USA, where a rich literature exists on the subject and the issue is taken up by the bodies that librarians organise themselves in, like the American Library Association and the Association of Research Libraries. These organisations even regularly publish a comparative analysis of salaries of male and female librarians to gauge progress in closing the gap in salary differences that exist.

This silence awakens curiosity and leads to speculation on whether female librarians in South Africa experience themselves as still inferior in status and
produced more articles than women in South Africa’s accredited library science journal, as Louw’s study indicated (1989:307).

This lack of South African literature on the subject is also indicative of the male bias in the choice of research topics (Jayarantne & Stewart, 1991:86). It has left a crucial topic for women librarians in South Africa under-researched. In this regard, Hildenbrand wrote that most library history was created by men for men (1992:19). The universality of this gap in documenting the female perspective prompted Hannigan & Crew (1993:32) to exhort women librarians to focus on topics of interest to them. Heeding this call, the present study’s purpose is therefore to document the experiences and opinions of female librarians in selected Western Cape tertiary institutions with regards to career advancement.

1.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the present research was to explore women librarians’ discourses as to whether they experience a struggle to advance within the library and information science sector and if they do, why they have this problem.
Arising out of this main aim, the following research questions evolved to form the basis for the research and direct the investigation:

1) To what extent has gender/sex impacted on the career positioning of female librarians?
2) Have any other obstacles impeded the career advancement of female librarians and if so, what were they?
3) When female librarians apply for promotion, what are their actual experiences?
4) To what extent has race impacted on the career positioning of female librarians?

To explain the rationale of the fourth question, it is necessary to say that before 1994, South Africans were categorised by race into white, coloured, Indian and African. Those classified as white were privileged in terms of jobs, education, access to housing, health and other benefits (Msimang, 2001). After 1994, racial legislation was abolished and new legislation sought to redress the disadvantaged groups that included all women, black men and disabled people. Instrumental legislation is the Employment Equity Act of 1998 that strives to bring about equity in the workplace through affirmative action. The legislation prohibits discrimination on the basis of
race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, belief, and so forth (Msimang, 2001).

At this stage the researcher’s view on sex/gender must be illuminated. While sex is biologically given, gender is a social construct (Kemp, 1994:118). Ginwala observes that gender is “...a socially constructed understanding of what it is to be a man and what it is to be a woman, with defined characteristics which are encompassed in the notion of femininity and masculinity in our society (1991:62)”. Since constructions of masculinity/femininity are artificial, they can also differ culturally, historically and geographically (Ginwala, 1991:63) and therefore challenged.

1.3 OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION

The dissertation will be structured in the following way:

Chapter One: This chapter provides an introduction to the subject and a rationale for the investigation. It will attempt to explain the choice of subject, outline the research questions and aim of the study, provide a brief resume of the methodology used, document the limitations of the study and also provide an outline of the structure of all the chapters.
Chapter Two: This chapter will investigate the literature on women and work and from this analysis a theoretical and conceptual framework for the study will be provided.

Chapter Three: In this chapter specific theories of sex discrimination will be discussed and analysed to further feed into the theoretical framework that will serve as basis for the study.

Chapter Four: Here the choice of methodology will be discussed and motivated and data collection procedures and methods of analysis will be explained.

Chapter Five will report on the results of the study and analyse the findings.

Chapter Six will review the theoretical context of the study, summarise the main findings, draw conclusions, make practical suggestions on the use of the study and indicate areas for future research.
CHAPTER TWO

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Female librarians are integral to the female workforce and any examination of their situation must take into account the working conditions of women generally. Additionally, conditions in the workplace cannot be seen in isolation from conditions in society and therefore the environment in the workplace will bear some similarity to the environment outside the workplace. Accordingly it is important to examine the link between the position of women in society and their labour market position. This is necessary to contextualise the study of female librarians particularly. Therefore the literature review will examine theories of women’s labour force participation that are informed by opinions of what women’s position in society is. The chapter will initially focus on an overview of the international literature of women in the labour market. This will be followed by a look at women in the South African workplace. Thereafter the international literature on female librarians in higher education in terms of career advancement will be reviewed followed by a look at the situation of female librarians in South Africa. The next chapter will examine general theories that attempt to
account for the position of women in society as well as their labour market participation.

2.2 WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

International studies have shown how women are clustered in certain occupations (Harris, 1992:11; Booysen, 2000:23; Bartol, 1980:90). For example, women are over-represented in occupations like hairdressing, nursing, librarianship, social work, primary and secondary education, domestic work, occupational therapy and radiotherapy. These professions are often referred to as sex-segregated professions because of the high proportion of women and the clear separation by gender (Witz, 1992:25) or female intensive occupations (Harris, 1992:3) or semi-professions (Williams, 1992:253; Hearn, 1982:184).

Sex segregation is sometimes described as both vertical and horizontal. Vertical segregation refers to women being concentrated in the lower status jobs in an organisation while horizontal segregation means that women are clustered into a segment of occupations within the labour market (Walby, 1990:26).
Besides vertical segregation into lower status jobs, women typically perform certain categories of work that are normally linked to lower reward and perceived to require less skill (internal segregation or intra-occupational segregation). Sex segregation has also proven resistant and has shown very little variation over the last century. Changes in sex segregation are usually measured by looking at the degree of migration across job categories that would result in equal representation for men and women in a specific occupation. In the United States, for example, it has been calculated that more than 50% of men and women would have to change across job categories to achieve a better distribution (Williams, 1995:10). Coventry (1999) placed the figure at 53% in the United States in 1990. Men consistently occupy the positions with the highest status and earnings. By calculation, women earn less than 70 cents for every dollar a man earns (Williams, 1995:11). Kemp (1994:18), in turn, claims that women in the United States earn 70% of what males earn.

Coventry (1999) cites the example of female real estate agents who generally specialise in the lower paid residential property sector while commercial real estate remains a male preserve. In the banking sector there is the example of bank managers being predominantly male while most women remain tellers and clerks (Morgan & Knight, 1991:189). Kemp (1994:220) calls it internal segregation when men and women perform
different work within an organisation. She also cites banking as an example of the glass ceiling where women in most cases only reach branch manager level. In contrast men are often located near the centre of power where they can be noticed for advancement.

In popular culture the term “glass ceiling” refers to the inability of all women to reach the pinnacle of organisations or to their exclusion from “the most lucrative and prestigious specialities” (Williams, 1995:6). Examining the medical field, for example, women doctors are concentrated in paediatrics, psychiatry and public heath while males concentrate on specialities that are more prestigious and better paid, like surgery. When males are concentrated in certain specialities or in management positions Hildenbrand (1999:670) calls the phenomenon gender stratification. Segregation often prevents women from realising that they are being discriminated against since they have no basis for comparison (Sinclair, 1991:15).

In contrast, (white) male success in obtaining promotion within sex segregated professions is referred to as the ‘glass escalator’ (Maume, 1999; Williams, 1995:87). Numerous men are aware of this phenomenon and consequently move into female-dominated professions since the ‘glass escalator’ operates to their advantage (Maume, 1999; Piper, 2001:5; Hildenbrand, 1985:191; Williams, 1995:89). Williams (1995:147)
describes the glass escalator as "the structural features...that enhance men's careers independent of their ambition or desire".

Analysing race, gender and occupational segregation, Maume (1999) reports that White and Black women as well as Black men are channelled into certain occupations. Using data from the American Panel Study of Income Dynamics to determine the influence of race and gender on advancement prospects, he observed that Black people of both sexes will be guided into positions where they can relate to the Black community for example as liaison officers, teachers, social workers or correctional officers. In the private sector they would be located in marketing and selling to their communities (Maume, 1999).

The divisions are so clear that Kemp (1994:220) calls education and the public sector a ghetto for Black people. Comparing achievement amongst different races and sexes, Maume (1999) talks about the "almost total absence" of Black men and women of all race groups from the highest level of management. According to Maume, white men are disproportionately advanced at the expense of black men as well as women of all races. The study deduced that the more women in a workplace, the easier and quicker men move up the organisational ladder. The antithesis holds true for women – the more women in the field, the less chance of promotion.
Using census data from 1984, Xu & Leffler (1996:109) examined the effect of race and gender on occupational segregation in America. Reviewing data for White, Hispanic and Asian American men and women in 52 occupations, and drawing comparisons to White males as the most privileged group, they calculate that 72% of White women, 70% of Black and Asian American women, and 73% of Hispanic women would have to change jobs to erase gender segregation. In the case of males, 31% of Black men, 35% of Asian American males and 22% of Hispanic men would have to change jobs. They admit the study has some limitations, but conclude that gender is more significant than race when it comes to segregation. With regards to wages, their research conclude that gender is more significant than race with White, Black, Asian American and Hispanic women earning between 66% and 77% of White males' earnings and their male counterparts earning 84% to 94% of what White males earn. Collins (1990:61) observed that while larger numbers of black women in the United States work in professional and managerial positions, they occupy lower status and lower paid positions than their male counterparts. Fewer Afro-American men have professional and managerial positions but those who do have higher levels of remuneration and higher status jobs.
Kemp catalogued certain characteristics of female-intensive professions (1994:246). One is that women work almost exclusively with other women and occupy positions with lower status and pay. Another is that control of the professions is mostly in other hands (Harris, 1992:8) and it is intensely bureaucratic (Irvine, 1985:15). Kemp (1994:247) writes that although sex-role stereotyping influences women’s choice of occupation to the point that women are found in numerically superior numbers in occupations that require nurturing and service, it does not answer the question why women are socialised in that manner. She further reflects that when women do enter male-dominated occupations, they soon leave due to harassment and discrimination. Moreover men resist women’s entry into certain fields and where women do enter male preserves, it could be because the job has been devalued and men leave the field to women (Maume, 1999).

Williams’ interviews with males in the field of librarianship, teaching, social work and nursing illustrate that their desire for advancement is immaterial (1995:87). Forces within the organisation will thrust them upwards. Furthermore, Harris (1992:27) recounts how in librarianship and social work males were recruited because it was hoped that they would increase the status of librarianship and secure better salaries for all. In reality males who moved in soon advanced to the top management positions while women remained where they were. Hildenbrand (1999:671) writes that gender
stratification was actively encouraged by the establishment of special courses at the Universities of Chicago and Columbia to develop male leaders for librarianship in the early 20th century. The Carnegie Corporation also sponsored fellowships from 1929 to 1942 to attract males to librarianship. Periodically women supported this strategy because they shared the idea that promoting men would raise the occupational profile (Hildenbrand, 1999:670).

Examining the structural features that enhance men’s mobility, some writers observe that organisations might promote males quickly because males do not fit the occupational stereotype and clients as well as female colleagues might not feel comfortable with them (Maume, 1999).

Interviewing librarians, social workers, teachers and nurses as prototypes of workers in some of the most sex-segregated professions, Williams (1992:261) found that in traditionally female fields like nursery school teaching, males might be viewed as potential paedophiles or that in nursing male nurses’ sexuality might be questioned. This causes such discomfort that men are removed from interaction with the clients and advanced into administration. Women in these professions might even collaborate with the idea of moving men up since they might also view men doing “a woman’s job” as an anomaly. Further findings of the study suggest that in female-
intensive organisations, where there are few men, male bonding and
identification between male employees and supervisors would facilitate the
career advancement of males.

Having looked at women's position in the workplace in general, the next
section will focus specifically on working women in South Africa.

2.3 WOMEN IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKPLACE

The South African workplace is likewise divided along race and gender lines
as the writings of various people have indicated (Booysen, 2000:23; Gwele,
1998:70; Msimang, 2001; De la Rey, [1999?]). Gender itself is generally
presumed to be a key determinant of occupational field, salary level and
position in the organisational hierarchy. Booysen (2000:22) comments on
this situation when she observes that women form 50% plus of the world's
population, 39.4% of the paid workforce, but that there is "...no country in
which women represent half, or even close to half, of the corporate
managers".

She reports that a 1999 study on the South African private sector by the
Commission on Gender Equality indicates that only 1.3% of directors in
companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange were women
(2000:23) and that less than 1% of board members in South Africa were women. The same 1999 study reports that women form 2/3 of the workforce in the public sector, but despite their numerical superiority, 1997 figures indicate that 87% of positions at director level and above are filled by men (Booysen, 2000:23).

Scrutinising areas of employment, Booysen reports that women form more than 2/3 of the workforce in sectors like nursing (96%), social work (86%), teaching (67%) and domestic work (96%). On the other hand, women's representation in traditionally male areas like engineering, artisans, communication and related fields and as judges and magistrates or any other area associated with masculinity, are minimal.

According to a 2001 Mail and Guardian report women comprise only 16% of senior management and generally find themselves situated in lower skilled positions. There are 264 695 senior male managers and 100 207 senior female managers in South Africa (Mail & Guardian Supplement, 2001:1).

Furthermore the subordinate position of women in the workplace is often compounded by the interplay of race and gender. South African writers observe that in relation to Black women, White women are relatively advantaged (Booysen, 2000:24; Msimang, 2001). While all women are
under-represented in management, Black women find themselves disadvantaged by both race and gender. (De la Rey: [1999?]; Booysen, 2000:23). Booysen’ findings on this matter are illustrated in the following table:

**Table 1: Comparative status of Black and White women managers in SA private sector:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position level</th>
<th>Total % women</th>
<th>% White women</th>
<th>% Black women</th>
<th>% Coloured women</th>
<th>% Indian women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive director</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-executive director</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior executive</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior managers</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle senior</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Booysen, 2000:24)

What the table clearly shows is that while women represent a small percentage of the upper echelons of management, race plays a substantial role within this discriminatory situation. White women’s chances of
achieving a managerial position are more favourable than Black women who in turn are relatively better off than Coloured or Indian women. Booysen (2000:24) explains this disjointure by remarking that White women, for historical reasons, shared in the socio-economic and political benefits of being White under apartheid.

Although Booysen’s statistics date from a study by the South African Gender Equality Commission completed in 1999, this disparity persists. A more recent South African survey by De Loitte & Touche (The Star, 2000) indicates that White males still occupy 80% of top management positions. Black women only make up 6.1% of the total corporate workforce. Training and development programs further perpetuate discrimination. Women only receive 42.6% of training and even here the distinction between white and black women can be seen. While white women receive 33.8% of training, black women are given a marginal 8.8% of training. Training is an important indicator since it serves to develop potential and therefore might signal an organisation’s intention to advance an employee.

Since women librarians in tertiary institutions in South Africa are the focus of this study, it is appropriate to examine the situation of women in South African tertiary education particularly. Sarinjeive (1996:9) examined women academics’ placement in South African higher education. She reports that in
1993 94.9% of professors and 85% of associate professors were male while 61.2% of junior lectures were female. The low representation of women at universities in South Africa can be understood by looking at the history of women academics. According to Sarinjeive (1996:10) female academics' participation were historically restricted at universities by various measures. She suggests that even after the scrapping of discriminatory regulations, women's representation in influential positions like interview committees are still limited (Sarinjeive, 1996:11).

A later South African study by Queeneth Mkabela (1999) compared three universities, namely the University of Zululand, University of Durban-Westville (UDW) and the University of Natal to see how women are represented at managerial levels. She compared women’s positions at different levels in 1992 and again in 1999 and reported the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>University of Natal</th>
<th>University of Zululand</th>
<th>UDW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Mkabela, 1999:93)
Table 3: Position of women associate professors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>University of Natal</th>
<th>University of Zululand</th>
<th>UDW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Mkabela, 1999:93)

What the figures clearly show is that in most cases the increase in women academics in the two chosen categories are minimal. The number of women professors specifically shows no real change and in one case even decreases.

Additional statistics she refers to demonstrate that women do not yet play a meaningful role in educational management and are bunched at the lower levels of the hierarchy, both where academic and non-academic posts are concerned, with a very visible gender imbalance existing at the top. The implication is that women are disempowered by not being involved in major decision-making forums. Like Badsha and Kotecha, (1994:50), she states that women lecturers form a minority at universities in South Africa. In a 1994 article, Badsha reports that men formed 73% of university staff at the eight institutions they studied and also the majority of the senior staff. A newsletter from the African Gender Institute at UCT (1999) comments that most women in African academia are in administration or employed as junior
lecturers and confirms that few women become professors and those who do are predominantly White. Gwele (1998:70) writing on staff perceptions at English language historically white universities in South Africa, observed that Black people and women in South Africa do not easily reach professorial level.

Furthermore, this lack of achievement by women serve as negative reinforcement to other women about women's capabilities and deny them the role models and mentors they need to strive to fulfil their potential. Higher educational institutions, as mirrors of the values and norms of society, reflect the subordinate position of women in general and therefore these findings are not surprising or exceptional. (Soko, 1995:17)

Greyvenstein (2000:30) quotes the report by the Task Team for Educational Management Development of 1996 that lists gender inequality in educational management as one of the shortcomings in the present education system in South Africa. Women represent 2/3 of teachers in South Africa but are quite under-represented in management positions (2000:30)

The 1997 Department of Education statistics on gender distribution in the management of the Department illustrate clearly that the top management of the department is dominated by males with women crowding the lower
blames patriarchy and its accompanying sex role stereotypes. Her suggestion is that rather than blaming women, the relationships between the individual, society and the organisation should be examined. Major barriers to women's advancement are divided into intrinsic (psychological) barriers and extrinsic (environmental) obstacles (Greyvenstein, 2000:31; Haynes, 1989:10). Intrinsic barriers are limitations of gender stereotyping (Greyvenstein, 2000:32; Haynes, 1989:15) and include attributional beliefs held by women and men that cause the former to act within the 'feminine' stereotype and the latter to reject any women not in a traditional female role. This also causes women role conflict in management positions since women have to change the view they have of themselves as well as accommodate their domestic roles.

Greyvenstein suggests that women have traditionally been blamed for their own lack of success "with the focus on the internal and psychological factors, a blame-the-victim approach and emphasis on sex and gender differences, rather than on external factors" (2000:32). She focuses on extrinsic attitudinal and structural barriers women face "so deeply embedded within the entire education system, which is based on the norms and values of society, that any challenge aimed at effecting change would be a challenge to people's basic assumptions, attitudes and belief systems" (2000:32). Barriers she names are filtering, (where men who are commonly
in control of hiring, will hire other males) and tokenism and marginality (where women are isolated within organisations or sexually harassed to exclude them further). Resistance to affirmative action policies (2000:32) is also mentioned.

Additional obstacles identified are lack of mentors, sponsors and role models for women (Greyvenstein, 2000:32; Chliwniak (1997b; Haynes, 1989:3), and exclusion from those male networks that exercise influence and centralises power within organisations. Family constraints (career breaks, the assumptions around the family wage and males being the main breadwinner, the assumption of both men and women that women bear the main responsibility for domestic roles, lack of child-care facilities) are also a barrier to women’s progress. Women’s reproductive functions are often conflated with childrearing roles. It is assumed that because women give birth to children they should automatically bear responsibility for raising them. Yet Kemp (1994:276) writes that research has proven that children can flourish in any nurturing relationship, not necessarily with the biological mother. She cites the success of adoption and fostering programmes to prove the point. Greyvenstein (2000:32) mentions the persistent myth that women lack the necessary qualifications. She points out that this is untrue, yet it is “…embedded in a general assumption…” that women are less skilled. Feminists argue that the reality might be very different. Skill as a concept, as
Rees (1994:16) and Wajcman (1991) suggests, is a construct used to keep women out of traditionally male jobs and segregated into lower paying jobs to secure higher wages for men.

On the one hand, most working women, by being excluded from certain types of work by measures like sexual harassment, male domination of technology or segregated into lower-paying jobs that requires less skill and therefore affect women’s self-esteem, are thus forced into dependency on the male wage (Rees, 1992:10). On the other hand, women’s primary responsibility for family and home hampers their participation in full-time employment and pushes them into lower paid part-time employment (Rees, 1992:10; Luck, 1991:25).

Greyvenstein mentions organisational cultures like Chliwniak (1997) who writes that organisational cultures might use “male filters [to] render women invisible”. Therefore when women display the ‘right’ attributes, they might not be promoted. Doubtless sex-role stereotypes limit women, but, as Kemp remarks, men are adept at keeping women out of their preserves (Kemp, 1994:247).

Gourley (1995:24) talks about the subtlety of organisational culture in universities such as the “informal rules” that which is not written down or
spelled out but nevertheless dictates "the way things get done". Soko (1995:17) writes that the institutional culture of White English universities in South Africa are tilted toward "white male Anglo-Saxon values, norms and traditions, while Ramphele (1994: 18) refers to South African educational institutions in general mirroring the national culture of patriarchy and racism. Soko observes that it is a racist, sexist and conservative culture which – despite all the rhetoric of transformation – continues to permeate all spheres of the institutions". He feels that it is this culture and its Eurocentric standards that are responsible for the slow change and the alienation of women and black people. Institutional culture, for him, defines and decides people's relationship towards the institution and achievement is expected to be within the confines of the dominant culture. Rival cultural identities have to be negated since failure to integrate leads to rejection. He remarks: "In this scheme of things, compliance yields rewards, while assertion of difference is systematically punished (Soko, 1995:18). Writing on transforming tertiary education in South Africa, Gourley (1995:21) identify institutional culture as a major stumbling-block to change and a reason why people leave institutions that are alienating and comments on the low representation of women and Black people.

As illustrated above, people have different ideas about the reasons for the differences in women and men's position within occupations and to account
for the lower salaries of women. The following sections will look at the position of women in libraries specifically starting with the conditions women librarians universally encounter before focusing specific attention on women librarians in South Africa.

2.4 THE INTERNATIONAL VIEW OF WOMEN LIBRARIANS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Roma Harris (1986:31) states that the ratio of women to men in librarianship in America is 4:1, but that only 23% of directors of North American academic libraries are women. Many other studies in Britain, Canada, Australia and the USA reflect the same phenomenon: in all sectors of librarianship, women are numerically superior, but under-represented in managerial positions (Murgai, 1991:682; Beck, 1992:30; Irvine, 1985:3). This sex segregation in the profession is, according to McDermott (1998a), a reflection of the subordinate position women occupy, both in society and in the workplace.

