Using Narratives and Storytelling in Career Development:

A South African Distance Learning Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated how a career is conceptualised amongst a sample of previously disadvantaged South African distance learners. The research argued and used a narrative and story-telling approach in understanding career development. This method is used given the need to generate knowledge specific to the local context and using this knowledge to inform a wider audience. Although other methods (mostly quantitative) have aided the process of knowledge generation within the careers literature, their limitations are noted in this thesis as well.

Participant narratives revealed three main findings. First, individuals interviewed in this research narrated a life of struggle and challenge as not only affecting their personal lives but also their framing of the nature of a career. Second, stumbling blocks acting as constraints not just to the lived experience but towards career development are presented in this thesis. Third, the way individuals work around these stumbling blocks through a process referred to as enacted negotiation is presented. This process, though driven by the individual, mediates between the individual and their situation. The process emphasises how individuals take action as a result of their situation in aiding their career development. A Career Development/Context/Constraints Framework (CDaCCF) based on the findings from this research is proposed. This research illustrated the use of a narrative inquiry in understanding career development amongst a sample of previously disadvantaged individuals in South Africa. The implications of this are explored.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the previously disadvantaged individuals who are taking opportunities presented to them in the new South Africa. Thank you for reminding me of the African Spirit of forgiveness and togetherness.

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ACRONYMS

Advanced-level	A-level
Career Attitudes and Strategies Inventory	CASI
Career Beliefs Inventory	CBI
Career Development/Context/Constraints Framework	CDaCCF
Career Decision-Making	CDM
Career Decision-Making System Scale	CDMS
Career Psychology 3	CP3
Chaos Theory of Careers	CTC
Human Resources Management	HRM
Information Communication Technology	ICT
Ordinary-level	O-level
Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional	RIASEC
Science, Engineering & Technology	SET
Social Cognitive Career Theory	SCCT
Systems Theory Framework	STF
United Kingdom	UK
United States	US
University of Port Elizabeth	UPE
University of South Africa	UNISA

University of Zimbabwe   UZ

Vocational Exploration and Insight Kit   VEIK

Vocational Preference Inventory   VPI

Vocational Self-Concept Crystallization   VSC

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

The South African *Sunday Independent* newspaper details the story of Tiyani Rikhotso as follows:

> "I'm a 31-year-old young South African male who feels privileged to be part of the change that has been taking place in the past two decades in our country. Let me hasten to declare that my involvement in this necessary process of change is informed by my conviction that the struggle for socioeconomic justice is superior to all battles confronting the working class. I'm also the rightful beneficiary of all the liberties guaranteed under South Africa's inviolable constitution … this is not to be confused with implying that things are perfect in post-apartheid South Africa. Many challenges remain." (*The Sunday Independent*, 2013:17).

Tiyani's sentiments relate to the central problematic issues of this thesis. First, Tiyani's quote addresses the opportunities available to individuals like him given the historical deprivation of black people by the apartheid regime. The policy of apartheid entailed "separateness" (Cottrell, 2005:14–15) and meant limited educational, job and career opportunities by race favouring mostly white males (Stead and Watson, 2006). The process of change has resulted in a focus of redress and granting opportunities to

population groups directly affected by the policy of apartheid. These groups include black Africans, Indians, Chinese South Africans, mixed-race people, women, youths, the disabled and people residing in rural communities (Cottrell, 2005).

Second, in post-apartheid South Africa, Tiyani attributes a way of accessing opportunity to individual "involvement" and efforts for social justice as enshrined in the constitution (*The Sunday Independent*, 2013:17). Such efforts have come through newly introduced Acts of Law targeted at benefiting individuals disadvantaged by apartheid. These statutes strive to achieve parity and equity in South Africa given the historical legacy of apartheid (Czakan, 2006). At the core of this is the empowerment of individuals previously disadvantaged by apartheid and recognised as a priority (Booysen, 2000). One way to achieve this has been through a number of interventions targeted at the role of education and skills development (Toni and Olivier, 2004). One such intervention was the building of distance learning universities aimed at removing barriers of access that impeded previously disadvantaged individuals from attaining an education (South African Department of Education, 1997; 2010). Finally, Tiyani acknowledges that "many challenges remain", given the two previous points (*The Sunday Independent*, 2013:17). These challenges include lack of educational resources and facilities (Mathabe and Temane, 1993; Sedibe, 2011), gender imbalance owing to historical issues (Moletsane and Reddy, 2008), illiteracy (Mathabe and Temane, 1993), skills shortage (Wilson, 2001) and poverty (Maharasoa and Hay, 2001; Stead and Watson, 2006). These challenges still remain to be addressed in post-apartheid South Africa.