Harris describes the patterns of sex segregation in librarianship as reflected in the different specialities women and men are concentrated in (1992:12) and the horizontal structuring that is reflected in women librarians occupying positions in the lower levels of the organisation while males are concentrated
at managerial level. Irvine (1985:10) writes that men earn higher salaries and that more male librarians work in the prestigious area of academic librarianship than in school and public librarianship that are perceived to have lower status. She also observed that where women become chief directors, it would most probably be in smaller college libraries. Her writings also draw parallels between female academics and female academic librarians who are both concentrated at the lower levels, in certain specialities and at less prestigious institutions (Irvine, 1985:18). Heim & Perrault (1991:223) confirm this by reporting that: "The percentage of women increases as the size and prestige of the type of institution decreases".

Women who achieved directorships in academic libraries were more likely to achieve that in smaller institutions while men achieved the higher ranks at the bigger, more important institutions. A study by Moran on American academic libraries concluded that ".... it is possible to speculate upon the existence of two separate career patterns that exist in academic librarianship - one pattern existing for the males and a separate pattern prevailing for the females" (Moran, 1983:343).

Murgai (1991:682) observed that in America, women managers with equal qualifications were still paid less than males. Moreover, recent surveys on libraries by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Canadian
Association of Law Libraries illustrate that salary discrepancies still persist. The ARL Annual Salary Survey 1997-98 (USA and Canada) found that women in ARL libraries earn on average $46,888 while men earn $50,171 for the same work (Rodriguez, 1998).

The Canadian Association of Law Libraries 1998 survey concluded that on average men earn $61,100 while women earn $47,800 (Stephens, 1998). Quint (1999) reports that the recent Special Library Association survey of 1999 indicates that in the USA and Canada the salary gap is closing due to legislation. As far as median salaries are concerned women are on par or even ahead, but mean salaries show that men earn $700 more in the USA while in Canada they earn $500 more than women do.

Numerous studies have attempted to explain the differences in achievement between male and female librarians. Quite a few of them have until recently tended to examine patterns of similarity or differences between men and women in libraries to determine where women fall short. Close attention was paid in study after study to indicators linked to male success and then comparing where and how women lacked.

Examples of these studies are the studies by Moran (1983), Martin (1983) and Irvine (1985) that looked at academic women librarians’ participation in
professional organisations, publication activities as well as their qualifications. Irvine (1985:253) suggested that women should improve their professional qualifications while Moran (1983:343) found that professional qualifications improved the chances for males but not for females. Examining geographical mobility, Moran (1983:343), (Irvine, 1985:243) and Braunagel (1979:647) found that women gained less out of mobility than men did and found that women gained less financially from relocating than men. Irvine (1985:247) and Moran (1983:343) both suggest that a woman’s best chance of promotion is to remain in the same institution since they might then seem less threatening than outside candidates. Moran reasoned that fear and distrust of women as library directors cause discrimination and concluded that further research was necessary to adequately explain the discrimination women face. She wrote “If a profession that is 80% female has such a fear and distrust of females that only a female who has been a long-term success as an administrator is likely to be hired as a director, then something is seriously wrong with the perception of females as library administrators (1983:344).”

Another factor that both Harris (1986:36) and Martin (1983:260) considered is career commitment of female librarians. They found no differences between men and women. Irvine (1985:253) and Martin (1983:276) concluded that women should publish more and obtain better qualifications
to succeed. The theory was that once women equalled men in these areas, they would succeed to the same degree. The obvious assumption was that women are to blame and that they will achieve equality with men once they eliminate their shortcomings. To succeed women had to imitate men. Both Irvine (1985:253) and Martin (1983:275) reflect on how women’ family roles and career breaks to have children may have a negative effect on promotion for them. Irvine remarks that women who are ambitious might have to “...make career and family tradeoffs...” that men do not have to do (1985:252).

Martin does, however, admit that her research has shown that men demonstrate a more negative attitude towards women as managers and that given the fact that men are over-representative at managerial level, they might be prejudiced against the elevation of women (1983:274). However she fails to pursue this point and persists in blaming women for their lack of advancement. As indicated before, she and Irvine reflected on the negative impact women’s reproductive labour has on their careers but they fail to question the existing power relations and the ideology of the family. Another point of concern is that she found, in contrast to other studies, no differences in position levels attained by men and women. She conceded this discrepancy and concluded that her sample might have been too small (Martin, 1983:275).
Although Martin also found no differences in salary levels of non-managerial staff, a different picture emerged when salary levels at managerial level were examined. Women were earning consistently less than males. She ascribed this to the fact that men had more advanced degrees, published more and presented more papers. If women did the same, she speculated that they would show the same results as men.

These viewpoints ignore the problem of the lack of value attached to women’s work. Harris (1992:16) and Kemp (1994:3) claim that women’s work are undervalued simply because they are women and that the all-pervasive influence of the social relations of capitalism and patriarchy are to blame. Women enter a workplace structured to their disadvantage. They are segregated into certain types of occupations where they can expect lower wages and into certain categories of work deemed suitable for women according to constructions of what sort of work women should be performing and where they should be performing it.

Additionally their stereotyped role in the domestic sphere are used by employers to justify pushing women into part-time work, invest less training in them and pay them lower wages on the presumption that their employment will be intermittent and they will leave the workplace sooner or
later. Harris and Kemp believe that the situation for women will never improve until patriarchal social relations are addressed. Therefore, regardless of the amount of papers produced, the advanced qualifications obtained and the involvement in professional activities, the majority of women won’t achieve the same occupational mobility as men as long as the fundamental power relations in society do not change and the value placed on women’s work remain unaddressed.

Several writers took a different path. Once it was realised that even where women compare favourably with men on those factors seemingly linked to career success, women still lagged behind, different explanations were sought. Later studies like those of Harris, McDermott and Hildenbrand demonstrate a paradigm shift away from blaming women librarians to looking at the gendered structures within which they work.

McDermott blamed patriarchy and its influence on organisational culture and women for the discrimination women faced (1998a). Articles she wrote were based on abstracts from her thesis on women librarians in Britain. She linked women’s primary role in nurturing and domestic responsibilities to their failure to achieve at work. Both women and men in organisations play out gender stereotypes that are reflected in male librarians’ negative attitudes to women and in the submissive way women relate to men at work.
Furthermore the female librarians she interviewed found the competitive environment, sexual harassment and the masculine culture of libraries hostile and were negative about their chances for promotion.

Women librarians that McDermott interviewed gave graphic accounts of negative experiences with male colleagues and managers that lowered their self-esteem and discouraged them from applying for promotion. They felt that they would be safer at the lower levels since the atmosphere in general is not affirming of their aspirations. Several have internalised stereotypes to the extent that they even expressed a belief that ambition is unfeminine.

Searching for explanations, Irvine blames women’s socialisation, their domestic role and the masculine stereotyping of management for the lack of advancement of women. She mentions that men have secured control of a network of resources in all spheres and would reinforce these networks through networking and strong identification with each other (1985:12).

Murgai (1991:687) and (1999) focussed on negative attitudes to women as a barrier to career advancement. She feels that stereotypical attitudes and prejudice toward women are impeding their progress and that male managers’ attitudes to women are critical to success. According to her, if male managers had positive attitudes to women, they would succeed. Once
women earned higher salaries, moved into male-dominated areas and spend more time in paid work, husbands will be forced to take more domestic responsibilities and that will lead to the increased status of domestic labour. This will result in domestic labour being properly evaluated and market value being assigned to it (1991:696). Reviewing perceptions and attitudes, Murgai’s 1991 and 1999 studies gauging the attitude of male and female students toward female managers concluded that male and female students both believe women can make capable managers. However, she was uncertain whether, in practice, male students would carry this positive attitude into the workplace. Given the earlier discussion on institutional culture, her caution might be justified. Another problem with her approach is the one-sided focus on men’s attitudes. Williams (1995:95) reflected on how women also bring gender roles into the workplace. Her interviews with male librarians revealed how often women librarians push males into administrative positions as they regard them as an anomaly that do not fit the gender stereotype. She remarked that although pervasive in organisations, stereotyping is often unstated. Additionally Wajcman (1991) demonstrates strategies that men have developed to resist women’s entry into male-dominated areas and therefore it is doubtful whether women would easily succeed in challenging men’s resistance in this regard so easily.
Writers like Hildenbrand (1985:193) looked at segregation and observed a dual career structure for male and female librarians in America that was advantageous to men. She remarked that librarians often denied the existence of sex segregation.

Williams (1995:4) interviewed men in female-dominated professions like librarianship, nursing and social work to find the reason why the gender stereotype they bring into an already gendered environment is a positive factor for them but a negative factor for women. She concluded that organizations are gendered and that the gender stereotypes people bring into the workplace interact in a dynamic way with the organization to reproduce male power and privilege. Both Williams (1995:87) and Hildenbrand (1985:193) reflected that men are rewarded in a sex segregated workplace. Williams states that while a glass escalator operates for men, a glass ceiling hampers women's progress. (1995:87). Males who reject the masculine stereotype could be be punished (1995:88). She indicates that the stereotype of a profession is flexible and can be changed if necessary. Although librarianship is currently regarded as a female profession, it was not always the case (Williams, 1995:23;Hildenbrand, 1992:23). Historically it was a male bastion and masculinity was used to justify employment of males. When it became a woman's profession, the qualities traditionally
associated with women e.g. nurturing, service, meticulousness and so forth were used to swing the image of the profession to a feminine one.

Harris believes that intraoccupational sex segregation in librarianship is but an outflow of the value placed on women and their work. She, as well as Hildemand (1992:22), feels that unless librarians acknowledge the significance of the fact that theirs is a female-dominated occupation, any attempts to analyse the situation will fail (1992:12). Harris remarked that the status of the profession is low because of the inferior status of women in society in general. Both of them criticise some writers in librarianship who tend to blame women librarians for the low status of the profession (Harris, 1992:15; Hildemand, 1992:20).

Beck (1992:30) reflected on the way patriarchy reinforces gender roles in libraries and the way librarians deny the effect of prejudice against women as demonstrated in the lack of advancement of female librarians. She writes "Concepts of gender are archetypes that may not describe us as individuals but subtly and powerfully affect us throughout our lives" (1992:31).

The different strands of feminism can be discerned in the way some writers in library science attempt to ascribe the differences in achievement between men and women in libraries. Several employ a liberal analysis in that they
seek to remove barriers to women's advancement within the current system. They believe that lack of achievement is due to individual differences and believe that the playing field is level. However, Heim (1982:3) remarks that "Study after study has shown that when all the variables usually presented to explain the status differences are controlled, the major variance is sex. That is, even if we discount the women who can't move, discount the women who have fewer degrees, and discount the women who have no career aspirations beyond doing a good job, we still cannot explain the variance except by observing that more men rise to the top than their female counterparts simply because they are men".

Beck (1992:30) as well as Harris (1992:13), Chliwniak (1997b) and Hildenbrand (1992:22) feel that within professions the fact that it is female intensive is normally ignored while it should be central to any analysis of its status or the status of women within it. The status of librarianship is low because the field is predominantly female. The perception that women's socialisation lend itself to a meek disposition willing to submit obediently to bureaucratic rules and structures is speculated by Harris to be one of the reasons for their recruitment to librarianship. Taking up the issue of skills, she writes that because women do the work it is assumed that little skill is involved. This contributed to the devaluation of the profession. She reinforces this view by quoting studies proving that people tend to over-
estimate the amount of skill and knowledge involved in male professions like law while under-estimating the skill and knowledge base of occupations like librarianship and nursing (1992:28). Her conclusion is that regardless of strategies advocated to change the status or image of the profession, it will not succeed until the value of women and their work is addressed (1992:16).

The next section will focus on the position of women librarians in South Africa specifically.

2.5 WOMEN LIBRARIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa women librarians encounter the same difficulties as their counterparts in other parts of the world. Anna Louw (1989:305) asserts that women form the biggest component of library staff but are still marginalized in terms of managerial position. She estimates that in South Africa, two-thirds of library workers are women but library managers are overwhelmingly male.

In her study, admittedly old, she quotes statistics showing that out of a total of twenty-one university library heads, only three are women. She compared women and men in her sample on publishing activities, participation in
professional activities and advanced degrees and found women lagging in all categories. She remarked that women seemed to be reluctant to be nominated to higher offices in SAILIS, which was the predecessor to the current organisation for librarians, and that men were proportionally over-represented in leadership positions of the organisation. Men published more but not so much more as would justify their numbers in management positions.

Furthermore, she expressed a wish that her research would motivate women to take an interest in their situation and in improving it. As far as the basic degree is concerned she feels that the fact that most librarians do not see the need to obtain a second degree as a possible reason for the low image of the profession.

Since her study is dated, the researcher called university libraries around the country recently to get an updated picture. The following picture emerged from a telephone pilot.
This illustrates that although there has been a slight improvement, given the fact that women outnumber men in librarianship, Louw's findings are still valid.

In the Western Cape (the south-western part of South Africa), female librarians' situation is a microcosm of the broader South African situation. The Western Cape, with a population of approximately 4 million, has a high concentration of tertiary institutions (South Africa Yearbook, 1999:4). Although women constitute the majority of professional library staff, (those in possession of a library science degree or diploma) in the libraries of the higher education sector as represented by the Universities of Stellenbosch, Cape Town and Western Cape and have always done so, only one library had a female head until recently. The situation has changed at UWC where a female director has been appointed. At the two technikons in the Western Cape, Peninsula Technikon and Cape Technikon, women do not feature strongly in the top hierarchy. One would expect no different since these libraries are part of broader institutions where, as Greyvenstein and Mkabela pointed out, gender for the most part determines your position in the hierarchy.

Scanning the literature of South African librarianship found only one article (Louw's) on the subject and that was limited to quantifying the amount of
female versus male librarians at the head of major South African libraries. Besides the fact that it was a solitary venture into the topic, it was quite old. If anything else was written in the journals in the field, the researcher was unable to locate it despite the fact that women form such a large part of the staff of South African libraries.

As said before, this lack of literature on the subject can be taken as an indication of how research is biased in favour of topics that those who produce most of the literature on librarianship (males) regard as important. It can also be understood in the context of Beck's remark that a denial exists within librarianship on the effect gender has on the careers of female librarians. On the other hand, perhaps one needs to look at the effect that sex segregation has on the awareness of discrimination.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Women are subjected to gender, class and race discrimination that impacts deeply on their position in the labour market. Discrimination in the workplace is expressed either through outright exclusion of women from an occupation or sex segregation. Sex segregation stratifies women into positions linked to lower pay and status and further differentiates and discriminates between women through "racially constructed gender roles" (Parmar, 1982:237).
Occupations like librarianship, nursing, social work and teaching are examples of extreme sex segregation where a "glass ceiling" operates to prevent women's progress while a "glass escalator" promotes male careers. Some authors feel that the fact that it is a female-intensive occupation should be central to any attempt at analysing women's position within the occupation but it is often ignored and instead women are blamed for their lowly status.

Additional factors to consider are women and men's socialisation that tend to interact with the existing organisational culture that already favour men. Male attitudes to women have also been blamed. Currently males occupy the majority of management positions and should they be hostile to women, this would have a negative effect on women's careers. Value systems in organisations and people are slow to change. Therefore one cannot count on affirmative action alone to change the position of women in libraries, but must recognise that women's position in libraries are dependent on women's position in society in general. Until fundamental changes occur in how gender, race and class are constructed within society women librarians cannot expect much progress.
What is also lacking from studies of women’s positions in librarianship is a look at the effect of racism and cultural stereotypes. None of the studies in librarianship reviewed have any accounts of the experiences of women from other cultural backgrounds. This echoes complaints from broader feminist theory that traditional feminist theory has excluded the experiences of women of other cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
CHAPTER THREE

THEORIES OF SEX DISCRIMINATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with the phenomenon of sex discrimination in the workplace, how it presents itself, its prevalence in occupations generally and also specifically in librarianship. In order to understand this phenomenon, it is necessary to have a theoretical understanding of gender in the workplace. This chapter will explore theories of gender discrimination in the workplace and the broader paradigms of which they are part.

3.2 ORTHODOX ECONOMIC THEORIES

Orthodox economists focus on supply and demand for labour. The theory is based on the premise that humans act according to their best interests and the labour market operates on rational principles. Employers are interested in maximising gains and the higher your human capital (skill, education and training) the more you will be worth on the labour market. Orthodox economists believe that because women take primary responsibility for
domestic issues, women invest in less human capital as they choose not to stay full-time in the labour market. It is then logical to conclude that since women’s human capital is lower than men’s, the reward in the labour market will reflect their lower productivity and lack of skill (Sinclair, 1991:5; Kemp, 1994:69). Poor choices regarding education, jobs and issues like working hours results in further inequality (Kemp, 1994:69).

Criticism of this theory lies in the assumption that everyone has equal choices. Sinclair (1991:6) writes that for a lot of people, choices are ‘made within a context of inequality.’ For example, sex-role stereotyping creates formal and informal barriers to non-traditional career choices. The resultant is that women are forced into lower paying jobs (Rees, 1992:24). Cultural determinants are also limitations for choices, for example, countries where women are denied the right to work alongside men and or refused the right to work at all (Sinclair, 1991:16). Race class and ethnicity can privilege one woman and disadvantage another. A case in point is Taliban rule in Afghanistan that denied most women the right to work.

Furthermore, Rees claims that research has proven that although the skills gap between men and women have narrowed considerably, the gap in wages shows no concomitant decline (Rees, 1992:24). Kemp (1994:75) suggests that instead of blaming women for lack of skill, the central debate should
focus on the definition of skill. According to her, the definition of skill employed by orthodox economists is gendered and becomes a political instead of an empirical term. Work performed by women is always less valued whether in the home or the labour market and therefore rewarded differently.

3.3 FEMINIST THEORIES

Feminist theories concentrate on locating gender in the labour market. Rees (1992:25) feels that the defining contribution of feminism to the labour market was the incorporation of a gender perspective and the examination of existing power relations within the home. Although theoretical positions might not be as rigid and uncompromising as before, an attempt will be made to outline the fundamentals of each position.

3.3.1 LIBERAL FEMINIST THEORY

Liberal feminists work within the system to overcome legal, political and institutional barriers to women’s progress so that they can reach the levels men do. This will happen once barriers are eliminated (Rees, 1992:25; Kemp, 1994:78). Fundamentally they agree with existing economic and social relations (Beasley, 1999:52), thus they target the public sphere and their
campaigns have succeeded in securing the franchise, favourable public policies and equal opportunity legislation for women. Kemp (1994:78) suggests that since they advocate reform and not radical change, the success of liberal feminist campaigns can perhaps be attributed to its lack of challenge to patriarchy and capitalism. Criticism of liberal feminism centres on the lack of challenge to existing power relations and its acceptance of women's primary role in the home. They ignore class, race and cultural differences between women and explain the differences in achievement to poor choices or inadequacies in the individual.

3.3.2 RADICAL FEMINIST THEORY

Radical feminists place patriarchy at the centre of their analysis. They believe that the main cause of oppression lie in men’s control of women’s sexuality, childbearing and childrearing (Kemp, 1994:84). Therefore the basis of patriarchy is women’s relationships with men. A central tenet of radical feminism is that gender, fostered by patriarchal social relations in the family, is a social construct (Kemp, 1994:84). Men are identified as the enemy and the cornerstone of women’s oppression lies in their relations with men (Beasley, 1999:55). As soon as women desist from compulsory heterosexuality and regain control over their own sexuality and bodies the sooner oppression will end (Kemp, 1994:85). Walby (1990:20) defines
patriarchy as follows: "...a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women." Witz (1992:11) defines patriarchy as "...a societal-wide system of gender relations of male dominance and female subordination".

Feminists use the term patriarchy differently. Some use it to describe the development of systems of oppression of women. Others use it to analyse the material base of task allocation according to sex and others use it to describe the psychological impact that patriarchal relations have on the development of the self (Beasley, 1999:55).

Feminist critique of the radical viewpoint is that it lacks a class, race and cultural analysis of differences amongst women. Rees (1992:31) suggests that for ethnic minority women, class or race oppression might take precedence over patriarchy. Kemp (1994:87) writes that radical feminist theory tends to be ahistorical, lacks contextualisation of sexuality, biology and patriarchy and treats the relations between men and women as biologically determined. All men are seen as bad regardless of race, class, culture or individual differences between them.
3.3.3 MARXIST FEMINIST THEORY

Marxist feminists emphasise class rather than patriarchy as the basis of women’s oppression. In contrast to radical feminists, they theorise that class oppression came first historically. Beasley (1999:60) writes “Sexual oppression is seen as a dimension of class power.” Inequality is caused by one’s relationship to the means of production. Kemp writes “Women’s oppression is seen as being due to class relations, and Marxists conclude that women’s liberation requires the end of private property and capitalism (1994:95).” The free labour women provide by caring for husbands and children, plays an important role in capital accumulation (Rees, 1992:26). Kemp suggests that the Marxist solution to women’s oppression is for all women to join the labour force (1994:95).

Important Marxist concepts described by Rees are:

a) that women form a reserve army of labour that can be used to limit wages.

b) That of deskilling - work can be broken into smaller segments requiring less skill. As a cheaper source of labour women would be employed in these unskilled jobs.
A major flaw in this analysis is the fact that women should then always be a preferred source of labour since they are cheaper. This has not happened (Kemp, 1994:109). Sinclair also writes that the flood of women entering the labour market in industrialised countries is contrary to the theory that women serves as a reserve army of labour. She maintains that men have been able to prevent women from threatening men’s status in the labour market by “...social and sexual norms and power relations that restrict women’s entry into many male-dominated occupations’ (1991:10).”

Wajcman (1991) shows how men kept women from their traditional preserves by taking an example from the printing industry during a time of technological change. She demonstrates that capitalist and patriarchal interests do not always coincide, specifically when new technology was introduced. Male workers struggled to maintain their skill and therefore their power base in the face of employers’ plans to use technology to simplify production and use cheaper female labour.

Historically this successful defence of territory forced women to seek alternative employment in new areas rather than succeed in breaking male power over a particular area of work. However, even in new types of occupations, women tend to keep their lowly status by being segregated into the lower hierarchies. The central point that she makes is that technology
does not develop in a vacuum but is shaped by gender relations at the point of production. Sex-role stereotyped concepts like male affinity with technology and differences in physical strength are used to define the design of machinery and tools and prevent women from entering occupations with the argument that women lack the physical strength or technical skill to operate machinery. She points out that there is actually no reason why certain machines can’t be smaller or for instance why a bag of cement has to be made in units of 50kgs. It is based on assumptions that males will use or carry it. Lastly Wajcman warns that one must be careful not to assume a conspiracy but rather look at it as “the outcome of a pre-existing patterns of power.”

Therefore socialists feminists differ from Marxist feminists in their view of deskilling. They feel that skill is a political concept and that its value is gendered. To the extent that women’s work is undervalued, all work performed by women is devalued. Since domestic labour is undervalued and women are employed in jobs similar to their roles as nurturers and caregivers, women and their skills in the workplace remain undervalued (Harris, 1992:14). Rees writes that there is an intimate connection between status, power, unionisation, gender and the skill attached to a job. She writes “In a highly gendered workforce, gender assumes vital importance in determining the skill component deemed to be attached to a specific job.
That perceived skill level is then reflected in the level of pay which rewards it (1992:16)."

Marxism does not include an analysis explaining the sexual division in the home. Some authors feel that focusing exclusively on the public sphere can be seen as support for patriarchy and the lack of value attached to domestic labour (Kemp, 1994:101). An example of contradictions in Marxism is the fact that domestic labour can be classed as both waged and unwaged labour depending on where and why it is performed. Amongst other things this theoretical stance is criticised for its focus on class struggle to the exclusion of race and gender (Kemp, 1994:97).

3.3.4. SOCIALIST FEMINIST THEORY

While Marxist feminism has lost its popularity, socialist feminism use both class and gender to explain the oppression of women. Some writers (Rees, 1992:31; Walby, 1990:39) refer to it as dual systems theory. Different versions of socialist feminism combine patriarchy and capitalism within one theoretical stance (Beasley, 1999:63) and have different ideas on how the two systems work together historically or compete to oppress women or how they compete (Walby, 1990:40).
Despite disagreements about the use of the concept (Hearn, 1982:186; Witz, 1992:11; Walby, 1990:19) and the precise relationship between capitalism and patriarchy, Witz feels that it is still a useful concept to describe a system of male dominance through all social structures e.g. the state, labour market, the domestic sphere, male violence, etc.

What is certain is that the two systems’ interests do not always coincide as Wajcman’s work revealed. Walby (1990:40) also believe that the role of the state, ethnicity and different patriarchal strategies like exclusion and segregation need to be explored. Kemp (1994:104) writes that socialist feminists view women’s oppression as the result of patriarchal relations in the home and class oppression in the workplace. Men benefit from the unpaid labour women perform at home while capitalism benefits when women are underpaid on the assumption that the male wage is the family wage. Employers can invest less in training women since the assumption is that their participation in the labour force is temporary. This argument also leads to women, for example in Great Britain, performing the majority of part-time jobs available. Women are kept quiescent by the myth of the nuclear family as a natural and universal phenomenon and the ideology surrounding their role in nurturing both husbands and children.
Socialist feminists believe that patriarchy in the workplace is maintained by segregating jobs by sex (Kemp, 1994:108) and that this is the main cause for differential wage patterns. They theorise that the labour market is structurally different for men and women. There is a primary sector of the labour market where permanent employment exists, wages are higher, training is implemented and promotion can be expected. In contrast, a secondary sector exists that is filled with part-time employees with little promotional prospects and low wages (Rees, 1992:21). Most of the workers in the primary sector are male while those in the secondary sector are female.

The social closure argument states that men exclude women from certain jobs by setting requirements that are difficult to reach, by harassing and isolating women who enter non-traditional jobs. Shorter promotion ladders for women and guiding women into supervisory positions over other women or into clerical work with other women, are other mechanisms used to exclude women. In this way they ensure that only males compete amongst themselves for promotion. (Maume, 1999).
3.3.5 POSTMODERN/POST-STRUCTURALIST FEMINISM

Postmodern and poststructuralist feminism draws on the work of De Saussure, Lyotard, Foucault, Lacan, Derrida, écriture feminists and others (Brooks, 1997:47; Beasley, 1999:71). The two terms are often used interchangeably (Beasley, 1999:84), but post-structuralism can also be seen as a component of postmodernism (Beasley, 1999:89). These movements grew out of disenchantment with the failure of radical politics and mainstream theory of the 1960’s. It engages critically with its heritage (Brooks, 1997:1) and moves away from absolutes and certainty. “Grand narratives” or metanarratives of earlier eras, that looked for singular causatives for social phenomena, were abandoned.

While attempting to define postmodernism, Beasley remarks on the difficulty by saying that no singular characteristic can be defined except to say “…any unity…lies precisely in this antagonism to singular structural (underlying) explanation and the attraction to considering multiple determinants, to diversity, plurality and indeterminacy (1999:85).” What can be said is that postmodernism accepts that truth/meaning is constructed by excluding and repressing other meanings/truths and is linked to the exercise of power.
Since universalising accounts of human experiences are seen as reflecting a masculine bias and bearing only a pretence of neutrality, these essentialist ideas are scorned in favour of highlighting plurality and differences between people. Postmodernists believe that universalising seek to normalise some versions and thus causing difference to be viewed as deviant.

Additionally, postmodernist feminists believe that universalising also serves to overlook differences between women and therefore serves to marginalise and enforce power differences between them. Essentialist categories like race, gender, and class are re-examined and reconstructed. Although postmodernists recognise power differences between men and women, they do not believe that women as a category, has any intrinsic qualities based on universal experiences of women as a group.

The focus on the importance of language in the structuring of reality and in creating of power hierarchies was the contribution of post-structuralists who believe that meaning is constructed within language and that our understanding of the world is culture and context-bound. Meaning is formulated by the structuring of oppositions within language e.g. man versus woman, white versus non-white, etc. The constructive power of language is fundamental in structuring power hierarchies and creating difference that excludes and represses others. Truth is legitimised through the exercise of
power and those in power have more resources to shape and legitimise their truth. Beasley writes "...insistence on only one meaning, on the Truth, is a strategy which enforces dominance and fixity (1999:93)."

Therefore language cannot be seen as neutral (Beasley, 1999:92). Foucault believes that power is not centralised in any one person or institution, but permeates all social relationships and finds its expression in practice (Beasley, 1999:93; Brooks, 1997:50). Although theorists like Foucault have no feminist agenda, and postmodern/post-structuralist positions taken to the extremity can paralyse any notion of gender, agency and or a feminist agenda, feminists have found the ideas of postmodernism/post-structuralism useful in destabilising categories like race, women, class. This was once regarded as universal and marginalising for the experiences of women of other races/ethnicities (Brooks, 1997:23; Beasley, 1999:88).

Walby writes that feminists have often constructed a concept of 'women' as opposed to 'men' in a very essentialist way regardless of historical or cultural context while the truth is that masculinity and femininity can be seen as "overlapping, cross-cutting discourses....which are historically and culturally variable (1990:15)."
The point that is being made is that both women and men cannot be reduced to a single homogenous category that is a generalisation for all issues. Some issues do cut across culture, race, time and space. While one can say that all women are oppressed, the form of oppression varies. Walby’s (1990:20) solution to difference is her belief that patriarchy has several bases and she uses these bases to accommodate the varied forms of oppression as a way to overcome reductionism and essentialism that is problematic for traditional feminist theories. She suggests that patriarchy have six structures:

- patriarchal mode of production (Domestic reproduction)
- patriarchal relations in paid work
- patriarchal relations in the state
- male violence
- patriarchal relations in sexuality
- patriarchal relations in cultural institutions

She feels that these structures are independent, but affect one another and can have either a mitigating or exaggerating effect on each other.

Postmodern social theory has sometimes led to suggestions that concepts like race, class, and patriarchy are so differentiated and fragmented that they are no longer functional for analytical purposes. However, Walby (1994:225) feels that enough content remains within these concepts although they are not hegemonic to make theorising of similarities on the basis of class, race or
sex possible. Additionally, not all postmodernist/post-structuralist feminists are prepared to prematurely abandon the notion of gender. Accommodations for alliances are made, a "unity in diversity", that accepts that common ground should be found to fight oppression (Beasley, 1999:84) as long as recognition is given to the fact that essentialist accounts of women as a group are unacceptable and that multiple forms of power exist. Hansson also suggests forming alliances around certain issues since women's priorities would differ depending on their situations. Though all women cannot be united on all issues, they can work together on specific issues. Hansson (1992:38) makes a distinction between short-term and strategic alliances.

Walby agrees that it is necessary for fragmentation and differentiation within categories, but argues that it has been taken too far in some cases. In terms of the argument that class is now so diffuse a concept, that it is no longer useful, she maintains that capitalism has restructured, not died away.

"...while the social relations involved in gender, 'race' and class have indeed changed, and while the notion of 'new times' does have some uses, the postmodernist argument has been taken too far in the attempt to disintegrate the concepts of gender and 'race' and to see capitalism as disorganised. Gender and 'race', or more precisely, patriarchy, remain potent social forces, and capitalism has not withered away despite its new form (Walby, 1994:226)." Capitalism, she explains, has restructured itself internationally
and found cheaper, and by their definition, unskilled labour in the Third World, which in many cases mean black women. Therefore she argues that women, politically have enough in common across national boundaries.

Other feminist positions that have drawn strength from postmodern/post-structuralist formulations are feminists dealing with race/ethnicity issues.

3.3.6 BLACK FEMINIST THEORY

A bone of contention for Black feminists is that the theoretical formulations of women’s position in the labour market has been predicated on the experiences of White middle-class women in First World countries and this excludes the experiences of women of other races, cultures, ethnic origin or from developing countries. (Walby, 1990:15; Afshar, 2000; Westwood & Bhachu, 1988:1; Witz, 1993:279; Collins, 1990:7).

Walby poses the question: "...whether existing feminist theory has a view of women as more uniform and undivided than is really the case (1990:14)". Collins, writing on feminism, suggests Black women’s ideas about the interaction of race, class and gender have historically been ignored by feminist theory and that Black women were never fully incorporated into white feminist organisations (1990:7). Walby (1994:227) suggests that
black women not only face racial discrimination in the workplace but that the basis of inequality itself might be different for them since the family has been "...a site of resistance and solidarity against racism for women of colour, it does not hold the central place in accounting for women’s subordination that it does for white women". She uses this example to illustrate how generalisation might be different between groups of women.

Another example comes from South Africa. The earlier simplistic understanding of black women as triply oppressed in South Africa are also being re-examined since feminists now believe that oppressions cannot be seen as "additive" but must be understood as the interaction between race, class and gender and this varies with women’s experiences of oppression (Fouche, 1994:82; Hassim, 1991:68). It creates different experiences of oppression between white and black, between black and black and so forth.

Therefore black women’s experiences of oppression might differ qualitatively from a white woman and also qualitatively from other black women depending on the specificity of the forces (class, race, gender) working on her. The significance is that the issues to organise around will differ depending on how women perceive their priorities.
In South Africa, as elsewhere, earlier belief in a universal sisterhood as the foundation for a united struggle against a common oppression disappeared and was replaced by a fragmented view of the category "woman" (Fouche, 1994:78). Through the operation of apartheid that separated the interests of Black and White, women in South African have practical experience of the vast differences amongst women. Black women, like Black men, suffered the effects of apartheid like pass laws, forced relocation, forced sterilisation, inadequate remuneration. Hansson (1992:35) writes "...women shared certain forms of oppression with men, rather than with women. Working class women share class oppression with working class men and black women share racial oppression with black men".

Parmar remarks that one cannot speak of all women as an undifferentiated group or class because that tends to "perpetuate white female supremacy." White women tend to overlook struggles of black women or subsume them into white campaigns. "They have thus failed to accommodate the specificity of black women's experiences of racism, which have been structured by racially constructed gender roles" (Parmar, 1982:237). Fouche writes that a common experience of black women is the feeling that "...the existence of black men is acknowledged and that of black women overlooked (1994:90)".
Hansson remarks that the majority of white women, like White men, in South Africa had an interest in maintaining their racial privilege (1992:35). This allowed them to exploit the labour of black women as domestic workers, nannies, cooks, etc just like white men exploited the labour of black men and the labour and sexuality of black women.

Parmar further observes that patriarchal control over women in the workplace takes cultural and racial forms. One British example given of how race defines women is the exclusion of black women from jobs that exploit women’s sexuality like receptionist, secretary, sales assistant and modelling. These jobs are preferably staffed by white females while black women are over-represented in jobs that echo historical roles of slavery like catering, nursing, cleaning and domestic labour, (Parmar, 1982:259). Additional comment on stereotypes comes from Collins (1990:63) who writes that Afro-American women find themselves in sectors that relate to their history as domestic workers in the United States. Witz (1993:284) noted that in Britain race and ethnic variation exists within the segregated sectors women are employed in

Black South African women have in the past acknowledged that being a woman secured special treatment for white women while black women receive no special consideration as women. Fouche remarks “...while for
typical white employers black females were not properly women but merely robust female workers of indeterminate gender (1994:80).” Therefore being a woman did not protect black women in the same way as femininity protected white women. She observes that black women were forced by apartheid to develop qualities not traditionally viewed as feminine e.g. strength, endurance and self-reliance.

Witz again cautions that while feminists have traditionally argued that women are disadvantaged relative to men by part-time work, this is not universally true. Full-time employment does not benefit everybody equally, since generally White women earn more money in full-time employment than Black women (1993:279) do. Black women work full-time more often than White women and in many cases as the only breadwinner. Women who are migrants in Britain are more likely to work full-time than British–born women since black men are more likely to be part of the unskilled labour force with concomitant lower wages. Therefore women have to work full-time (Parmar, 1982:247). While full-time work for White women means better pay, Black women are badly paid for the same amount of hours. Another issue is domestic labour. While for some women this might be unpaid labour, for others it is waged labour. Another example illustrating that generalising about women across ethnic and class lines might not work, was the example
of working-class Turkish women participating in the labour force while upper-
class Turkish women stayed at home (Ecevit, 1991:58).

Sinclair (1991:11) warns against cultural stereotypes, for example that
some women are domesticated, passive or oppressed by their cultures.
Women can use culture as a tool of resistance and it is not wise to assume
that women are helpless victims or find their culture oppressive. Parmar
(1982:249) remarks that it is often assumed in Britain that Asian women are
domesticated while they have a long history of labour both in and outside
the home in their countries of origin and very often family survival depended
on that work. She gives examples of telephone operators in India (1982:255)
and Bangladeshi women (1982:257) to illustrate the long hard hours of work
these women endure in their countries of origin. When these women are at
home, in many cases it is because they cannot access childcare like white
British women. Therefore their domesticity is not a matter of choice but due
to discrimination.

Contrary to the popular stereotype of Asian women as passive, these
women have long histories of resistance against oppression (Parmar,
1982:264). To measure their militancy in terms of trade union membership,
like some writers have done, is incorrect since their experiences with racism
in trade unions have affected their view of trade unions. During periods of industrial action, they might instead depend heavily on community support.

Looking at feminism in other cultures, Afshar (2000) claims that Islamist feminists are disillusioned by Western feminism’s failure to liberate women through waged labour and the issues they choose to prioritise and have started to resist patriarchy from within Koranic law. In this way women in Iran have successfully regained territory in the face of patriarchal religious and political forces. While in Western feminism wearing the veil is seen as a sign of oppression, Islamic feminists use it to resist the objectification of women’s bodies. What Afshar illustrates is that rather than generalising about the experiences of women, what is needed now is to study the experiences of women within specific geographical and historical contexts.

Walby relates how superficial assumptions by aid agencies with regard to gender relations in developing countries have sometimes deprived women of their sources of income and forced them into dependency (1990:47). Meena (1992:21) remarking on development strategies in Africa suggests that “it did not increase women’s access to resources both tangible and non-tangible, which would have enhanced their greater participation in the management of the society in which they were living. In brief, it did not lead to their empowerment.”
Walby (1990:44) writing on class and race differences, notes that White males used trade unions to protect their rights from women and all Black people. She also relates that Black men were used as cheap sources of labour in the textile industry during the period 1970-1982 when the British textile industry went into a decline due to overseas competition.

Writing on migrant women from various ethnic groups in Britain, Baxter & Raw (1988:58) and Bhachu (1988:76) relate how the waged labour can make some women more independent while creating bondage for others. While ethnic Chinese women working in family fast-food businesses are reincorporated into both productive and reproductive patriarchal relations, Sikh women use their waged labour to enjoy more independence and to modify traditional divisions of labour in the home. In this case, waged labour frees the Sikh but not the Chinese women since the Chinese women work long hours that causes social isolation and only receive handouts on the whim of fathers, husbands or sons.

One can clearly see evolutionary progress from an earlier unidimensional and rather rigid explanations for women’s situation to a more multi-dimensional flexible accommodation of women’s varied situations. Drawing from postmodernism, feminists started focussing on differences between women.
Differences relating to class, colour, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, geographical location and age were all debated.

While welcoming the focus on experiences and voices that were once marginalised, the obvious danger pointed out was that abandoning the category women would lead to the end of a feminist agenda. However, as indicated above, some writers argue that such a move would be premature and that women should form alliances around common issues to fight women’s oppression.

3.4 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Besides sex segregation, other writers suggest that organisational culture might be a stumbling block to women’s career aspirations. One writer suggests that numbers might not be enough when women enter organisations (African Gender Institute, 1998:2). Organisations have cultures, values and practices that guide perceptions and behaviour and that might create barriers for women. Chliwniak (1997) suggests that organisations have been saturated with masculine norms and values for so long that these norms have become associated with all organisations. Male leadership has become the norm and those women who succeed must conform to male values.
Tertiary education leadership in the United States illustrates that women form a minority in university leadership (Chliwniak, 1997). She feels that institutional cultures create a "chilly climate" for women. Institutional culture affects the allocation of resources, curriculum's, faculty and administrative styles of organisations.

Male leadership styles are hostile to women since it focuses on outcomes, rules, hierarchy and structures while women are assumed to centre on relationships, sharing and process. Young female faculty also lacks alternative role models due to the scarcity of female leaders and this could force women to adopt male norms of success. (Chliwniak, 1997).

The assumption that men work better with other men might adversely affect a woman's career aspirations (Chliwniak, 1997; Irvine, 1985:12). Irvine suggests that the perception might exist that women would not contribute as much as males to the prestige of the institution. Women also do not fit the masculine leadership stereotype and therefore males might be more comfortable associating with and employing other males. Therefore Chliwnaik (1997) suggests that women are also excluded from informal male networks that consolidate power and provide individuals with the necessary exposure to those who decide on advancement.
Williams talks about gendered organisations (1995:11) and claims that organisations “value men and qualities associated with masculinity more highly than they value women”. She suggests that especially in female-intensive professions, males and masculinity is especially treasured and highly rewarded. She relates that men (White and middle-class specifically) were targeted for high-level positions within these professions to bring masculine qualities like rationality, technical skills and aggression to its management.

Writing on the culture of the public service in Trinidad and Tobago, Bissessar (1999) remarks that a change in consciousness is necessary to accommodate women. She sees institutional culture as a means of social control through shared norms and values. She cites the example of these two islands where radical changes were expected in the public service after independence from Britain. However, the indigenous governors continued the practice of picking ‘high brown males’ with foreign education and a twenty-year tenure track. Bissessar writes that women were excluded and that one elite seemed to be replaced by another elite.
3.5 CONCLUSION

The development of feminist theory over past decades has succeeded in formulating credible explanations for women’s oppression in both the domestic and public sphere. Feminism has demonstrated and illuminated the relationship between patriarchy, capitalism and racism in the oppression of women in all spheres of society.

However, what has also been illustrated is that although all women are oppressed, the forms of oppression differ from group to group and woman to woman and that it would be problematic to forget women of different races, cultures, classes and localities suffer different forms and degrees of oppression (Brooks, 1997:16). On the other hand, the differences between women are not so great that finding common ground is impossible (Beasley, 1999:84).

In the work environment, gender, class and race form interlocking systems of oppression to either exclude women from certain occupations or segregate them into a limited number of occupations. Although race and class also serve to differentiate and discriminate further between women, research has proven that gender is a greater determinant of labour market position than race (Xu & Leffler, 1996:113).
It has become clear that the status of women in librarianship is directly connected to the status of women in society at large. The one cannot be separated from the other and the treatment of women in librarianship reflects the treatment of women in society.

The link between patriarchy, class and race in society and in the workplace must be made otherwise credible explanations for women librarians’ disadvantaged positions will not be found. Gender and race constructions within a capitalist mode of production have succeeded in relegating women librarians to lower positions based on assumptions about their domestic constraints, their fitness to manage, their skills and qualifications.

Besides feminist theories, additional explanations for women’s disadvantaged position lie in the masculinity of organisational cultures that are a reflection of the prevailing values and norms of society and which rewards and values masculinity above femininity. This pervasive and often unacknowledged culture is racist and sexist, and works to exclude all women as well as black men from management positions.