Given this brief background, the present research seeks to investigate the nature of career development within a distance learning context in South Africa. The distance learning context offers potential as it is recognised by law as a mode of delivery allowing access to education, especially opportunities for previously disadvantaged individuals (South African Department of Education, 1997; 2010). Recent figures showed an increase of 82% in university enrolment compared with 1994 just after the democratic elections of 1994. Nearly two-thirds of these students (62%) were studying via contact or full-time enrolment. The remaining 38% were enrolled as distance learners. An estimated 65% to 69% of these distance learning students were categorised as being previously disadvantaged (South African Department of Education, 2010).

Potential exists here not just theoretically but practically on a policy level for the integration and participation of previously disadvantaged individuals in the South African economy. Studying and investigating the nature and role of career development for previously disadvantaged individuals fits within efforts allowing for their integration into the socioeconomic cluster (Booysen, 2000; Verhoef, 1996). The aim here is to give economic opportunities to improve the lives of these individuals (de Bruin, 2000). Individual career development offers potential for this. The present chapter will present various viewpoints of career development. Added to this, the surrounding difficulties in the South African context regarding career development for previously disadvantaged individuals are presented. Thereafter, the South African distance learning context will be presented as a way forward.

1.2 CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Hall (2002) viewed a career as consisting of an individual's sequence of perceived work roles. This has been suggested to include the roles of students or those in formal and informal work (Baruch, 2004). The aim in the process of career development is one of individual "self-development" (Maree, 2002:9) and empowerment of the individual (Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte, Guichard, Soresi, van Esbroeck and van Vianen, 2009). This section presents the various debates within the careers literature stream including the perspectives shaping our understanding of careers and career development.

1.2.1 Three Debates

The extant careers literature appears to be shaped by three debates. First, there is a heavy emphasis on the individual, including their aptitude, ability and interests. Hall (2002) acknowledged how the individual, their work roles and their personality informed the meaning of a career. This individual focus was also alluded to by Simpson (2005), who emphasised the individual responsibility that comes with the pursuit of a career.

A second debate concerns the nature of this individually driven process. The dominant thinking here is of a career being seen as linear, systematic, sequential, stable, planned and predictable (eg Arthur, Hall and Lawrence, 1989). For example, Arnold (1997:16) defined a career as being in the form of a " … sequence of employment-related positions, roles

and activities encountered by a person". This view has remained a dominant one within the careers literature stream. The reason for its dominance has been attributed to the predominant use of Western perspectives in empirical studies that mainly use survey-based techniques in the careers field (Stead and Watson, 2006).

This Western dominance informs the third debate that has characterised thinking within the careers literature. Much of the research in the careers literature stream has aimed to achieve an objective understanding of the concept of a career (Baruch, 2006) through survey-based techniques. These techniques have been popular across a number of contexts, eg school settings, counselling practice and organisational settings (Baruch, 2004; Cascio, 1991; Hughes, 2004; Watts, 1996). This research invigorates interest in the careers research stream and questions the nature of career development in this thesis. These debates seem to portray the notion of career development as a process of self-development that is progressive and upward (Savickas, 2005; Savickas et al, 2009). Two common research perspectives on career development exist: an objective and subjective understanding (Baruch, 2006). These receive attention next.

1.2.2 Objective and Subjective Understanding of Career Development

The majority of empirical work within the career development research stream has tended to rely on quasi-objective measures (Dries, Pepermans, Hofmans and Rypens, 2009). These studies mainly have their origin in and rely on seminal career theories developed in a Western context, mostly in the United States (Sullivan and Arthur, 2006). The support for investigating career development using the quantitative research design

is from generating data based on observable, measurable and scientifically tested instruments (Nicholson, 2000). However, scholars have raised questions regarding the use of the quantitative research method in researching career development.