Therefore, within organisations, gender stereotyping and negative attitudes towards women lead to strategies to filter women out at critical points of
career development. Consequently, having few women in senior positions to act as role models and mentors, racism, male bonding and the exclusion of women from networks that serve to advance careers are all contributing factors that solidify male power and lead to women's marginalisation and demotivation. Those women who find themselves in senior positions might suffer isolation and lack of support.

Employment equity legislation and affirmative action policies both locally and internationally, have led to some changes but these are forced changes and do not really change the attitudes and cultures that have led to the exclusion and silencing of women librarians, particularly black women librarians. Legislation, though welcome, may force some changes on institutions, but it is not sufficient to change the position of all women. This will require more fundamental change both within society at large and within organisations, and in ideas and constructions both males and females have about gender, race and class.
CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As indicated before, this study will fall within a qualitative paradigm. However before describing the study, the existing paradigms within which research could theoretically be placed will be examined in order to contextualise the current study and motivate for the methodology adopted. This theoretical discussion will be followed with a description of the objectives of the study, the data collection methods, the participants, the procedures followed and will be concluded with an explanation of the methods used to analyse the data.

4.2 PARADIGMATIC DECISIONS

Any researcher needs to make decisions regarding methodology and the basis for that decision is likely to be found within the paradigm that informs and guides the research process. Guba & Lincoln (1994:105) define paradigms as "...the basic belief system or worldview that guides the
investigator, not only in choice of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways”. Having found Guba and Lincoln to be very authoritative sources, this researcher will rely heavily on their work.

Paradigms are purely subjective since it involves beliefs about the nature of reality, what can be known about reality and how it is known. In other words, they are “human constructions” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:108). According to Guba & Lincoln (1994:108) paradigms inform in three areas:

- **Ontology** – what is reality, or “What is the nature of the knowable?”
- **Epistemology** – how do you acquire knowledge of reality, or “What is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)?” Logically, this answer is predicated on the response to the first question.
- **Methodology** – what methods would serve in finding out about reality, or “How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?” This answer is dependent on the response to the above questions (Guba, 1990:18).

Historically four paradigms have guided research: positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism. The implications of these paradigms will be discussed below. While constructivism is a radical departure from former
paradigms, both positivism and critical theory are adaptations of positivism and therefore will not be included in the discussion.

4.2.1 COMPARING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF POSITIVISM AND CONSTRUCTIVISM

Positivism is approximately 400 years old, is the oldest paradigm and has been used by the ‘hard’ sciences for centuries. Ontologically, the proponents of positivism believe that a “real” reality exists governed by eternal laws and this view is also termed “naïve realism” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:109). Science exists to discover these laws with the aim of explaining, predicting and controlling events (Guba, 1990:19; Guba & Lincoln, 1994:113). A dualist and objectivist epistemology guides action in the belief that the researcher can be totally objective. The researcher should prevent biases and values from polluting research in finding out the real nature of things. Obstacles to validity must be identified and eliminated (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110).

Constructivism cast aside the belief in a ‘real’ reality that can be known, in favour of believing in a duality of realities, existing as constructions based on the experiences of individuals or groups or across cultures. These constructions are flexible and in terms of validity can be “more or less informed and/or sophisticated (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:111).”
Social constructionism places great emphasis on the role of language to construct realities. While essentialism implies a belief in occurrences as natural, unchanging, universal and biologically determined (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998), social constructionists believe that language provides the lens through which we view reality. Language allows sharing of experiences of reality between people and is a by-product of social interaction.

Being value-laden, it provides the categories instrumental to interpreting our realities. Gergen (1988:37) writes that reality ("whatever is the case", as he calls it) does not determine how phenomena are described or interpreted and the same phenomenon can be interpreted differently depending on the vantage point of the viewer.

Therefore our ontological viewpoint already decides how observations will be interpreted and our biases makes objectivity impossible. Gergen clarifies it "...in spite of the attempts of empiricist foundationalists to separate clearly between fact and value, there would appear to be no means by which value neutrality can be achieved. To the extent that any set of observables is subject to multiple interpretations, rules of empirical procedure furnish no barrier against the free play of values in selecting one interpretation over another (1988:29)".
Therefore social constructionists believe that the concept of objective knowledge must be abandoned in favour of the idea that all knowledge are forms of discourse and that reality does not dictate how events are interpreted. The same event could therefore be given different meanings or interpretations (multiple realities). Knowledge claims are legitimised through discourse and therefore be viewed as a social process. "...the generation of knowledge is thus the fruit of social connection rather than separation. It is through harmony in human relatedness that reality, as a linguistic rendering, comes into being at all (Gergen, 1988:40)." Scientific discourse is therefore seen as a communal activity that serves the function of prediction and control.

In positivism, controlled experiments are the chosen method. Hypotheses are stated beforehand and tested empirically to prove them either true or false (Guba, 1990:20). Paradigms like postpositivism and critical theory both believe in a "real reality" and are attempts to correct flaws in the former model.

The shortcomings of the quantitative approach identified by Guba & Lincoln (1994:106) is the elimination of context by focussing on a limited number of variables while the inclusion of other relevant variables might have made a
difference to the findings. Another problem of experiments in the traditional sense is that it deprives activities of explanatory and contextual factors. Furthermore, the outsider (etic) scientific view often does not speak for the emic (insider) or 'other' views that exist in the world, as evidenced by critique of feminists. The above criticisms are intraparadigmatic and the normal remedies for these failures are the application of qualitative methodology as an additional safeguard.

Other reservations of quantitative methodology come from outside the paradigm (extraparadigmatic) and deemed so fundamental that the paradigm itself becomes fatally flawed (Guba & Lincoln (1994:107). A problem is that facts do not exist independent of theories and therefore the language of empirical testing and theory cannot be objective. Another problem is that the same facts can be used to justify different theories and therefore no theory can be fully proven. Theories can only be falsified by additional knowledge or anomalies (Guba & Lincoln (1994:107). Total objectivity is impossible since research is often a process of interaction between people that both influence the process and makes objective observation impossible. Even in the physical sciences this objectivity is discredited by certain developments and therefore now it cannot be argued for in the social sciences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:107). Further problems with empiricism are the exclusion of the feminist viewpoint and the fact that there have been cases where scientists
have favoured interpretations more aligned with vested interests (Gergen, 1988:29). Additionally, feminism finds the separation of reason and emotion, subject and object, and knowledge from its social and historical context within empiricism problematic (Gergen, 1988:30).

In contrast, constructivists believe that reality is subjective and relative, they favour subjective methods of inquiry based on interaction between humans that will illuminate the constructions held by people (Guba, 1990:26). Knowledge can be regarded as “...those constructions about which there is relative consensus...among those competent...to interpret the substance of the construction (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:113)”.

Methodologically, the accurate representation of constructions are sought (hermeneutics) while a dialectic interaction between researcher and respondent attempts “comparing and contrasting” (Guba, 1990:26) the constructions of both in order to reach an approximate understanding of constructions for “substantial consensus” (Guba, 1990:27).

Both paradigms have their own methods of judging successful research. In quantitative methodology the quality of research is evaluated by measuring the reliability, validity and the transferability of the findings to other settings and participants (Leedy, 1997:32).
Criteria to judge quality in constructivism rests on credibility (the degree of approximation reached between the constructions of respondents and the representation of those constructions given by researchers) and transferability (the degree to which findings can be generalised. This is done by providing “thick descriptions” that makes it easy for potential users to see the extent to which findings can be generalised to other settings. The burden of determining generalisation is therefore placed on the user and not the researcher (Glesne, 1990:237).

Additional criteria are dependability, confirmability and authenticity. Dependability means that decisions regarding the inquiry and the methods used can be changed but changes are to be expected because of “maturing constructions”. All that is required is documentation for outside inspection. The technique employed is the “dependability audit” (Guba, 1989:242). Confirmability refers to “...assuring that the data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the evaluator and are not simply figments of the evaluator’s imagination (Guba, 1989:243)”. The confirmability audit means that the data from which conclusions were drawn and the logical assumptions that were behind the processing and interpretation of the data should be available for scrutiny (Guba, 1989:243).
A criterion unique to constructivism is authenticity. Authenticity refers to the development of an understanding of other people's constructions and a deepening in the level of sophistication of the researcher's constructions for improved utility. It connects research with empowerment, action and fairness (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:114; Guba, 1989:245). Fairness means different constructions and their value systems are illuminated, clarified, verified and respected within the research process. This is necessary since conflicting constructions based on differing value systems will emerge during the research process and must be accounted for. Another method to ensure fairness is the "open negotiation of recommendations and the agenda for subsequent action (Guba, 1989:246)".

Marshall (1990:191) suggests that in qualitative research there are degrees of bias. Judgement of whether a research project is good or valuable is subjective since all relate to the "...interpretation of the interpretations people give to their own situations...". The researcher should be "...tolerant of ambiguity, searched for alternative explanations, checked out negative instances, and used a variety of methods to check the findings (i.e. triangulation) (1990:194)". Research is linked to the "big picture" and respondents gain in some way, while limitations of generalisation is admitted, transferability of results are pointed out and ethical standards are

After looking at various research methods and evaluating them in terms of this study, it was decided to apply a feminist social constructivist methodology within a qualitative paradigm.

4.3 MOTIVATING FOR A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

In this research project qualitative methodology has various strengths. It is ideal for topics that are under-researched and under-explored which require a descriptive approach. Qualitative methodology provides data that has "richness and holism" and provides "thick descriptions" of situations that are illuminated in context (Miles & Huberman, 1994:10). As only one South African article on women librarians was found, it is clear that in South Africa the topic is under-researched and the researcher felt descriptive data collected through personal contact would be necessary to do justice to the topic. Most of the literature on the subject is American or European and not always applicable to our situation since the circumstances and environment differ significantly. Moreover the degree of sensitivity of the topic was unknown, simply because it is seldom raised publicly, or in the researcher's experience, privately.
Qualitative methodology is particularly suitable to uncover detail and provides closer contact through observation and in-depth interviewing, which seems more appropriate in this case where little is known on the topic and the desire exists to elicit perspectives and feelings on the matter (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:2).

In the past, feminist methodology has been closely linked to qualitative methodology. Recently this close association between feminism and qualitative methods has been relaxed and feminists make use of both qualitative and quantitative methodology where necessary. However, feminists have criticised quantitative methodology for the choice of sexist and elitist topics, an exploitative relationship between researcher and subject, the illusion of objectivity, (Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991:86) and the lack of relationship between action/politics and research/science (Mies, 1991:62).

McDermott (1998a) has criticised the predominantly quantitative methodology used in the past to study women's situation in librarianship since "they tell us little about the reasons for the imbalance". Most of the studies done on the position of women in libraries used a quantitative approach with questionnaires and statistical analysis being the rule.
Jayaratne & Stewart (1991:86) call it the “simplistic and superficial nature of quantitative data”.

We need to re-examine our theories and research methodology (Hannigan & Crew, 1993:32) and do research for women rather than on women. Hannigan and Crew (1993:28) writing on the value of feminist methodology for library science, observed that up until now the female perspective has not featured centrally in our literature. We need to look at methodologies that, in a profession that is 80% female (Murgai, 1991:681), place women centrally.

Hildreth remarked that library history is a history of men written by men (1992:19). Librarians need to re-examine androcentric biases embedded in their own theory and practice as well as in those fields they have drawn from (Hannigan & Crew, 1993:31) and need to develop new perspectives and interpretations. Feminist methodology recognises that research is influenced by values and perspectives are not bias-free. In library science we need to bring in the perspectives of those who have been ignored, namely women and minority groups. This will bring about “...multiple perspectives towards a complex and evolving view of reality” (Hannigan & Crew, 1993:28).
Feminist research (working against women’s oppression) is particularly concerned that existing hierarchical relationships are not duplicated in research settings (Acker, Barry & Esseveld, 1991:136) and stresses that researchers should recognize the power differences between researcher and subject and the potential for abuse. Pritchard (1994:42) felt that feminist thinking leads to a more “...nuanced discussion about the nature of power in social and political institutions and about the values and communication patterns implicit in abstract and concrete hierarchies and structures”. Therefore a feminist approach allows us to critically look at the philosophy of librarianship underpinning everything including library communication, hierarchies, decision-making styles and values. She feels that we need to re-examine women in libraries, salaries, occupational segregation, pay equity, professional education, public policies, access to services, information and technology.

However, Hannigan and Crew (1993:31) believe that eventually we need to move beyond issues like pay equity, to look at the assumptions behind the philosophy of librarianship. We need to develop different models of research and thinking so as to give women librarians a voice. Mies observes that the ultimate aim of feminist research is to move from consciousness-raising to building alternative structures.
"If women forgo the opportunity to construct
...centers of opposition, during their consciousness-
raising processes and their research, then they have
no other option but to adapt once more to male
power structures. (Mies, 1991:68)"

Since theory building is also necessary, she recognises that all research need
not lead to action. This study will at the very least allow women interviewed
to engage with the issue, as Louw (1989:308) also wished, as a possible
contribution.

4.4 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The concepts of reliability and validity in qualitative research and the
methods to deal with it were discussed earlier. It is important to emphasise
that the influence of subjectivity of the researcher on the process and results
are acknowledged and welcomed.

In contrast to quantitative assumptions of objectivity, in qualitative research
it is expected that the researcher should reach a measure of closeness or
empathy with the research subject to be able to truly report on it. The
researcher should constantly examine him/herself for bias and reflect honestly on these in the research account, since:

"...there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed." (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 12).

Therefore Marshall and Rossman (1995:147) suggest that bias should be stated. The researcher must acknowledge that their views and experiences influence the research process. There is no need to pretend objectivity, but place subjectivity at the heart of the research by making it part of the research process and in essence, desirable. Furthermore the researcher should check for alternative explanations, present credible explanations and use methods like triangulation to verify results (Marshall & Rossman, 1995:147).

The following sections will focus on the objectives of the study, the sample, instruments and the processes of data collection and analysis.
4.5 RESEARCH AIMS

The main aim of the present research was to explore women librarians' discourses as to whether they experience a struggle to advance within the library and information science sector and if they do, why they have this problem. The research questions on which the research was based and that directed the investigation are:

1) To what extent has gender/sex impacted on the career positioning of female librarians?

2) Have any other obstacles impeded the career advancement of female librarians and if so, what were they?

3) When female librarians apply for promotion, what are their actual experiences?

4) To what extent has race impacted on the career positioning of female librarians?

4.6 SAMPLING, PARTICIPANTS AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Taking into account the sites to be covered, time constraints and the type of study, it was decided to collect data using focus groups and personal interviews where focus groups would not be possible. In this way two focus
groups and five individual interviews were held. A vignette and a biographical questionnaire was developed to be used during the focus groups and interviews. A pilot study helped to refine the vignette.

4.6.1 THE INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with three librarians at UWC plus two female library directors. These interviews were conducted at the workplace of participants since that was convenient for all concerned. In all cases participants chose the venue.

Introductions and clarifications regarding the study were made. The reason why they were selected was also explained as well as the format that would be followed. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of the proceedings and were asked to speak freely in any language they preferred. Permission was sought to tape the interview. Participants were also asked if they had any other stipulations for the interviews except confidentiality, freedom of speech and language usage. They were also given the biographical questionnaire to fill in.

The vignette was handed out. A choice of English and Afrikaans vignettes was available. Participants were also told that the questions that
accompanied the vignette were to be used as guides only and that they were free to speak on anything that the vignette brought to mind.

Experience gained during the pilot study was employed. Rather than launching into the questions, participants were asked to imagine themselves in the subject of the vignette's, Doris, situation and tell the researcher what they think her experiences will be. They were asked to use or ignore the questions as guidelines depending on how they feel.

This approach was utilised since the researcher observed during the pilot study that people tended to speak very briefly on the first few questions and very broadly and openly on the last two questions. Participants were either hampered by the specificity of the questions or warming up and relaxing as the interview went along. Whatever the reason it was felt that participants should be free to ignore the questions and speak on whatever came to mind when reading the vignette. After terminating the interview, people were thanked for their participation.

In the interviews with the two female directors, the vignette was presented and they were merely asked to comment on what they thought her experiences would be. They could also use the questions as guidelines if they wanted to. In the latter two interviews the interviewees were also
asked to touch on issues like how they were perceived by both male and female staff, the support they received from their superiors and obstacles they might have experienced on their way up the hierarchy. Rank and file librarians also touched on the issue of the sort of support that females in the higher ranks receive. Although it was not specifically asked, it was an issue frequently mentioned. In analysing the data and writing the report, the two directors are referred to in ways that identify them, but since the information was not sensitive, confidentiality was not regarded as a problem.

During the study, the researcher also kept in mind Jayaratne & Stewart’s discussion on objectivity and subjectivity in the research process. They believe that feminist research aim to unite the subjective and the objective (1991: 98). Therefore the researcher must constantly reflect on his/her own prejudices and reactions during research.

While the unifying factors in these interviews with female librarians was the fact that the researcher was female, a librarian and had spent many years in the higher education library sector in the Western Cape, one source of constraint in some of the interviews was race and possibly language. At this stage it becomes necessary to touch on the topic of race. Race, like sex, can be seen as a construction reflecting physical differences (Kemp, 1994:118). In South Africa where race was once legislated, it becomes a very sensitive
topic. This researcher falls within the so-called Coloured population group, historically legislated into separate geographical spaces through the Group Areas Act of 1950 and through enforced separation, developing a group identity that is highly contentious today. Within the coloured community it is sometimes rejected as an attempt to divide black opposition to apartheid and other times it is argued that a unique culture was created that should be celebrated (Martin, 2001:250). Coloured history is filled with ambivalence, in terms of political allegiance as well as towards the term coloured. The so-called Coloured group are also marked more by diversity (e.g. religion, cultural interests, geographical variations, language, and so forth) than unity. This researcher recognises the ambivalence of the term and its political expediency and argues for herself a multi-layered identity as South African, Black and female. When using the racial or sexual descriptors, it is with full knowledge that they are constructions.

As a Black woman the researcher was interviewing mostly White women and touching on topics like affirmative action that is a contentious issue amongst different races in South Africa. On both sides there was an awareness of the sensitivity of the issue. This was especially apparent during the Cape Technikon interview where constraint and discomfort could be discerned at times and a clear feeling that had the researcher been White, they might have felt freer to express themselves in the presence of
somebody who might theoretically be more supportive of negative views on affirmative action. Despite efforts to maintain a supportive encouraging presence, it is not clear to what extent the effort was successful as the researcher also experienced discomfort.

In contrast, interviews with librarians at UWC was much more relaxed because of shared experiences, language and similar racial and gender backgrounds. In the Stellenbosch interview the majority of participants were White and possible tensions were eased by conducting the interview in Afrikaans that is the home language of the participants.

Plows (1998) writes that the researcher needs to practice reflexivity by being conscious of the effect he/she has on the research process. Here the values, views and experiences of the researcher are acknowledged and objectivity is disclaimed. Thus the researcher needs to state that she has strong views on the disadvantaged position of women in libraries and this influenced the choice of research subject. During the interview process, a feeling of gladness was experienced when it became clear that most women were aware of their disadvantaged situation. In some instances, there might have been a temptation to ask leading questions, but this was balanced by the fact that generally women came forward with the same issues and the themes reflect that.
As said before, race was a constraint in certain instances and had the researcher been a different colour, different responses might have been received. It is a two-edged sword, since had she been a different colour in other interviews it might have met with less honesty. Language served as a bridge as in the case of Stellenbosch where people could speak in their own language.

Having been formerly employed at UWC, prior acquaintance also served the researcher well as discussions could be intimate and open. During the interview process participation was encouraged from everybody to ensure that all views are represented.

4.6.2 FOCUS GROUPS

The method used to gather data depends on the nature of the problem (North, 1988:48). Focus groups facilitate the extraction of information from a group of people in a short space of time (Morgan, 1988:19). It provides a supportive space for discussion (Potgieter, 1997:124) and should ideally be composed of approximately 6 to 12 participants (Stewart and Shamdasani 1990:57). They suggest that planning should take into account that at least two people might not turn up. The size of the group or the amount of people
interviewed is not as important as the quality of information and interaction with people, which means that even a very small sample could be satisfactory (Morgan, 1988:21).

On the application of focus groups, Morgan (1988:25) suggests that "Focus groups are useful when it comes to investigating what participants think, but they excel at uncovering why participants think as they do". Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:102) concur that focus groups are ideal to explore topics when knowledge is marginal. In this study, focus groups were chosen as a method of data collection because very little is known about what women librarians think and why they think the way they do. Since the purpose of the study is to vocalise the experiences, beliefs and perspectives of the women librarians themselves with regards to career advancement, focus groups was to be the main instrument of data gathering.

Since several sites had to be visited and the librarians concerned are perpetually short of time, focus groups would be a further advantage. In this study, a minimum of six per focus group was achieved. The researcher had to adjust targets according to the size of the libraries and the pool of suitable candidates available at the institutions in question.
Morgan (1988:46) feels that one should ensure "a reasonable amount of homogeneity within groups in order to foster discussion". Therefore the female directors who participated in the study were accommodated via personal interviews since their presence in the focus groups (as managers) might inhibit free expression by others of lesser rank. Individual interviews served as an alternative where a focus group for whatever reason could not take place. If necessary, post-focus group interviews could be held clarify or expand on issues discussed in focus groups (Patton, 1990:353).

4.6.3 THE VIGNETTE

Barter and Renold (1999) defines vignettes as follows: "The vignette technique is a method that can elicit perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes from responses or comments to stories depicting scenarios and situations." They also state that vignettes can be used as icebreakers, to identify attitudes and beliefs and to explore sensitive issues. The vignette allows a depersonalisation process that eases participants in discussing subjects especially those that are highly personal and sensitive. Vignettes can be used with either focus groups or individual interviews to aid discussion.
Vignettes have been used successfully in South African research to introduce sensitive topics. Potgieter observes that vignettes should be broad enough to allow participants to create their own meaning but it should also illuminate different angles of the topic under discussion (1997:119).

To initiate and aid the flow of discussion in the focus groups, a vignette (case study) was composed with follow-up questions to elicit the information needed in line with the research questions of the study. The vignette used in this study is vague enough to allow projection but also incorporate enough features that interviewees can identify with (see Appendix A). It was used as a question-framing device and structured to facilitate responses to the research questions. An attempt was made to create enough similarities between the character in the vignette and the female librarians chosen to facilitate identification. The vignette was drawn up in English and Afrikaans. The questions following the vignette tried to gauge the importance of race and gender in career advancement, the factors that affect career advancement positively and negatively and the confidence females have to apply for promotion.
4.6.4 THE BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

A biographical questionnaire was drawn up and used to describe participants in the study. The questionnaire focussed on age, qualifications, home language, further studies, relationship status and children. (Appendix B).

4.6.5 THE PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted to test the efficacy of the vignette and the questions attached to it. The pilot study was conducted at the Library of Parliament with the help of female librarians who were qualified and had been there more than 3 years. A very small pool of librarians, five, fitted the profile and agreed to participate. This indicated to the researcher that the pool of suitable candidates overall in the Western Cape might not be large. The vignette demonstrated that participants were more animated on some questions and that such behaviour should be anticipated and catered for in the interviews. Some unnecessary information in the vignette that proved distracting during the pilot study was removed.

4.6.6 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participation was sought from women librarians who have been employed for a significant amount of time – three years or more. It is hypothesised that
after some years experience they would probably have
witnessed/experienced /reflected on their ambitions and career prospects in
librarianship.

Marshall and Rossman (1995: 51) lists as criteria for choosing a site for
research that entry should be possible, that relationships of trust are built
and that data quality and credibility can be expected. The study was
intended to be located in the five institutions of higher education clustered in
the Western Cape. These are the University of the Western Cape, University
of Stellenbosch, the University of Cape Town and the two technikons,
Peninsula Technikon and Cape Technikon. The reason for choosing them was
the convenient geographical clustering, which facilitates research. It also
furnished, in contrast with school and public libraries, a large enough pool of
qualified female that have been at the institutions for a number of years.
These sites also meet the criteria listed by Marshall and Rossman given
above.

Permission was sought via e-mail (Appendix D) from the listed institutions to
conduct research. Once permission was granted, a list of suitable women
librarians was requested from the institutions. The heads of the five
institutions were asked to provide a list of female librarians that had been at
their institutions for three or more years and who were regarded as qualified
librarians in their institutions. The latter criteria were preferred to merely
requesting for female librarians with degrees as technikon qualifications are also recognised as professional. The subject is a sensitive one in libraries where technikon qualifications are sometimes regarded as inferior in some quarters. The researcher felt it best to leave it up to the institution to decide what they regarded as suitable qualification to be in a librarian position.

The directors of all five libraries gave permission for research to be conducted amongst their female staff. Of the five institutions three responded with lists of suitable candidates quite soon. These were UWC, Stellenbosch and Cape Technikon. Peninsula Technikon never responded even after a follow-up e-mail to the director. A follow-up e-mail to the director of UCT libraries resulted in the information that they would post a list of candidates to the researcher. The list arrived so late that UCT was dropped from the list of sites for the study except for an interview with the Library Director.

An individual interview was also arranged with the only other female director of a tertiary library (UWC) since their experiences might throw a different light on the research questions as stated earlier. While a list of candidates and e-mail addresses was supplied by UWC and Cape Technikon, the researcher's name was passed to suitable female librarians at Stellenbosch
with an e-mail from the researcher soliciting their participation. In this way they were free to choose to participate or not by e-mailing the researcher.

Using the lists supplied by UWC and Cape Technikon, the researcher contacted each person via e-mail and solicited their participation in focus groups to be set up at their libraries. The e-mails indicated that the interviews would be taped, that the interviews would last approximately an hour, that permission had been received from the head of the library and that it would take place on a date, time and place convenient for them. They were also informed that they would be requested to fill in a biographical questionnaire. Convenient times were sought and after much e-mailing two focus groups were set up at Stellenbosch and Cape Technikon. Eight positive responses were received from Stellenbosch University while seven positive responses were received from Cape Technikon. Due to changing circumstances on the part of some librarians, the two focus groups were eventually composed of six each.

Out of a list of seven suitable librarians provided by UWC, only three were willing to be interviewed. Shift work and work pressure made focus groups difficult but eventually individual interviews were held with the three librarians.
4.6.7 THE PARTICIPANTS

The data gathered by the biographical questionnaire were translated into tabular form to enable the researcher to start describing the participants. Questions in the biographical questionnaire related to age, home language, relationship status, children, qualifications and further studies.

Table 5: Biographical data and description of participants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual E/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualification</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Degree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd degree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or more degrees</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuing studies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total interviewed</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The age range shows that 53% of the women interviewed were in mid-career (40-49 years old). In terms of relationship status, the distribution of
married and single women was almost equal. Most women were childless and Afrikaans speaking.

The percentage of women who had second degrees were 29% while 12% have three or more degrees and 24% were studying further. Of the 24% that are studying further, 3 are bettering their basic degree and one already has 3 or more degrees. Therefore the figure for those with 2 degrees will actually increase to 47% eventually.

In terms of race, 65% were White and 35% coloured. No African women formed part of the sample. Only one African female librarian was a potential candidate and she did not respond to a request for an interview. Although this dense concentration of White women in the sample is worrying in terms of representivity, it is not unusual if one looks at the history of the institutions covered in the sample. Stellenbosch University and Cape Technikon traditionally served the White population of the country and were part of the grand apartheid plan in terms of location, staff and students. The University of the Western Cape, where all of the interviewees were coloured, was an institution aimed at serving the higher educational needs of the Coloured population. Only two of the Stellenbosch interviewees were Coloured and all of the Cape Technikon interviewees were White. The only Coloured candidate at Cape Technikon reported sick the day of the interview
and therefore did not form part of the sample. As mentioned somewhere else, the only African candidate in the various lists of prospective interviewees, did not avail herself for an interview. Following a subsequent unsuccessful attempt to get an interview, the attempt was abandoned.

The difficulty experienced by the interviewer in achieving a sample more reflective of the racial distribution in the country, reflects the slow pace of change in institutions in spite of the legislation introduced after 1994 to achieve equity in terms of race. This does not mean that those institutions do not have librarians of different races, but one can speculate that where they exist they might be more recent employees. As one of the criteria for inclusion in the sample was the length of time employed at the institution, this might have excluded possible candidates.

Since the study is meant to focus only on the views and experiences of a small number of women librarians located within a specific geographic area, the intention was not to represent the views and experiences of women of all races in the country. It is simply the view of a cross-section of female librarians at particular institutions at a particular time and assumptions of the transferability of findings should be carefully considered.
4.7 TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWS

The interviews were taped and then transcribed directly onto computer. A list of coding conventions is given as Appendix C.

The transcription process was not without problems. The tape recorder that was used proved a problem specifically during the group interviews. Due to inexperience on the part of the researcher, an outside mike was not used and the quality of the sound left much to be desired in some cases. In both group interviews people were seated around a table with the recorder in the middle. It proved difficult to catch all voices, as people tend to speak at different volumes. The sound in the Cape Technikon interview was not good but the voices were audible or could be boosted.

In the Stellenbosch interview the quality of the sound was very bad on the one side of the cassette and completely inaudible on the other side. Possible explanations were that the batteries might have gone flat or that the sound button was inadvertently pushed down when the cassette was turned around to record on the other side. Whatever the reason, attempts were made to retrieve the information using the technical expertise of sound engineers. It was important to try since valuable information was recorded during the latter half of the interview. As mentioned before, people seem to
warm up, relax and speak more freely as the interviews went on. This was the case in all the interviews.

Since it proved technically impossible to retrieve the information, the researcher tried to recall from memory and summarise the inaudible parts of the tape. The sound during the individual interviews was not a problem since the recorder could be placed close to the person and that worked well. Interviews were marked numerically 1-5 and focus groups alphabetically A-B for reference purposes.

4.8 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Marshall and Rossman (1995:111) define data analysis in qualitative analysis as the search for general statements about relationships between categories of data. Following their procedural steps the following process was broadly adhered to:

4.8.1 ORGANISING THE DATA

During this process the data is read and re-read to familiarise oneself with the content of each interview. Doing the transcriptions personally also assisted with becoming very familiar with the material.
4.8.2 GENERATING CATEGORIES, THEMES AND PATTERNS

After re-reading each interview, passages and sentences that were relevant were highlighted. Common themes, "added evidence of the same pattern (Miles & Huberman, 1994:246) could be discerned through the various interviews. Marshall and Rossman (1995:114) call it identifying salient themes, recurring ideas or language and patterns of beliefs that link people and settings together. Miles & Huberman (1994:246) suggest noting patterns of similarities and differences in variables across categories.

Different themes were given different colours. A list of themes were made and added to periodically. These themes were classified into categories distinct from each other. Once all themes were identified, passages and sentences were cut out and pasted to a large sheet under its category. One sheet was used per interview. Thereafter, similar data from different sheets were grouped together.

After reading and re-reading the transcripts the following categories and themes were identified:

The category obstacles to advancement which includes the themes patriarchy across race and class, patriarchy and male attitudes, gender discrimination in recruitment and selection, affirmative action and employment equity, exclusion from networks, support, socialisation and lack of confidence, socialisation and adherence to traditional gender roles, socialisation and the importance of family responsibilities, socialisation and IT
training, ageism as a result of socialisation, double proof, socialisation and institutional culture.

The category strategies for advancement which include the themes mentors, role models, membership of professional organisations, aggression (being pushy), higher qualifications and promotion.

The category women's view of the future.

**4.8.3 TESTING THE EMERGENT HYPOTHESES**

Marshall and Rossman (1995:112) observed that during analysis the researcher should discover significant classes of things, name them and link them together. Research questions and relevant literature should be used to identify these categories of data that needs to be analysed. They call it identifying "salient themes, recurring ideas or language and patterns of belief that link people and settings together" (1995:114).

Following this there should be an evaluation of the patterns that emerge by looking for alternative patterns and examine the data for credibility, usefulness and adequacy. This evaluation has been complete to ensure that the categories are relevant and coherent. The researcher is satisfied that the data gathered is useful for the questions being examined and central to it.
4.8.4 SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

In this phase, a critical look at the data for alternative explanations needs to take place. Miles & Huberman (1994:274) term it looking for rival explanations. Analysis is accompanied by explanations from the literature where possible to give credibility to interpretations.

4.8.5 REPORT WRITING

After this, report writing takes place where the data is presented, illustrated with quotes, to give participants perspectives on issues contextualised by their worldview. This takes place in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the results of the study are discussed by analysing and interpreting the data from the interviews and focus groups. As previously stated, two focus groups and five individual interviews formed the basis of this analysis. Using a thematic analysis methodology and drawing on the literature review, three broad categories with sub-themes are distinguished to serve as a framework for this chapter. They are:

- Obstacles to advancement
- Strategies for advancement
- Women's view of the future

A great deal of overlap exists between themes and categories and therefore they should not be regarded as absolute, but merely as devices to promote discussion. Verbatim quotes are used from the transcribed interviews to provide a 'richer' picture of the situation under discussion. Where necessary, word/s in square brackets were added to clarify meaning, but for the most
part, the participants are allowed to speak in their own words to preserve authenticity.

5.2 OBSTACLES TO ADVANCEMENT

Obstacles to advancement refer to those factors identified by participants as hindering their upward mobility in libraries. These obstacles are deeply entrenched in the systems, structures and cultures of the institutions as well as in the psyche of the men and women who work in the libraries concerned.

5.2.1 PATRIARCHY: ACROSS RACE AND CLASS

A major theme that emerged at all institutions is patriarchy. Although labelled differently, many participants perceived oppressive patriarchal relationships that structure their lives. Phrases and comments like ‘male-dominated world’, “patriarchal system” and ‘male-dominated våreldjie’ were used by female librarians from UWC, Cape Technikon and Stellenbosch. A UWC participant perceived patriarchy to be endemic to society:

Yes, if you are married for instance then it is your husband. So it is forever a man thing, your husband must be there or must be guardian. You can’t do things on your own... So you are never a person as a whole or on your own. ... And who makes the rules? It is usually the men. (2)
Sex segregation is labelled as the expression of patriarchy in the workplace by socialist feminists (Kemp, 1994:108) and it is seen as the main reason for differences in wages for men and women. The inability of women to reach management positions are informally referred to as the ‘glass ceiling’ (Williams, 1995:7) while male success in especially the female-dominated professions like librarianship is referred to as the ‘glass escalator’ (Williams, 1995:87). According to Williams, many men move into these professions precisely because they expect to advance quickly. Harris (1992:16) felt that until librarians make the link between women’s low status in society and the fact that librarianship is a female-dominated occupation, the understanding of the real problems facing women librarians would fail. It needs to be recognised that society places lower value on women and women’s work. This is the reason for sex segregation and the reason why women librarians find themselves in low status jobs.

Another librarian at UWC explained the sex-segregated structure that disadvantaged them as follows:

*Generally at UWC you have a large component of women...and you do find that those people are invariably in lower positions or not necessarily in positions of authority even if it is on the lower scale.* (3)

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1 Interviews were marked numerically 1-5 and focus groups alphabetically A-B for reference purposes.
She further explained the reasoning behind women's exclusion from management positions:

...librarianship, it is a job for women, its an easy job, it doesn’t make any particular demands on you, but that you needed a man to sort of steer the organisation, you needed men to guide all these other people in lower positions. (3)

The following comment made by a participant from Stellenbosch confirmed the belief that women are not considered management material:

...daar is traditioneel meer vrouwen in die biblioteekberoep en daar is genoeg vrouwen maar as dit nou op bestuursvlak kom dan raak dit 'n probleem. Dan is die mans wat daar is gewoonlik in die poste* (Translation: ...in the library world there are traditionally more women and there are enough women but when it comes to management it becomes a problem that only males are in those positions). (B)

A participant commented that in her view, the position the character in the vignette was applying for was not senior enough to be a threat to men. She said that women (all women) until recently only moved as far as middle management and when they tried to move further, men prevented them from doing this as men see women as a threat to their position. Her resentment is illustrated in the following passage:
She commented that men "...see their space getting smaller and smaller." Her opinion is that once men see this happening they "...of course all gang up". (2)

Most librarians at UWC felt that women are marginalised by men, irrespective of race. One librarian saw it as a universal problem:

... *It's an international phenomenon where women are not considered for posts upstairs - the top structure. It's a long fight, a long struggle.* (2)

Cape Technikon librarians perceived that women faced structural difficulties:

*The top structure of the library like our directors are still male-dominated? I am sure we are of the old school but it's still like that [laughter] = (A)*

The awareness that women are not considered good enough to manage exists at different levels. Both library directors interviewed mentioned that although women are numerically superior in libraries, males dominate the top structures. One library director said that South Africa was '... *where the States was about forty years ago...*', meaning that women librarians in South African are roughly in the same unequal position that American women librarians suffered a few decades ago. This is not substantiated by recent research in the USA that indicates that women librarians, in terms of salaries
and position levels, still lag substantially behind their male colleagues.

(http://www.arl.org/newsltr/198/salary.html)

For them too, it is an ongoing struggle.

Sara Pritchard (1994:44) remarked that sex segregation in librarianship is accompanied by differences in status and in many cases, in pay. One Stellenbosch librarian reflected that generally males are better paid than women, but it is not certain whether she was referring to Stellenbosch library or to society in general:

*Nee ek bedoel oor die algemeen ly vroue oral daaronder. Die vrou se salaris is nog steeds minder as die man sin al is man en vrou op dieselfde posvlak (Translation: Women suffer generally. Women’s salaries are always lower even when men and women perform the same job).* (B)

Kemp (1994:246) and Williams (1995:51) both referred to the influence of sex-role stereotyping as the origin of gender segregation in occupations. This in reality translated into discrimination in occupations. An indication of sex-role stereotyping emerged only at UWC. Here it emerged that women librarians are reluctant to apply for certain categories of work in the library and a participant mentioned that women only applied for certain types of jobs traditionally associated with women.
I find that in certain types of jobs in the library, for example, subject librarians posts or library assistant or senior library assistant, your support positions and so on, generally speaking you either have more women applying for it. It is also the level of the post- if it is a more senior position then most of the time more males apply for the job then females. (4)

This reflects the influence of a gendered education system that channels men and women into different careers. It is difficult for people to move into occupations that are not traditionally seen as befitting their gender or race. This issue will be discussed later.

Race is another significant factor. It can be surmised that black African women would be more at risk since they form the most disadvantaged group of South African society. This, however, is not clear from the responses as the sample did not include any African women librarians. There are very few African black librarians in the Western Cape tertiary education sector. If this had not been the case, this issue might have been raised. Booysen (2000:23) and Msimang (2001) report that South African black women are disadvantaged by race and gender. The proof is the fact that black women are almost totally absent from the sample taken at Stellenbosch and Cape Technikon. UWC as a historically black institution provided most of the black participants. Since the criteria for participation is three or more years as a librarian, it could be speculated that very few black women have reached that level in the historically white institutions. On the other hand,
participants from UWC are all from the so-called "coloured' as opposed to African, group. This points to the under-representation of African women from the ranks of librarians at UWC. It is significant since the rank of librarian, although not managerial, is a professional position in most libraries.

In other countries, the comparative importance of race and gender in the workplace was studied and it was established that gender weighs more heavily. In the United States Maume (1999) found that white males are favoured in relation to black men and all women when it comes to promotion. Xu and Leffler (1996:113) pointed out that gender is a stronger determinant of labour market segregation than race. Collins (1990:61) reports that although African American men occupy fewer professional and managerial jobs than African American women, they generally hold jobs with higher status and pay than those of African-American women. It can be speculated that the position of black women librarians in South African libraries is influenced strongly by gender and race, although this does not come out clearly in the responses as there was a lack of black African women librarians in the sample.
5.2.2. PATRIARCHY AND MALE ATTITUDES

McDermott’s study of obstacles women librarians perceive illustrates the negative effect hostile attitudes from males have on women’s self-esteem (1998b). Women librarians in her study became demotivated and disinclined to demonstrate ambition in the workplace after constant negative reinforcement by male colleagues.

The issue of respect from male colleagues and negative male attitudes appeared to be central at UWC in deciding whether to apply for promotion or not. Recounting an episode that she viewed as a disrespectful attitude by a male towards the new female director, one participant from UWC said:

_Nou ek weet onmiddelik as die hoofbibliotekaris 'n man was sou die professor nooit so iets gesê het nie. Hy sou meer respek gehad het... (Translation: Now I know immediately if the new chief librarian was a man, that professor would never have said that. He would have been more respectful...) (1)

This sort of perception creates reluctance in women librarians to put themselves at the risk of encountering negative behaviour from males at all levels inside and outside of the organisation. They choose not to expose themselves and this means not being in line for promotion. Women librarians at UWC feel that men regard women as encroaching on their territory when women aim for promotion and start moving up in the organisation. They feel
that male attitudes have remained the same despite employment equity legislation.

No. The attitudes are still the same. Just because they are forced to. (1)

The problem is not confined to the lower ranks of female librarians. The issue of respect from colleagues also emerges at director-level. Recounting an experience with senior male administrators in her former workplace who were dismissive of women’s intelligence, one director said:

Well basically...we are looking at a male-dominated society ... you are looking at possibly your senior managers or ...people are used to having males in senior positions. They tend to respect males ...they regard them as more authoritative then women. (4)

Another interviewee later also remarked how careful women managers have to be to do a better job in order to prove themselves and to gain and keep respect. This is discussed later. The interviewee quoted above explains that socialisation plays a big part in how men react to women managers. She feels that males who have been previously exposed to female managers, are more accepting. Noting that younger people find it easier to adapt to female managers, she believes that young people who have been exposed to sexist attitudes in their homes and from supervisors will react negatively to female managers:
... younger generation people that have the same attitudes as the older generation in terms of how they actually regard... because again the models that they have seen from their parents in their house and also the other people that they have to report to and been exposed to...(4)

In this regard, Murgai (1991:683) cautions that younger male managers are influenced by social norms and expectations rather than the actual performance of women employees. A UWC librarian made the point that women are hesitant to apply for promotion as men do not take women seriously and women have to work harder to prove themselves and to be taken seriously. She regards this as intimidating and laying yourself bare to attack.

5.2.3 GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Beck (1992:30) and Hildenbrand (1985:193) remarked that librarians are in denial about the fact that women do not advance proportionally and that the system disadvantages them. The very segregation of men into managerial positions, and men and women into different job categories, makes it difficult for women to realise they are being discriminated against (Sinclair, 1991:15). Proof of this is Luck’s (1991:38) report on the findings of a British survey of part-time female librarians who believed that no discrimination existed.
She observed that segregation is a sign of inequality. Women work almost exclusively with other women and find themselves in the same position in terms of status and pay (Kemp, 1994:246). Williams (1995:13) mentioned that women in female-intensive professions often collaborate to advance males. Hildenbrand (1992:19) ascribes this to a belief that some women have that men will enhance the status of their profession. However, it has been shown that an earlier strategy to recruit men into librarianship failed to achieve anything but the advancement of males at the expense of women (Hildenbrand, 1985:190).