Savickas (2005) cited quantitative studies as often neglecting the role of context and its influence on career development. De Vos and Soens (2008) supported this view by highlighting that in non-Western contexts such as South Africa there is a great deal of complexity. For instance, given the apartheid past of segregation and its influence on the lived experience, the South African situation may present some unique challenges away from the Western context. Quantitative studies may not be able to adequately capture such complexity. Savickas (2011b) later argued for the role of qualitative methods as providing solutions to modern career challenges faced by individuals in societies characterised by complexity that would not be captured fully using the quantitative design.

The subjective perspective on career development that is examined using qualitative research career experiences views career development as a social construction rather than an objective reality (Cohen and Mallon, 2001). This view of career development is seen as dynamic rather than static (Savickas, 2005), influenced by social, historical and cultural factors (Stead, 2004). Thus, the focus is on understanding career development through the lens of individual career experience (Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley, 1990) and career motives (Coetzee and Schreuder, 2009). There is an acknowledgement of this experience as being different from individual to individual (Driver, 1982; Schein,

1978) and entailing a long-term rather than short-term focus on the career experience (Derr and Briscoe, 2007). Chudzikowski (2012:298) heralded the "new" qualitative research agenda as an important development in relation to its predecessor, which relied on quantitative research designs. This thesis seeks to investigate the nature of career development from a qualitative angle within a South African context. The rationale for this is given in the next section which focuses on the South African situation.

1.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CAREERS RESEARCH AND PRACTICE SETTING

1.3.1 The History of Careers and Career Development in South Africa

Careers and career development have been a politicised issue throughout the history of South Africa. The policy of apartheid, which is rooted in the idea of "separateness", racially classified citizens, designated job opportunities, and physically separated and isolated educational opportunities by colour (Cottrell, 2005:14–15). This resulted in limited employment opportunities, segregation and a culture of endemic poverty (Maharasoa and Hay, 2001) that mainly affected the black population (Stead and Watson, 2006). With the fall of the apartheid regime and the ushering in of a new democracy in 1994, significant changes emerged in South Africa.

The first of these changes was the election of the first democratic, non-racial government

and the acceptance of a new constitution in 1996 (Stead and Watson, 1998). This event had a significant influence not just on careers and career development in South Africa, but especially for those who had been disadvantaged owing to apartheid. Second, the South African government recognised the consequences of apartheid on black people and addressed this in law. The term "previously disadvantaged" in South African law is defined as referring to:

"those persons or categories of persons who, prior to the new democratic dispensation marked by the coming into force of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996), were disadvantaged by unfair discrimination on the basis of their race and includes juristic persons or associations controlled by such persons."

These disadvantaged people included (mostly) black people, coloureds, Indians and Chinese people with South African citizenship (Cottrell, 2005). This cohort of previously disadvantaged groups also included women and people with disabilities (Maharasoa and Hay, 2001). Previously disadvantaged groups have made an important contribution to the South African economy despite being marginalised. Though in present-day South Africa these individuals have become the focus of social justice initiatives, barriers to their advancement still exist. Sedibe (2011) argued that previously disadvantaged individuals in present-day South Africa face challenges when compared with their white counterparts. These challenges include a lack of access to educational resources. In some cases the schools attended by these individuals have inadequately trained teachers and deplorable facilities.

Mathabe and Temane (1993) found previously disadvantaged individuals lacked access to career guidance information not just in their schools but also in their communities. In addition, because of illiteracy, the parents of these individuals usually could not offer any career guidance (Mathabe and Tamane, 1993). This creates a setback given that parental involvement has been found to be of significance in influencing individual career development (Super, 1984). The issue of career development in post-apartheid South Africa must be revisited, given the changes in post-democratic South Africa, with opportunities existing for previously disadvantaged groups. Another added challenge faced by the previously disadvantaged when being assessed by psychometric tests is the issue of cross-cultural applicability. These tests were developed and used mainly for dominant cultural groups in South Africa (eg Afrikaans and English-speaking groups) (Stead and Watson, 2006). This has had an effect of hindering career development amongst other sample groups, especially those who are previously disadvantaged. This warrants an investigation of careers outside the use of such tests and applying methods that offer the potential to empower the individual.