The women interviewed were profoundly aware of the bias of interview panels and the impact that it has on securing a position. The composition of panels was seen as crucial to success. Women feel that prior to employment equity legislation they had no chances of success. A UWC librarian explained the inherent bias of interview panels:

... and usually the interview panels would have been male because it used to be the heads of departments and management and they would have favoured men, but nowadays with the new equity laws they have to look wider they have to take qualifications and experience into consideration not just the sex of the person. (1)

Another comment on interview bias emanated from UWC:
I mean we all know that was the way people were appointed in the past. If you had two people applying, a woman or a man, it was obviously the man who was going to get the job. (3)

One person said that if you wanted to advance, you actually have to move from one library to another. All the UWC librarians had negative perceptions about interview panels. Greyvenstein (2000:32) refers to ‘filtering’ and describes this process as one where males who do the hiring exclude women from positions by using all-male panels. Males dominated senior positions as well as interview panels and consequently other males were favoured. Williams, referring to Reskin and Roos’s theory, observed that employees are in an imaginary queue with employers (mostly white males) having a preference for other white males. Only when other white males are not available, will they then move down the queue to white women and then to other races (1995:158).

One librarian recounted that she was interviewed by a panel of twelve of whom eleven were men. She regarded her interview as more difficult than for the male applicants. Furthermore, she believed the position was already earmarked for a man:

...My interview lasted almost two hours ...I knew that I was not going to get the job...I thought I was going to go for it just for the sake of being a woman.
and seeing what their wavelength[is]...although we[knew] that the position was ...for a male...(2)

Another participant from UWC felt that the gender composition of an interview panel prejudices a woman's chances and if it were all-male, a woman would lose out:

*Because there again, if they are inside, you're going to have people who might support ... the male candidates, as opposed to the female candidates. According to different scenarios, Doris (the character in the vignette) being a woman might lose out because all the people involved in the selection panel might be able to push the other candidate.* (3)

At Stellenbosch the observation was made that a few years ago the chances of a woman getting promoted would have been slim as she would be competing against men:

Έn Paar jaar gelede sou sy nie n kans gehad het teen die mans nie*(Translation: A few years ago she would not have had a chance against the men.)(B)

At the Cape Technikon, when talking about interview panels and appointments, librarians used terms like 'buddy system' when referring to male domination, inferring that interview panels dominated by males are viewed with a jaundiced eye. The exception was a librarian at the Cape Technikon who indicated great faith in her library director (male) and the
neutrality of interview panels by saying that selections are a democratic process and that the director can be overruled:

...the director does not have the final say. It is a very fair process. You've got...eight or even more people sitting on the panel each with a vote, opinions [and] so on. If the director says this and they don't agree with it...(A)

At director level, the importance of the composition of interview panels was emphasised by one director who believed that one cannot assume that interview panels are unbiased. Referring to the appointment of a female director at UWC she explained:

...But certainly that search panel was well representative of different kinds of people in terms of academic areas, in terms of race and in terms of gender. ...I think it was important to have women, senior women from UWC and then [myself] also as an outside person- as a woman. I think it is important not necessarily that a woman got the job, but that a woman was not excluded because she was a woman or because she was not white....(5)

Implicit in this quote is the general understanding among most female librarians interviewed that the playing fields are not necessarily equal for men and women. The perception that the composition of panels is crucial for women is echoed by another director. When questioned how being a female candidate would influence a panel, she explained, that we live in a society that regards males as natural managers and a predominantly male panel could be prejudicial to a female:
...because it really also depends on the panel. If you have a panel where... and in a society where or perhaps in an institution where male bosses are probably regarded ...where you have your senior male people then people tend to basically react according to...the people that are on the panel.(4)

... So depending on the panel you might end up with a panel that have the majority of people that are male that are on the panel. And I think it always, you know the society within which we live that we will find that yes being female has a certain impact on how people respond and also depending on the panel.(4)

It can be concluded that both directors and the majority of staff interviewed at different institutions are aware that interview panels do and can disadvantage women. Therefore, Employment Equity legislation is regarded by both UWC and Stellenbosch participants as crucial for women's chances for promotion. Institutions must build in mechanisms to ensure that the selection process is fair towards women. This is important to counteract what Irvine (1985:12) pointed out as the stratification system that ensures men's domination over economic, political, educational, occupational, legal and social resources. Vigilance is necessary, especially in South Africa where the legacy of apartheid favoured white male dominance and enshrined it in institutions.

Even if black and white women serve on interview panels, it cannot be presumed that black women will be appointed to the managerial positions. Women of all colours internalise sex-role stereotypes by fitting jobs for every sex and race. Kemp (1994:221) wrote that one of the greatest barriers to
women's success is the masculine concept of the successful manager. Williams wrote "The workplace...is a central site for the creation and reproduction of gender differences and inequality (1995:15)". One can supposedly infer the same about the workplace and attitudes towards race and inequality.

One participant at UWC expounded on how stereotypes affect women's attitude of women managers by saying:

...even amongst women you are going to find the same thing...even though we would like to see strong women, when we[do] see them, we don't like them.(3)

Additionally black professional women are not well represented in the workforce and therefore there is a dearth of suitable candidates. A further consideration is group dynamics, as people who are on panels might not want to jeopardise their positions by challenging generally held assumptions on whom to appoint within the prevailing institutional culture.

5.2.4 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

It seems there is a lack of recognition at some institutions of the historical disparities between White and Black in South Africa and a refusal to recognise that special efforts are required to redress the situation. This reaction is often found amongst White South Africans who have in many
cases viewed affirmative action as causing the lack of job security and the loss of advancement prospects for them (Transnetters ontevrede, 1992:62). Msimang (2001) wrote that patriarchy was intertwined with race, gender, sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity and thus affecting different groups differently. All women suffer under patriarchy but apartheid and poverty made life harder for Black women.

Persaud (1999) observed that the problem with only implementing the legislative component of employment equity neglects the fundamental shifts in values, attitudes and ideology. Changes must take place in socio-economic relations as well as at institutional and organisational structures to ensure success. Currently, most White women do not feel that they will be included in the disadvantaged group and this might lead to resistance. It is suggested that they must first accept that they will benefit from employment equity before they will support it. Generally the women interviewees feel that employment equity legislation has been a boon, as it at least forces men to look beyond the sex of the person and take into account the other characteristics of applicants. As one librarian at Stellenbosch remarked:

...Doris is 'n vrou en die nuwe arbeidswet maak haar kans e baie goed (B) (Translation: Doris (the character in the vignette) is a woman and the new labour legislation makes her chances very good.)

Another optimistic comment from Stellenbosch:
'n Paar jaar gelede sou sy nie n kans gehad het teen die mans nie* (B)
(Translation: A few years ago she would not have had a chance against the men.

At UWC a librarian remarked that the Gender Equity Officer is part of the interviewing and decision-making process, and this ensures that women are given a fair hearing. While the general feeling is positive, the interplay of race and gender also caused mixed reactions from other participants. There is a strong feeling that depending on the quotas institutions set for themselves to change the demographic profile, people’s chances of selection will be affected.

Several participants emphasized the issue of race and linked it to confidence. This was apparent in the Cape Technikon interview where all participants were White. When asked if the character in the vignette should apply or not, one participant immediately said it would depend on what race she is. Upon further questioning, she responded:

So clearly affirmative action in South Africa today is seen as a key factor in the decision to apply or not depending on the race of the potential applicant. (A)

Another participant’s feelings of anger towards affirmative action clearly show when she said:
... and lastly she must challenge the system. She must stand up and be counted. If race is definitely an issue because of affirmative action then she must challenge it. (A)

In this case the participant clearly has hostile feelings about affirmative action and even talks about it as a system that should be resisted or challenged. Recounting the story of a top position that became available recently and remarking on the scarcity of these top positions one participant said:

And then one of the few senior posts [became] vacant...it is very obvious that that position must go to a black or partly black person however you choose to describe people who are.... I find this so awkward to talk about it. We got two white people in management and the third person- you have got to start ? opportunities for people. Some of us may have applied. We did it purely I’m sure for personal development and to keep our skills in and that kind of thing. But knowing that we had no chance. (A)

Another librarian from Cape Technikon remarked that if the character in the vignette is a White woman and she is competing against a Black male it might affect her chances. They believe that Black females with potential would be the preferred candidates. So although their gender is in their favour, in terms of the demographic targets of the institution, they perceive their chances of promotion as White females to be marginal.
Yet the issue is not clear-cut. In some cases the need for gender solidarity would outweigh the race factor. A UWC librarian was very vocal about the need for women to support each other when it comes to serving on interview panels. When she displays ambivalence about employing White women at UWC she still comes down in favour of giving a White woman the job to show sisterly solidarity. She indicated there was a debate regarding the appointment of a white woman at one stage. Referring to people’s reactions to this she said:

*We had an incident like that now where a selection was made and it was a white woman … it was a whole cabal, like I said now. Why wasn’t one of our own people taken…(2)*

She feels that even if a woman does not directly gain from supporting another woman, women in general gain and therefore indirectly all women are better off. Although she admits that this might cause her some inner conflict, she feels that women of all colour should band together to fight male oppression and that unity transcends race.

The two directors interviewed would, however, first look at the requirements of the job and then look at how their selection might change the demographic profile positively in terms of race and gender. When asked how race might affect a woman’s chances the UCT director says:
.... Well it might in the sense if she is white and I had two candidates who are equally or very similarly qualified. I would tend to take a black candidate instead to change the demographics. (5)

So it seems that in terms of employment equity legislation the place you work and colour are more important than gender in terms of promotion in the libraries concerned. The fact that women are under-represented in management positions would also affect the decision of the director quoted above strongly.

The director of UWC said that their aim was to develop a more diverse workforce in terms of colour since UWC was traditionally a Coloured institution. Therefore diversifying in terms of race, and particularly African, will be a primary consideration for them. As she explained:

....99, 98% of the staff are coloured. We have an Employment Equity plan which we to report on. That plan and obviously certain targets have to be set... in our case we need to ensure... our numerical targets by appointing more black African, I think that's probably the word in terms of the Act, but African people either male or female and then in particular in senior positions. So if Doris works in UWC library and Doris is a coloured where we probably have enough now[laughs]... if we receive applications from other candidates and there are candidates that have the same qualifications or experience as Doris and they are black... by our own plan we obviously need to consider that. (4)

At Cape Technikon they seemed to have a unique form of affirmative action.

One librarian remarked that the library director, in response to the gender imbalance, is concentrating on recruiting more males:
...our boss ...we had a deliberate transformation of the library, not deliberate, but [a] conscious one, where we try to get in more men because the bottom of the libraries are sort of dominated by women throughout history...we now have a lot more men than we ever have before. (A)

The librarian who said this seemed to find nothing amiss in the strategy by their male director even though it ignores the demography of libraries and the position of women in society. This is despite the fact that they said elsewhere in the interview that women are not generally in leadership positions:

*The top structure of the library like our directors are still a male-dominated...I am sure we are of the old school but its still like that [laughter] (A)*

As mentioned earlier, Hildenbrand (1985 :190) recounted how women librarians in the USA suffered reverses in status and position early in the 20th century when males were actively recruited into the profession. She said that men entered the profession because they knew advancement would be swift in a female-dominated profession. The original reason for recruiting them (and women agreeing to this), and giving them top positions, was the theory that it would advance the status and image of the profession. This did not happen and instead women suffered when men advanced and their position remained unchanged.
5.2.5 EXCLUSION FROM NETWORKS

Carla Sutherland, writing on UCT, observed that networking is crucial in securing jobs and promotions within the university. She wrote "It is through the operation of established networks and entrenched cultures that both blacks and women are excluded (1994:195).

Greyvenstein (2000:32) lists exclusion from formal and informal networks as a barrier to women's advancement. In most of the interviews the women were acutely aware of how negatively this affects them. Same-sex groupings seem to develop, same-sex links and networks are formed and men, being in senior positions, are strategically able to use their positions to the advantage of other men. Murgai's findings (1991:694) that male librarians have more negative attitudes to the idea of female managers, is a crucial point, since right now more men are in managerial positions and therefore in pivotal positions to influence women's careers.

They call it 'the old buddy system' or 'boys club' or 'old boys ding' but to women librarians it means the same thing – men see to it that men advance to the detriment of women in libraries. In interviews with male librarians in the United States, Williams found that in occupations with few males, male
employees and supervisors tended to bond, identify and socialise with each other. This is advantageous for the careers of junior males in the organisation (Williams, 1995:91).

At Stellenbosch one librarian called it “soort van n [sort of an] old boys ding[thing] and said her perception was that men are more emotional about other men in the sense that men are the recipients of other men’s goodwill and sympathy. Referring to the fact that even where women form the majority men are preferred for promotion, she said:

_Want hy sien hier is 150 mense wat hier werk [en] daar is vyf mans. Hulle het gesinne wat hulle onderhou en hulle word net gesien as die mense wat bevorder[moet] word,[wat in] ‘n senior posisie moet wees.
(Translation:Because he sees there are 150 people working here and five of them are men. They have families to support and they are therefore seen as the people eligible for senior positions). (B)_

At the Cape Technikon one librarian talked about the “old buddy system”. The description caused general laughter and an explanation that it was a system that ensured males dominate top management positions. Explaining the historical background to an attitude that favours men she said:

_I think from my generation ? there was this feeling that ? top management if you are male and then they would feel that on the directors level ?only males would be able to do the job. (A)_
According to Sutherland (1994:195) networks work to exclude people from training and therefore promotion possibilities. She writes that black people and women face many obstacles to advancement as “Attitudes about the intrinsic ability of groups of people may well have a negative effect on the ability of individuals from within these groups to perform to their maximum” (1994:197).

The privileging of men ensures that they are seen in managing roles and when positions are available, they can claim the experience to make a success of it. This is a vicious circle, and because women are excluded, they never practice the skills required for the job and therefore will never be considered for the job.

A UWC librarian observed that men are unfairly advantaged by being given the space and encouragement to learn new skills and given informal management training while women are never presented with these opportunities:

*They were also given more opportunities in terms of learning management skills and so on, or being given some form of authority. And also I think more respect within the organisation.* (3)
One UWC librarian explains how male networks work for men and against women:

... and they really determine and ...it is this supporting system that they also have. I have to support you and you support me because we have to stay up there (2)

Several of the women interviewed, especially at UWC, felt that they had to start networking on their own as women, to bring about change and advance the interests of women. Some mentioned it jokingly and some seriously as the key to success as this dialogue with one interviewee shows:

*I:* There are a lot out there we just have to reach out, but we have to break that circle.
*R:* A lot of what now?
*I:* A lot of women out there who can do it but we first have to break that circle.
*R:* Of men?
*I:* Yes. (2)²

Although not all women understand the importance of networking and knowing the right people when it comes to moving ahead in their careers, some are definitely aware of this aspect as this quote shows:

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² Abbreviations: I: Interviewee; R: Researcher
... because there are things that come into play there are things like networking, getting all your ducks in a row. Making sure that you know the right people who will support you when it comes to making those kinds of crucial decisions and there, I don’t think we have a history of that kind of thing in the library. (3)

In an article analysing the factors used to select university administrators, Heim and Perrault (1991:232) concluded that women who want to advance need to understand the political environment within which the university functions as well as the politics on campus and the goals of the institutions. They say that most of the goals at the university is focused outwards to funding, contributing to national policy and economic development and so forth. To succeed women need to involve themselves on forums in and outside the university to build up a profile and an influential network to assist in advancing their careers. The central thrust of their argument is that women must learn how to network and the value of it. Heim and Perrault make it clear that the above is applicable to women librarians as well (1991:233). However, Chliwniak (1997) observed that women are often not rewarded for adopting male tactics, and even when they do adopt such tactics, they still remain underrepresented in management.
5.2.6 SUPPORT

McDermott (1998b) found that in her study women librarians complained that women executives treated them as badly as their male counterparts. She explains this by saying that they have adopted the male norm prevalent in organisations.

As mentioned before, one librarian at UWC said that women do not support their women colleagues who have moved up the ladder. She links it to role conflict and explained that women, just like men, do not appreciate strong women. Theoretically they like the idea, but in practice they show no support. She mentioned that support from the top is important once a woman is placed in a position of authority otherwise its ‘sink or swim’ as she puts it. She furthermore remarks that when moving up within the same organisation, colleagues might not support you when you move to a different level or they might become over-familiar. More than one UWC librarian expressed this fear in relation to how former friends might react:

... might be the ones who turn against you or who are not prepared to offer their support because often we can't distinguish between knowing people on one level, being friends with people on one level, but respecting that people...have certain responsibilities...(3)
A director also indicated that support for women in top positions is crucial to success:

...[at] the end of the day, if it is a woman that gets into that position you have to make sure that you have the proper support for that person, because you know we all need that, it doesn’t matter how good you are. You still need to have that support structure. (4)

She mentions that women face special difficulties because of negative attitudes towards women as managers. To ensure their success, management should not just appoint women but also provide them with a positive, nurturing environment. It was mentioned that it is a great benefit to report to a woman who has an understanding of the difficulties that women face and who has had a similar struggle:

...there is a big difference that the person who you are reporting to- that the person understands where you are coming from and what you have to put up with...you know what that person also had to go through...(4)

She indicated that she has not noted a lack of support from women but men tend to be problematic in this regard. As deputy director at another institution, she had positive experiences regarding the support women give each other. She reported to a female and in her experience women work well
together in contrast to the perception that women discriminate even more against other women and tend to advance men rather than women.

Generally the findings of this study do not support McDermott who found that her women interviewees complained of hostility from women in top positions. Rather the other way around, it is more likely that directors will face lack of support from women librarians at the lower levels, as indicated elsewhere. In fact, both directors were very positive of the mentoring possibilities that are open to them in terms of women still habituating the lower ranks.

5.2.7 SOCIALISATION AND THE LACK OF CONFIDENCE

At all institutions participants initially agreed that the character in the vignette had all the necessary qualifications to apply, but as the interviews went on, they started mentioning factors that were more important than qualifications when considering to apply.

For example, on being asked whether Doris, the character in the vignette, should apply, one participant remarked that Doris should definitely apply and substantiated this by cataloguing her qualifications, her experience and her IT qualification. She then said that her impression is that Doris is a confident
person. She regarded this as a crucial factor, because she thought confidence would help a woman counterbalance the effects of socialisation:

_Nee soos ek sê?dit hang ook van jou persoonlikheid af want baie keer werk ons ook teen onsself omdat jy wag maar vir daai barriers om te kom. So jy krimp al klaar ineen want jy weet wat gaan kom. In plaas van jou voorberei want dit vat baie uit jou uit. Want jy weet jy gaan nou half in 'n geveg of n argument met mense beland so dit kos baie._ (1)(Translation: No like I say, it depends on your personality. A lot of times we work against ourselves because we are always waiting for those barriers to appear. Instead of preparing yourself, you already cringe in anticipation. You know it will take a lot out of you because it means fighting or arguing with people.(1)

Upon being requested to define the barriers, she said that women have to do more or go further to establish their authority and this intimidates women.

She felt that only a confident person would, despite of the many obstacles women face, apply for certain positions. Women without strong personalities are at a disadvantage because they already anticipate the obstacles and it defeats them even before they apply.

Another participant remarked on the key role of socialisation for women and success:

..._at the end of the day it depends a lot on the person, the individual and it also I think the whole socialisation story you know...(4)_

Therefore one participant felt that women sometimes work against themselves and are frightened off easily. On the other hand, men are seen as
more confident in taking on management roles. When asked whether she thinks men consider the emotional cost of occupying positions of higher responsibility, she observed that only women have these problems. Another UWC librarian felt that men had less scruples in this regard:

*I don’t think they care about that. Barbara, you must remember, men are reared in a specific way and we all live in these societies.* (3)

5.2.8 SOCIALISATION AND ADHERENCE TO TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES

As noted in the literature, the myth of the family wage still exists and this influences wage patterns of males and females, to the detriment of women (Rees, 1992:9). Women are generally not seen as permanent members of the workforce but rather as marking time until they marry and leave to raise families.

Traditional gender roles are also cited as the reason why men advance and why women do not. Men are expected to achieve in society and the workplace and women are expected to focus their energies on taking care of husbands and children. One Stellenbosch librarian’s description was rather picturesque. She said that men’s wages were seen as butter and women’s wages as the jam on top, meaning that women’s wages were not really seen
as necessary to maintain a home but a nice addition where it exists. In her own words:

*Ek dink histories was dit die argument ja. Vrouens was amper meer gesien as die jam ?en mans die broodwinners.* *(Translation: I think historically it was the argument, yes. Women were seen as the jam and men as the breadwinners).* *(B)*

The family wage myth, used to justify males being promoted ahead of women, was also raised by one director:

*... that sort of community where males are regarded as being the...as being the breadwinner...*(4) In the Stellenbosch interview it also emerged that women did not always accept it quietly:

*Ek dink daar was baie vroue wat in opstand gekom het* *(Translation: I think there were many women who rebelled).* *(B)*

On the other hand, one Stellenbosch librarian said women feared victimisation if they complained. That is to be understood in the context of the current power relations that generally favour men at all levels of society.

For several participants socialisation and adherence to traditional roles held contradictions for women. However, it was pointed out that certain women were prepared to challenge stereotypical ideas. One librarian explained that
a key influence on her life was the early death of her father and that her mother provided a clear role model by demonstrating that women were capable figures. This taught her that women could achieve on their own:

...you can do it, you don't need a male or a masculine person to do that. I saw that as natural for somebody to do, but at that stage not many people agreed with me. (3)

This view that women can be strong and take up challenges was echoed by another participant:

...that if you are someone you know that grew up in a household where you were able to question things. .... You were able to take initiative and do certain things. If an opportunity comes along, you know, you go for it or you try it out. You try and reach your potential and do your best. Then I think, yes, you can probably deal with all these other battles and so on. (4)

Most of the interviewees were aware that women had formidable barriers to overcome. It is apparent that the decision to apply is by no means a straightforward one and their initial comments were purely theoretical. Women applicants would have to battle the internalisation of sex-role stereotypes and a host of other factors to get the post. While a few women are confident enough to tackle the barriers and obstacles that await them, others are too intimidated to attempt them.
5.2.9 SOCIALISATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

The subjugated position that women occupy in society and in families in many cases means that their careers are not the primary consideration. McDermott says: "The gender role identity that places women in a subordinate, caring, wheel-rolling position at work is mirrored in other important aspects of their lives, especially the domestic side" (1998a).

In this regard, Luck (1991:39) observed that the "...decisions most men make about their careers and the opportunities which are open to them are predicated on a lack of major responsibility for domestic tasks and childcare." Martin (1983:247) and McDermott (1998a) also refer to the constraints and stress that domestic roles and children place on women's career aspirations. Women in many cases now have the same educational levels as men but as Murgai (1991:682) observed, it does not automatically mean that they will get the same chances as men.

A minor theme that emerged as an obstacle at Stellenbosch is the importance of family considerations in limiting women's chances of promotion. Women were often limited geographically to the area their husbands work in. Husbands as the perceived main breadwinner will
determine where the family is located. If any moves are to be made, it will be to better the husband’s career and not the wife’s. Librarians at Stellenbosch highlighted the lack of mobility of women with families in their interview by saying:

_Jy kry mense wat vir n lang tyd bly as gevolg van verskillende omstandighede. Baie mense is getroud, hulle mans is hier betrokke by die universiteit ensovoorts. So hulle het nie die moontlikheid om op n ander dorp te gaan werk nie. Because of different circumstances you have people staying for a long time. Many people are married, their husbands are working here at the university and so forth, and it is not possible for them to move to another town._(B) (translation)

Women at Stellenbosch mentioned that in terms of career planning they were forced to consider starting a family at some stage. One young librarian said that very soon she would be forced to set aside career considerations. Once the children are a bit older, she will start thinking about her career again. (Quotes are unavailable since these comments form part of the inaudible sections of tape recordings made at Stellenbosch).

Furthermore, the Stellenbosch sample clearly accepted that it is their primary responsibility to manage the home and children. A librarian even remarked that her daughter sulks when she works late. Others in this group seemed to accept that men did not help with domestic duties. These constraints were specifically mentioned at Stellenbosch. How relevant this is for other female
librarians is uncertain since it was not mentioned elsewhere. A librarian at UWC mentioned that the age of children might influence a panel, as they will try and judge the demands made on a woman and her subsequent availability. She said:

*What might be problematic is not really family but how old those children are and will it affect that person's presence or availability to be around to do the job the person is supposed to do.* (3)

McDermott (1998a), in her study, blamed the double burden that women bear and the psychological and emotional stress that goes with it for their lack of career advancement. She mentioned that women in her study, like the Stellenbosch group, seemed to accept that the primary responsibility for family care rested with them. The women in her study, like the one Stellenbosch participant, mentioned that career breaks to have and raise children were necessary. This makes them less likely candidates for promotion in the eyes of managers.

5.2.10 **SOCIALISATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TRAINING**

The general reluctance of women to apply for more technical posts could be linked to the policy of excluding women from some fields. As Walby (1990:40) observed, two strategies have generally been followed in keeping women out of certain employment categories. One strategy is segregation,
of which libraries are a prime example. Another strategy is exclusion, where women who try to enter male preserves are harassed and intimidated until they leave (Kemp, 1994:247). Computers and information technology have been male preserves for a long time and therefore very few women enter these fields. Education is gendered and women and men are steered into different directions (Marry, 2000:137). While males are directed into technical fields, women are discouraged from pursuing technical fields since they are supposed to lack technical ability.

Both Wajcman and Webster (1996:44) observed that sex role stereotypes (like male affinity with technology) are used to prevent women from entering certain occupations, for example, those that require technical skill or physical strength. The current situation, according to Wajcman, is not a male conspiracy but relates to historical patterns of power. The historical connection between men and technical abilities are part of the social construction of gender identities (Webster, 1996:44).

A minor theme that emerged at UWC was that women very seldom have the confidence to apply for information technology or management positions. The director of UWC observed that women generally avoid applying for managerial and non-traditional jobs:
...[in] most cases, yes, you will have one or two females applying but the majority of people applying for the more technical type of post are still male. As I said generally speaking when it is more senior posts you have more men applying then women (4)

While there are few women in these fields, qualifications like IT are especially welcomed in libraries, especially in light of the fact that libraries are very technologically orientated. This was indicated in various interviews:

*So doing a diploma in IT certainly that would be a plus. I think clearly libraries are moving in that direction.* (5)

The dearth of women that enter this field means that these posts are usually filled by males resulting in the perpetuation of sex segregation in libraries. Monopolies over technical skills also lead to differences in power and if men for the most part fill these posts, it perpetuates power differences between men and women. Harris (1992:160) remarked that these specialists are often looked at with ‘awe’ in libraries. This contributes to the devaluation of certain jobs mainly performed by women.

According to articles in IT Review (The glass ceiling, 1993:9) and Information Week Southern Africa (IT management:sisters are doing it for themselves, 1997:61), women in IT in South Africa experience the same glass ceiling their counterparts in other professions experience. The lack of
women in IT demonstrates the internalisation of sex-role stereotypes by both men and women and it shows in their reluctance to enter and apply for jobs in non-traditional fields.

Research in South Africa shows that 75% of IT professionals are men, 23% are white females while 2% are black females (IT management: sisters are doing it for themselves, 1997:60). Furthermore, Anne Vincent observed that African women are the most exploited group due to the combined effect of gender discrimination and apartheid (The glass ceiling, 1993:9). By implication black women are then the least represented group in terms of IT jobs.

5.2.11 SOCIALISATION AND INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

This particular theme can be part of both socialisation and patriarchy. For convenience sake it will be discussed here.

One formidable barrier women face upon entering organisations is the institutional culture. These are the cultures, values and practices that shape perception and behaviour of individuals within organisations. Chliwniak (1997) feels that institutions display masculine norms and values that are hostile to women trying to advance. She calls it a “chilly climate” for women
and remarked that women are judged against male norms. Bissessar (1999) saw institutional culture as a means of social control through its shared norms and values.

Ramphele (1994:18) remarked that South African educational institutions are male dominated, racist and slow to change despite the rhetoric of transformation. It might be that discrimination at traditionally Afrikaner institutions are more overt due to the twin influences of patriarchy and apartheid. Msimang (2001) says that while White women under apartheid were not legally restricted from certain positions, they were limited by stereotypical ideas created by “...the conservatism of a patriarchy that was encouraged by the violence, conservatism and rigidity of the apartheid state”. Institutions most loyal to the apartheid ideology in the past might be changing more slowly and showing more overtly the effects of an inherently conservative ideology. Soko (1995:17) wrote that the cultures of tertiary institutions are especially hostile to women and black people. Therefore black women at these historically white institutions will suffer the combined effects of both racism and sexism. Williams explained that people bring their gender into an already gendered organisational environment. She claims that especially in female-intensive professions masculinity is highly rewarded (1995:11). Organisational cultures also affect organisational style (Chliwniak,
1997). Irvine (1985:15) observed that one of the characteristics of female-intensive organisations is the extremely bureaucratic nature of the structure.

Talking about the over-arching culture of the parent body and how it influences the library and people's attitude, one director said:

*It is an issue in the sense that people find that you actually have to do something drastic about it because people have not changed with the times. I think in some institutions but that is part of the general culture of the institution and not necessarily the library within that institution...I think you have to look at it also in terms of the parent institution and in terms of what is happening there.*

Women feel invisible in these institutions. One UWC participant remarked on the contempt for women's opinions that she experienced in the library:

*You still get that feeling that if you had been a man you would have been taken more seriously. Even with colleagues or people in inferior positions.*

Discussing the hostile and aggressive atmosphere a woman experiences when moving up the hierarchy one participant from UWC said that women were isolated in management positions:

*That she is now part of this group- they will all of course gang up because now they have the thorn in their midst.*

Women librarians expressed the dilemma that confronts them that when they are young and ambitious, they do not have the space to move up in the
hierarchy. They have to sit and wait for many years for people to retire or as someone jokingly said “to die” and then hope that they get the job. A Cape Technikon librarian remarked: “…there are only so many jobs”(A)

One participant spoke about the “…male-oriented culture” that is slow to change:

*I would say that there is something about the culture in those institutions that has made change less quick, less fast. Is it because people stay in their positions longer, is it because its in my perception a more male-oriented culture…*(5)

When this participant (5) talks about institutions that are changing slowly and are more male-oriented, she specifically excludes UCT and is referring only to Afrikaans-language universities as extremely patriarchal:

*My experience in South African academic libraries and that does not include UCT…is that the profession at the senior level, particularly in the Afrikaans institutions, are very male, top heavy male and very traditionally hierarchical structures which are simply inappropriate both in the society and in the way that libraries run throughout the world.*(5)

When asked for her explanation of this phenomenon she said:

*…a lot to do with culture and history. Look I am no expert on the culture. I see what I see and I see that it appears to me at least in many ways to be much more male dominated. They appear to be much more male-dominated libraries than the English libraries but that’s just outside observation.*(5)
On the other hand, liberal institutions are not free from discrimination against women but it might be taking on a more sophisticated form. Gourley (1995:24) cautioned on the subtlety of organisational cultures. Liberal institutions reflect the dominant social relations and women at all institutions find themselves clustered in certain sectors of the university and at lower levels. A case in point is the comments of the library director at UWC who said that she was one of the few women managers at the institution.

A participant from UWC felt that both English and Afrikaans institutions are guilty:

... and particularly in the South African library situation. Now you have to look at the whole history around historically advantaged and disadvantaged institutions. Because if you make an analysis of that you find that your previously Afrikaans institutions and in some instances even the white English universities they all had males. I think...the majority of the senior people in these libraries were male...(4)

It was demonstrated that not only traditionally Afrikaans institutions were affected. Soko (1995:17) observed that English universities lean toward “white male Anglo-Saxon values, norms and traditions”. It is shortsighted to believe that English universities are free of patriarchy and racism. One director believes that historically Afrikaans and English institutions are patriarchal. Discussing the culture of these institutions and how they shape perceptions, of who deserves to be managers she said:
They had... there were these senior male heads and people always looked up to them and they were also always professors...I think they had become the model on which these institutions had actually developed...(4)

Therefore there were definite expectations of what a library manager was supposed to be like and women definitely did not fit the model regardless of the institution concerned.

5.2.12 AGEISM AS A RESULT OF SOCIALISATION

People (both male and female) have been socialised to accept that only persons of a certain age, sex and with certain levels of experience should occupy positions of responsibility. An issue that differed from institution to institution was people's ideas about the advantage/disadvantage of youth when applying for a management position at the different institutions. The research indicates that opinions about age is linked to the culture of the institutions people work in. While Stellenbosch women indicated that it was unlikely that a person the age of the character in the vignette would be considered for a top position, institutions like UWC and UCT did not demonstrate these reservations. In fact, one librarian at UWC liked the idea of youth as she links it to energy, new ideas and fresh blood:

... I mean that being young, it is like having new blood because it is new ideas ...If youngsters come in it is also bringing technology with you and she's got that.(2)
At Stellenbosch University however, where a more conservative culture seems to prevail, the idea of promoting young people to senior positions would not appear to appeal to management. The staff showed an awareness of the negative correlation between youth and the attainment of seniority by saying:

_Ek dink tog dis’ n persepsie dat senioriteit en ouderdom ook gekoppel is... (B)_

_Translation: I do think that a perception exists that age and seniority [in position] is linked._

This unwritten policy can be very frustrating for people as indicated by the discussion below:

_Ouderdom per se behoort nie n rol te speel nie...wat gebeur as jy nou werklikwaar na die praktyk gaan kyk dan sit jy in n situasie waar daar n persoon is wat miskien ouer geword het in n bepaalde afdeling... hy nie’ n kans gekry het nie...omdat die bevorderingsmoontlikhede baie beperk. (B)_

_Translation: Age as such should not play a role, but in practice you sit with a situation where a person grows older within a particular section because he never got a chance at promotion. In many cases because there are few promotional possibilities._

Another participant mentioned that in conservative Afrikaans institutions, people seem to spend a long time in the same position and change seems to
happen slowly. In contrast, both the librarians and the director of UWC seemingly find age unimportant. In fact one librarian at UWC said that the character in the vignette is at the ideal age for taking up a position of authority and has the level of maturity to deal with a number of issues to come up:

... I think Doris is ideally positioned for a step to a more authoritative position because by then you have more life experience and I think that to a large extend helps you to deal with situations...(3)

Another comment from UWC reinforced this positive attitude to youth as illustrated in the following comment:

The age should not be an issue I think in terms of... if a person feels that I have the potential to do the job...(4)

In contrast to this attitude, at Cape Technikon library, youth and lack of experience is perceived to be a negative factor in obtaining promotion:

It depends on the post available like if it is a very nice sort of senior position then usually a lot of people apply... then the best is on the shortlist and then obviously... if you are less experienced and say younger you do not have that opportunity...(A)
It seems that institutional culture plays a role in how the age of applicants are viewed. While more conservative cultures might overlook applicants that are too young in their view, more liberal institutions might find youth a positive characteristic and take factors like potential seriously.

5.2.13 ‘DOUBLE PROOF’

The perception that women have to work harder at proving themselves entered into discussions irrespective of rank. Haynes (1989:48) confirmed that successful women have to work harder than men in the same position. Inevitably they find themselves in a more stressful position. Therefore from a management perspective women need more support than men who are of the same rank. Ironically, Williams (1995:11) observed that it is especially true in the occupations where men are in the minority, that masculinity is valued highly and rewarded likewise.

A librarian at UWC who calls it ‘double-proof’ has this to say about men’s attitudes:

...and without [us] even realising it we are actually proving ourselves double. Even though we don’t get the credit or recognition for it. And they will still go out of their way to discredit you. (2)
This feeling that women have to put in extra effort can be intimidating and can act as a deterrent to ambition. Speaking about applying for promotion, one UWC librarian said:

*Dit sal haar moontlik afskrik. Die feit dat sy weet vrouens moet altyd 'n bietjie meer doen of verder gaan om hulle autoriteit te bewys. Dit kan, ja.* *(Translation: It can frighten her. The fact that she knows that women must always do more or go further to show their authority. It can, yes.)*

This perception of extra emotional burdens inherent in senior positions seems to be pervasive at UWC. It is not sure whether this is a peculiarity of the institutional dynamics or not. One librarian felt that for her personally, the emotional energy needed to constantly fight would be detrimental psychologically:

... *I can’t say you’re not tough enough, but you are not prepared to invest as much energy into almost fighting with people all the time and always having to sort of draw the line...* *(3)*

And on how men relate to women in management positions in libraries she says:

*And then I think as long as you have the society we live in, men are always going to challenge the women who are in a better, or what they view as a better position or in a higher position within the organisation.* *(3)*

The director of UCT explained that women managers have to be careful at all times to do a perfect job:
I think women also have to be very careful and very conscious when they do things... I am one of few women in the group at the executive senior management level... I was very, very conscious that I always have to do a slightly better job than men have to do. It always has to be more precise. It has to be well thought out because there is just that much of an edge to being a woman... (5)

A more relaxed attitude was expected from someone who earlier had implied that her institution is more liberal in its attitude towards women. As said before, women in both English and Afrikaans universities face the same patriarchal social relations. The director at UWC, historically an institution that aligned itself with the mass democratic movement’s non-racial, non-sexist ideals, does not minimise the difficulties she faces:

...in all other positions where women have senior positions or getting the top position in your particular field... being a woman... certainly many obstacles and many things you have to do. You have the usual thing where you have to... put in a lot more in order to be recognised. And also to be able to see that you can obviously do the job and that you have to overcome all the time... (4)

There is a feeling of vulnerability, isolation and being part of a minority:

For example here at UWC ... from the support services I am the only female manager... you are sort of standing on [sic] all the time... it is like... you have to show all the time... I am not here because I am a woman, well I am a woman [laughs]. (4)

These women in senior positions are aware that they are part of a minority that is constantly being judged. They recognise that whatever they do will be
a reflection of the whole sex and therefore as ambassadors of women they have to perform better than average.

This sentiment did not come through in interviews at Stellenbosch or Cape Technikon. It does not necessarily mean that it is non-existent but it might mean that through shortcomings in interview technique or because there were no female directors in those samples, this has not been highlighted or brought forward in the interviews.

5.3 STRATEGIES FOR ADVANCEMENT

During the interviews specific issues or factors surfaced as important for career mobility. The issue of higher qualifications, networking, mentors, role models and support, membership of LIASA are all factors that women librarians consider of differing importance. The interviews indicated that women do not lack ambition and in some cases test the job market and deliberately hone their interviewing skills to keep themselves ready for a possible career move. Some of them use interviews to practice:

You've got to learn how to handle interviews and how to handle your own nervousness. (A)
Since the job market in academic libraries in the Cape Town area is small, moves are carefully considered. Reflecting on the job situation in Cape Town one librarian said:

People are reluctant to leave the Cape and...if you are in that stream of academic librarianship, most people tend to stay in it and we have five large institutions...it is a very small world and the consortium brought places closer together...(A)

Institutions are carefully compared to ensure that moves are made for real gains:

So there are different structures as well and there's different salaries...and if you go somewhere else you really have to compare what they have and what's available...(A)

The next section will look at specific aspects surrounding advancement.

5.3.1 AGGRESSION ("BEING PUSHY")

Some complained that women's socialisation hampered them. In some cases women were blamed for not being aggressive enough due to their socialisation:

On the other hand I also think that women were, and are still, not aggressive enough in this department, I am not going to say this institution, within this department...(3)

She remarked that women should be more "pushy". The feeling that being pushy is important was echoed by another participant:
Country-wide I see more men in senior level positions. Maybe it happened in the past and maybe women didn’t push themselves. Certainly we all know from the literature of human relations and sociology and behaviour that women have to learn have to be socialised to push themselves and to learn to think in ways that men have been socialised to think over the years. But it is socialisation. It’s nothing in women that can’t be changed to do the same kind of thing. (5)

In a sense such remarks are reminiscent of the blame-the-victim approach of earlier feminists who felt that women were at fault for their lack of achievement and advised them to be more like males to succeed. It does not challenge existing power relations and neglects to consider that many people make choices within a context of existing inequality (Sinclair, 1991:6).

5.3.2 HIGHER QUALIFICATIONS AND PROMOTION

Anna Louw (1989:306) observed that the image of the profession suffers when librarians do not move beyond the basic degree. A director mentioned that South African entry-level positions in library science do not require a Masters degree and she finds this problematic. She feels that it makes it difficult to gain the trust and respect of academics since librarians are not perceived to be adequately qualified to do the job. Therefore she would welcome qualifications beyond the basic degree:
...I would look very closely at an MA. I think one of the problems academic librarians have in this country in gaining credibility in academic environments is the degree is not a postgraduate degree by definition. That many librarians come in without the postgraduate work. I think that makes liaison with the academic community particularly in the university environment more difficult. (5)

The contradiction is that female librarians do not feel motivated to study since they see no reward in it. One librarian clarified the view of ordinary female librarians regarding obtaining better qualifications:

*I think that here people have wonderful opportunities to study but...it is not necessarily something which will enable you to better your position in the first place...*(3)

Until the problem of upward mobility for female librarians is resolved, women will not invest in further education. In South Africa, one needs to look closely at how such a requirement for professional education could affect black people, and particularly black women, who are often first generation students with no means to go beyond the first degree. Women also have the additional burden of domestic duties that often prevents them from studying, or even working full-time.

Additionally, the argument for further qualifications has not been without controversy. While professional education for librarians in the United States requires a Masters degree, some have questioned whether it is not merely a strategy in the ongoing quest for status and respect (Harris, 1992:48).
5.3.3 MENTORS

Since very few women have advanced through the structures of tertiary institutions, women at lower levels have very few female mentors and role models. Women lack role models and therefore an important supportive mechanism (Irvine, 1985:105). Mentors broaden the occupational vision of women, and are normally people higher up in the hierarchy who support, encourage, educate and give access to networks otherwise inaccessible to the neophyte. Female role models are more desirable since women need examples of how women who had gone before overcame the problems they would likely face.

The importance of mentoring is seen as critical to the advancement of women in libraries. One director attributed her success to mentors. She makes it clear that she owes her position to mentors and especially male colleagues who chose to perform this role and that this was a rare privilege. Burke and McKeen (1996) observed that women perceive more barriers in finding mentors than men. This hampers women's advancement since mentors are critical to the success of women. Speaking of the obstacles that women face the director mentioned above said:
I think it gave me a few more problems early on in my career, but I think the key factor for me was that I had mentors and that I was ready to accept mentoring from males and that these males were very keen to mentor. So I have been extremely lucky in that respect. (5)

The director used the word “lucky” several times which indicated that she thinks her success extraordinary and dependent on the help she received. Following on Burke and McKeen’s observation, most mentors are male and women have difficulty in finding mentors, one can see why she believes herself fortunate. Haynes (1989:48) also observed that male mentors are more powerful. The director also said, speaking on the absence of female mentors:

In fact I was mentored much better by males than by females. Maybe they were struggling to do the same thing I was and maybe because it was harder for them. (5)

Participant Five acknowledges the difficulty she as a woman had in finding female mentors since at that time the women that could have mentored her were still climbing the ladder and trying to establish themselves. Haynes (1989:48) observed that the stresses involved in being a female manager makes it difficult for women to mentor. McDermott’s study (1998b) confirmed that most women do not have access to female mentors due to a
lack of female managers and have to make do with informal mentoring from males. Similarly, the participant feels that women in South African libraries face a similar dilemma and should therefore accept mentoring from men and the occasional woman since there is a shortage of female mentors. In support of this position, Astin’s study as quoted in Irvine (1985:248) found that career women are often guided by ‘significant men’ for example a relative, a friend or teacher. Irene Charnley, a top South African businesswoman, acknowledges Cyril Ramaphosa as her mentor (The Citizen, 29 Aug, 2000).

One director feels the responsibility to ensure that more women move up in the hierarchy of library structures lies heavily with those women who have achieved top positions. Talking about the responsibility of mentoring women at director level she says:

...So we also have responsibility being in these positions now and those of us that have the opportunities to also ensure that people... that there are many more there. (4)

In contrast to McDermott, this researcher finds that the women directors interviewed seemed very positive about mentoring and supporting other women and in fact saw it as their responsibility to plough back some of what they have learnt. In this study there is no evidence that women in higher
positions are equally guilty of negative attitudes toward other women as McDermott said in her study.

5.3.4 ROLE MODELS

Role models are defined as people who can be emulated or who are influential in providing examples. McDermott (1998b) found that some female librarians mention their mothers, who worked, as positive role models. Mkabela (1999:95) emphasized the importance of having females in senior positions as examples for female students and women at the beginning of their careers. She remarked that failure to have women visible in senior positions sends non-verbal signals to other women about the inevitability of their subordinate position as women and that this makes them limit their ambitions in line with sex-role stereotypes.

Role models are important in that they have the skills and techniques lacking in the individual and which, by using the model as an example, can provide the necessary learning experiences (Irvine, 1985:105). Likewise, role models also reinforce the idea that women can succeed in previously male positions.

One factor that women in this study found positive in career advancement is the availability of role models and the encouragement they gained from
seeing women in senior positions in libraries and professional organisations. They were encouraged by the election nationally of female leadership in LIASA as well as the appointment of female library directors at UCT and UWC. One librarian at Stellenbosch explained how encouraged she was and said:

En wat vir my ook baie goed is is dat daar so baie goeie voorbeeld gestel is deur LIASA se topstruktuur...in hierdie stadium is die vrou die voorsitter daarvan en n groot deel van die topbestuur [ook] wat in die verlede met SAIBI nie so was nie. Ek dink dis ook baie goed?boodskap uitgegaan dat jy kan die hoogste sport bereik in die beroep (B).

(Translation: For me it is good that LIASA top structure sets such a very good example. A woman is the chairperson and women form a good part of the top management. This is in contrast with the past history of SAIBI. I think it also sends out a positive message that women can reach the top of the profession.)

Here she is referring to the new professional organisation for South African librarians, LIASA, that replaced the previous organisations like SAIBI/SAILIS. Since its inception, women have played a leading role. One director (who incidentally is the chairperson of LIASA) was fully aware that she serves as a role model:

I think it makes a difference and I hope that being here at UWC it will also make a difference in terms of that. People might feel that they can come [to me] and let us use to our advantage that whole
socialisation of ...how women are regarded in the community (4)

It seems that the women in top positions that were interviewed are aware of their responsibilities to change the negative perceptions about women. This combats women's own internalisation of sex-role stereotypes that inhibit their progression through the ranks. These library directors are fully aware of the pioneering role that they are playing and are very positive about it.

5.3.5 MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Women felt that if it were to become a consideration, mere membership is not the issue, but how involved and active you are in the organisation. At Cape Technikon a librarian remarked on the limitations of membership of a professional body and remarked:

*You could be a member of fifty societies and not be involved in any running, steering committee... you can say you are involved...you just pay their fees...*(A)

On the other hand, some at Cape Technikon feel, that if they have to choose between two candidates that are fairly similar, and one is a member of a professional organisation, this could be a deciding factor. But one librarian at Cape Technikon who attempted to include it in an advertisement, found that it was erased by top management. She remarked:
I was recently ? adverts for two vacancies and I included membership of LIASA was recommended and it was taken out. So obviously [it is] not a very strong factor [laughter](A)

One of the directors interviewed feels that she will not take it seriously since the current organisation for librarians, LIASA, is not differentiated and specialised enough to be of use to librarians:

I would be much keener to know if people had been in LIASA and involved in an interest group in that area in which they were applying. Certainly I think that membership shows interest but membership also... there are two issues, one is how active one been and how interested and what has one learned in the process. (5)

One can conclude therefore that membership of professional organisations were not really considered to be of crucial importance in South Africa and in this research it can be regarded as a minor theme. It is clear that LIASA has to develop as an organisation and needs to contribute a lot more to the professional development of librarians in order to be taken seriously by those who make appointments.

5.4 WOMEN LIBRARIANS' VIEW OF THE FUTURE

It seems that the changes in the socio-political atmosphere in South Africa after the 1994 elections have boosted women librarians' confidence.
Whereas one can clearly discern a deep frustration with the discrimination that they are experiencing, the socio-political and legislative changes and the few examples of successful women librarians have combined to make them feel that they are advancing.

Women librarians are generally very positive about their future for a number of reasons. One reason is political change in the country and changes in labour legislation. A librarian at Stellenbosch listed the positive factors that she saw around her:

*Baie faktore. Polities, regsfaktore ek praat van Employment Equity... Ek dink net dis die gevoel van die dag. Dis die kultuur. Die vrou se tyd het nou gekom.* (B) (Translation: A lot of factors. Political, legislative – I am talking about employment equity. I think it’s the feeling of the day. It is the culture. The woman’s time has come.)

There is a sense that this is the era for women. The two female directors are positive role models and reflect the advances made by women. One felt that it is time to promote and advance the interests of women:

*But now it seems like OK the doors are opening so therefore we have to start pushing each other. At least we have a few female librarians that are[at the] top....* (2)
The fact that LIASA has a female leadership at the moment also serves as an inspiration to women:

"En wat vir my ook baie goed is is dat daar so baie goeie voorbeeld gestel is deur LIASA se topstruktuer...in hierdie stadium [is] die vrou is die voorsitter daarvan en n groot deel van die topbestuur [ook] wat in die verlede met SAIBI nie so was nie. Ek dink dis ook baie goed ?boodskap uitgegaan dat jy kan die hoogste sport bereik in die beroep (B). (Translation: For me it is good that LIASA top structure sets such a very good example. A woman is the chairperson and women form a good part of the top management. This is in contrast with the past history of SAIBI. I think it also sends out a positive message that women can reach the top of the profession.)"

Women generally feel that the position of women in libraries and society will look very different in a few years from now:

"And gradually the patriarchal system is going to get broken down... South Africa has I think one of the best opportunities to do that in the whole world at the moment (A)"

One librarian remarked that the prospects for women librarians are quite good:

"... it looks actually very favourable for females still out there. (2)"
This positive attitude about the future was expressed at all institutions in the study. Whether it is justified, remains to be seen, since Rees (1992:12) says that despite legislation and the changing socio-political context, sex segregation in other parts of the world still persists. This is also reflected in the persistent gap in salaries evident from surveys in the United States (http://www.arl.org/newsltr/198/salary.html). Nevertheless, this positive outlook bodes well for the future.

The female library directors are aware of the significance of those who opened the way for them and of the pioneering role that they play. One director felt that women after her would not find the doors so tightly shut as the hard work had been done:

_To make the way that it actually is becoming easier. There is not that, no way, never...you will probably get an equal distribution one of these days you know of women and men in senior positions and so on_ (4)

The fact that women are in leadership roles will encourage women librarians and female students in the field to change their views regarding the capability of women and thus make them more ambitious despite negative attitudes from men. Additionally, males will also benefit from females in
managerial positions since it will break down sex-role stereotypes and create positive attitudes in reporting to female managers.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Why have women librarians been so quiet about the discrimination they suffer? It is obvious from this research that, with the notable exception of one person, all of them are both aware and resentful of the discrimination. One can only conclude that a key factor is the power differences between men and women and how women have learnt to deal with it both in their daily lives as well as in their work environment. Additionally all women are generally in the same position, and it makes it difficult for some to see that they are being discriminated against.

Most women are used to adjusting to patriarchal social relations in their home environment and in the workplace. Women are not passive in this process of reproducing sex differences in the workplace, even though men are the main beneficiaries. Therefore some of the women interviewed do not question their primary role in a domestic situation that clearly hampers career advancement. Williams (1995:180) explained that jobs are gendered and that people bring their gender constructions into an already gendered workplace. Generally the discourse of women librarians interviewed clearly
acknowledged and resented the influence of patriarchy on their position in libraries. However none of them labelled themselves as feminists although one of the participants leaned towards the radical feminist school in the way she resents and blames men for their negative attitude towards women. On the other hand, the reported lack of support for female directors in some cases by women librarians means that feminist consciousness is not the norm in the libraries surveyed. This is indicated by the fact that no link is made between patriarchy, class and race, their position in libraries, the lack of value attached to women’s work and the general acceptance of the domestic roles thrust on them.

What was also discerned from the female librarians was the idea that their difficulties are in the past and that the future is more positive for women. Women are emboldened by the socio-political changes in the country and the subsequent implementation of employment equity and affirmative action measures. This is in line with liberal feminist thought that believes the removal of legal, political and structural barriers will liberate women and that the social relations need not be challenged. It is clear from Chapter Three that this might not be enough. They do not felt free to speak up and feel powerless to bring about change. There is no evidence of a feminist analysis of power relations in society and libraries as a prerequisite to challenge power structures.
What was not touched on and was mostly absent from their discourse is the issue of class and race and how black women are marginalised. When it comes to power hierarchies, women also have different levels of power. In terms of race, white and coloured women are more established in libraries in the Western Cape in terms of position as well as numbers. Therefore it is not just power differences between men and women, but also power hierarchies between women librarians themselves. Black women are disadvantaged by race and gender. Where black librarians do find themselves in numerically inferior positions, their voices might be extremely marginalised. Postmodern feminism dictates that women accept that there are power differences between them, that white women were privileged and that a coloured labour preference policy existed in the Cape. These historical disparities need to be addressed.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will reflect back on the research questions and to what extent they were answered. It will examine the limitations of this study, look at practical applications for the research and finally make suggestions for future research.

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In concluding the findings it is necessary to look back at the research questions and the extent to which they were answered. The research questions on which the research was based and that directed the investigation were:

1) To what extent has gender/sex impacted on the career positioning of female librarians?

2) Have any other obstacles impeded the career advancement of female librarians and if so, what were they?
3) When female librarians apply for promotion, what are their actual experiences?

4) To what extent has race impacted on the career positioning of female librarians?

The questions incorporated into the vignette were designed to solicit answers to the research questions outlined above.

- The first question asked whether gender/sex significantly influence the careers of women librarians. This study concludes that gender/sex have been significant impediments in career advancement of women librarians in the libraries of those tertiary institutions in the Western Cape included in this study. This is evident in the pattern of sex segregation present at all libraries in the study. In this regard there is no difference between these libraries and experiences mentioned in international literature on the negative impact gender has for the careers of women librarians.

- The second question attempted to get the opinion of female librarians on obstacles seen to impede their careers. Quite a few were mentioned during the interviews. Obstacles are produced by factors like institutional cultures that are generally masculine and racist and
negative attitudes from male colleagues. Institutions have developed a stereotypical idea of what a manager should look like and women do not fit the picture. However as pointed out earlier, women as well as men have stereotypical ideas of the types of work suitable for each sex and sometimes women do not apply for jobs that they think atypical e.g. technical or managerial positions. Other obstacles are the double burden women carry that makes them primary caregivers in the home. This inhibits career growth. Women also lack mentors and role models.

- Women’s experiences of applying for promotion have also proven negative in the past. There is a perception that certain jobs were reserved for men. This points to mechanisms like networks and interview panels being used to keep women librarians out of senior positions. However, recent socio-political changes in the country that have filtered down to institutions have produced tangible results as shown by the appointment of female directors and this coupled with other factors have given women hope that the situation will change for the better. Whether this happens remains to be seen.

- The fourth question tried to establish the significance of race for career advancement. While gender is a stumbling block for all, race
complicated issues further for black women librarians. This does not emerge from the interviews, but the under-representation of black women librarians does indicate that. Institutions also reflect staffing patterns that are a legacy of apartheid policies. However, while in the past being black was a drawback, current equity policies favour black applicants as institutions try to reach a racial balance. Thus some white female librarians feel that their colour is an impediment in terms of advancement at the moment.

As to the reason why women suffer these problems in advancing, the underlying reason for all the obstacles are patriarchal social relations and its negative affect on the value placed on femininity and women’s work. As indicated elsewhere, until this is addressed, sex segregation will persist and women will have to depend on special mechanisms to protect and advance their careers. This is a societal problem and should be addressed on a macro as well as a micro level.

6.3 LIMITATIONS

While the Western Cape has a various types of libraries, this study was limited to the four institutions listed before. An attempt was made to include Peninsula Technikon in the study, but lack of response forced the abandonment of the idea. These institutions were chosen since they employ
a sufficiently large number of women librarians to facilitate this type of study. Additionally these institutions also include a sufficient number of males to facilitate a comparative perspective by women participating in the study. Public libraries, school libraries and special libraries rarely employ large numbers of librarians within one physical location. Additionally, in the case of school and special libraries, staff work in relative isolation and would find it difficult to make the necessary comparisons required between their relative position and that of their male colleagues.

Although race is an important issue in South Africa, this is not the main focus of the study. Furthermore it is known that in other countries salary discrepancies exist between the sexes, but this researcher is not sure to what extent it exists, if at all, in South Africa. Salaries warrant a separate study and since institutions and individuals are often reluctant to disclose those details, it was deemed beyond the scope of this study. For that reason an investigation into salary discrepancies was excluded from this study.

6.4 PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The intention of this researcher was to make a contribution to an under-explored field in South African librarianship. It is contended that it would be to the benefit of women librarians to bring to the fore a topic that is of
immense importance to them and which is not often discussed in South Africa. Research should be grounded in practice and since the existing literature is mostly aimed at American or European audiences it is not always applicable to the local situation. A further objective of the research was to allow women librarians to engage with the issue.

The researcher would therefore like to highlight various issues that were addressed in the research project and which she thinks could be used in practice to redress the situation and benefit women librarians in South Africa.

- Female librarians will hopefully be motivated by this research to organise themselves within their own libraries and within LIASA to work more actively and aggressively to promoting their needs. Women librarians should establish a women's group in LIASA to raise consciousness and organise for their advancement. It is surmised that as a number of the librarians who were interviewed articulated a need for women librarians to organise themselves in order to advance many more women librarians all over the country would be receptive to the idea. Within these groups women will learn the processes and benefits of networking to advance the cause of women librarians. Networking, as has been pointed out, is a key skill that women librarians should learn to use effectively. It would
also create the ideal platform to actively encourage mentoring between the more senior women librarians and their more junior colleagues.

- Library and Information Science teaching departments should introduce courses in women's studies within librarianship. There is a lack of understanding that action needs to be taken to rectify the anomaly between women constituting the majority of workers in the profession and the fact that they are grossly under-represented in top library structures. Women librarians and women library science students need to develop a feminist analysis of their situation. This awareness should motivate them and lead to a desire to actively engage in joining other women to challenge existing power relations and improve their environment. Teaching departments, as the earliest mentors of young professionals, should recognise their responsibility to assist women librarians (the silent majority) to actively engage in redressing the power imbalance in the profession.

- Organisations such as LIASA should organise across occupations to form a common front with nurses, social workers and women in other professions that show extreme sex discrimination. This, of course, does not exclude working with women in professions other than the ones
mentioned and forming a broad alliance of women to engage in issues of common interest to all women.

- This research has focussed on women librarians’ working environment and has clearly indicated that it is generally hostile to women’s ambitions. Action is therefore needed to redress the situation and make it easier for them to realise their ambitions in libraries. Two areas require particular attention, viz:

  ➢ Current library structures are extremely restrictive and hierarchical with little room for originality and growth. This research should therefore be used to advocate the flattening of library structures to give more opportunities for personal growth and professional advancement. There should be no need to “wait for someone to die” as one female librarian said. Women can advance not only through management positions but through specialisation in various fields as well. This should result in creating a body of female librarians who are considerably more motivated and this should benefit the organisations as well.

  ➢ Current organisational culture is hostile to the aspirations of all women and people of different races. It is hoped that this research will sensitise organisations to the fact they are currently rewarding
masculinity and certain race groups and that women and marginalised groups are thus affected negatively. Masculinity, as Williams wrote, is always defined in terms of its opposite, femininity, which is then devalued (1995:183). The lack of value attached to femininity and the rewarding of masculinity must be challenged to bring permanent change to the workplace as well as broader society. Harris writes that there must be a revaluing and rewarding of women’s work on its own terms and not in comparison with masculinity. She further advocates a feminist analysis to analyse and challenge power structures in society and the workplace (Harris, 1992:161). Williams believes that both a structural and cultural/psychological change is required to change gender differentiation at work (1995:185). Organisations must be restructured to place equal value on masculinity and femininity. For example she observed that there is no empirical reason why emotions and empathy are discouraged in the workplace.

- Women’s double burden should be addressed. Men should acquiesce to their share of domestic responsibility and organisations should accommodate both women and men in this regard. They should first acknowledge the domestic problem of their workers and then create flexible organisational arrangements to accommodate these obligations.
• Women and men should work together to change gender socialisation within families and society at large. Families and society should be encouraged to recognise the inherent worth and value of femininity and be discouraged from constantly negating and devaluing it (Williams, 1995:187).

• A proactive method that can be adopted to try and institute change in gender attitudes would be to communicate the findings of the research to as wide an audience as possible. In this way it is hoped relevant role players and possible protagonists could be encouraged to recognise the value of women and engage with these issues to improve their lives. A further reason for publishing the findings is Potgieter’s recommendation (1997:239) that research on marginal groups should be widely published and also that publishing one’s findings is consistent with the accountability criterion of qualitative research. Female librarians can be regarded as a marginalised group, especially in the local librarianship literature and therefore one aim is to publish a journal article on this research.
6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is acknowledged that although it is hoped that this project has addressed many relevant issues that relate to women librarians in South Africa, it has by no means been exhaustive and many important aspects remain that should be researched in future. The following is a brief résumé of the research topics within the field that the researcher considers should be undertaken in future.

- In line with Pritchard’s views (1994:43), it is felt that women librarians have to critically examine the philosophical basis of librarianship as well as specific issues like pay equity, sex discrimination and so on. Men have mainly conducted research in the field and written the library and information science literature and a feminist approach to librarianship is now required that would re-assess accepted practices and thinking.

- More specific issues that this project did not address and that require examination are:
  - The issue of salary discrepancies. Future research is needed to see whether salary discrepancies exist in South Africa as has been documented elsewhere.
➢ Research is also needed to monitor the affect of the employment equity and affirmative action legislation on all women in libraries and how far it addresses the problem. Despite the women in the sample’s optimism, experience elsewhere has shown that legislation is not always effective.

➢ Research on the link between advanced qualifications, career advancement and femininity to prove or disprove the assumption made by a few of the librarians interviewed that higher qualifications are of no practical help to them.

➢ Women librarians should also research the type of qualifications that assist in career building to direct their future efforts.

➢ The entire issue of mentoring in the South African library profession requires research since the mechanism has been identified as crucial to career advancement. A specific aspect that should be addressed is whether gender makes a difference in mentoring and whether there is a difference between male versus female mentors for women librarians.

➢ This research project has not provided sufficient information on how women librarians view and cope with their double burden as workers and primary caretakers. This should thus provide another important aspect to research in depth.
In conclusion it should be stated that future research projects should allow women to state their views on issues that affect them in their own words. We thus need more research in this field of a qualitative nature to obtain the true and in-depth picture of the female librarian’s working world. Only then can we strategise effectively to change things. Lastly, this research was confined to one specific area and it would be valuable to duplicate in other locations to determine whether the views expressed hold a more universal sway. Specific attention needs to be paid to institutions where black female librarians are more numerous to obtain their views and compare them with the views and opinions expressed here.
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APPENDIX A

VIGNETTE IN ENGLISH

Doris is a 30-year old librarian who has been working at the .............Library for the past five years in the same position. She has an MA degree in librarianship and is currently doing a diploma in IT. She has worked at other libraries before coming to work at this library. She is an active member of the professional organization for librarians.

The head of cataloguing at her library has retired and Doris is thinking about applying. She also knows that two other librarians, one a 52-year old male with an MA and another 27-year old male are definitely going to apply.

- Do you think she should apply and why?
- What factors do you think will favour her candidacy and why?
- What factors do you think will affect her chances negatively and why?
- Do you think her race will affect her chances?
- Do you think the fact that she is female will influence the panel and how?
APPENDIX B

BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following questions. Be assured that the information is relevant to the research and will be treated as confidential.

1. Date of birth:........................................

2. Home language: (Please tick the appropriate block)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xhosa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zulu</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/Sotho</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/Sotho</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tswana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsonga</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndebele</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Swazi

Other (please specify).......................

1. Relationship status:(tick the appropriate block)
   - Single
   - Married
   - Divorced
   - Other

2. Children (Please tick the appropriate block)
   - Y
   - N

3. Please list your qualifications and the year you obtained them:
   1. ..............................................................
   2. ..............................................................
   3. ..............................................................
   4. ..............................................................
   5. ..............................................................

4. Are you presently studying further? (Please tick appropriate block)
   - Yes
   - No

5. If yes, what is the qualification you hope to obtain?..............................
APPENDIX C

Coding conventions

Three dots...for omitted talk

Question mark ? for inaudible talk

R for Researcher

I for interviewees

= for overlapping talk

* for talk in the background
APPENDIX D

Letter of request to conduct research

The Chief Librarian

Dear sir/madam

Permission to do research

I am a Masters student in Library and Information Science currently studying at the University of Cape Town.

The subject of my thesis concerns the career advancement of female librarians and my aim is to document their experiences in terms of career advancement and their perceptions of the factors influencing their chances of advancing within their chosen field.

In order to do this study, I need to do focus group interviews and perhaps individual interviews with selected female staff members in your library. I hereby solicit your permission to include your library in my study.

A response to the following address or e-mail number will be greatly appreciated.

Barbara Swartz
8 Erica Street
Woodstock
7925
E-mail: bswartz@parliament.gov.za
APPENDIX E

List of abbreviations

IT – Information technology

LIASA – Library and Information Science Association of South Africa

SAILIS – South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science

UCT – University of Cape Town

USA – United States of America

UWC – University of the Western Cape