1.3.2 Proposed Government Interventions

The South African government proposed policy interventions around social and economic justice to redress historical imbalance (South African Department of Education, 2010). A number of laws were enacted to help previously disadvantaged individuals in South Africa. Some of these laws include:

(a)   Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998

(b)   Skills Development Act 97 of 1998

(c)   Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995

(d)   Unemployment Insurance Fund Act 63 of 2001

(e)   Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997

(f)   Broad-Based Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003

These laws aimed to achieve not just gender but also racial parity in the workplace and community initiatives through affirmative action (Czakan, 2006). The idea here was that those disadvantaged by the laws of apartheid should be given the opportunity to exert influence in the socioeconomic environment (Booysen, 2000; de Bruin, 2000; Verhoef, 1996).

Though these efforts are commendable, it is believed that present-day South Africa still exhibits the effects of apartheid. This concerns both the gender and racial consequences of apartheid. Regarding gender, there remains an imbalance in the workforce, particularly in the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) sectors (Moletsane and Reddy, 2008). Interestingly, these are the sectors that have significance for South Africa's local, regional and international growth and competitiveness. Concerning race, whites have been found to still earn much more than any other population group in South Africa. The median monthly wage by race in the survey showed black African earners receiving R 2,380, coloured earners receiving R 3,030, Indian earners receiving R 6,800 and white earners R 10,000. (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2013:1). In addition, Wilson (2001) identified a skills gap affecting black people that resulted in a varying distribution of opportunity in present-day South Africa. Black schools (attended mainly by previously disadvantaged groups) in particular are noted for having inadequate resources,

eg career support and personnel (Chuenyane, 1983; Hickson and White, 1989; Stead and Watson, 2006).

Another government intervention came through the provision of education to the black population. The South African government acknowledged the challenges faced by previously disadvantaged groups and how access to education can be a panacea (South African Department of Education, 1997). One such mode of delivery of education was distance learning. Interestingly, distance learning is growing in popularity, particularly amongst the previously disadvantaged (South African Department of Education, 2010). Msila (2006) attributed this popularity not just to historical issues, but also to the nature and challenges of the present South African higher education landscape. These challenges include:

1. The high volume of diverse student enrolment in South Africa. This is owing to a migration to South Africa from other African countries and the world in general (Pityana, 2009).

2. The exorbitant cost of attending national universities (mostly full time) (cf. South African Department of Education, 1997, 2010).

3. The inflexibility of teaching methods used in national universities (mostly full time) when it comes to answering the needs of a diversifying student population (Msila, 2006).

4. Finally, the teaching methods in national universities, and universities' ability to deliver to graduates the specific skills needed in the employment sector

(Pityana, 2009).

The effect of distance learning is believed to extend beyond South Africa to the rest of the African continent. Pityana (2009:7) viewed distance learning as a "promising and practical" intervention not just for the South African context but also for Africa. This is given the challenge of access to higher education and the need to increase participation in higher education. Recent figures showed an increase of 82% in university enrolment compared with 1994 just after the democratic elections of 1994. Nearly two-thirds of these students (62%) were studying via contact or full-time enrolment. The remaining 38% were enrolled as distance learners. An estimated 65% to 69% of these distance-learning students were categorised as being previously disadvantaged (South African Department of Education, 2010).

1.3.3 Distance Education Providers in South Africa

A range of distance education providers have emerged in South Africa. INTEC College was an early provider of distance education and was established in 1906 as a correspondence college in South Africa (INTEC, 2010). INTEC's teaching strategy incorporates the traditional postal delivery of learning resources. Recently, the launch of INTEC24 has resulted in courses being made available through on-line delivery. Other distance education providers to have emerged in South Africa include: Lyceum (founded in 1917); the Rapid Results College (founded in 1928); Damelin College (founded in 1948); and Success College (founded in 1940). Ngengebule, Glennie and Perold (1992:2)

summarised the role of these institutions as providing "valuable insights into the use of the print materials to reach the student body and also the use of the postal tuition services to offer guidance, advice, tutor-marked assignments and comments to its students largely in the pre-tertiary sector."

These institutions offer a wide range of accredited international tertiary qualifications and practical training through distance learning. Though these institutions have made a mark on the South African distance education terrain, the most notable contributor is The University of South Africa (UNISA), whose role goes as far back as 1873 (Lawlor, 2007). The role and make-up of UNISA will be discussed next.

1.4 UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA (UNISA)

UNISA is a publicly funded higher education institution in South Africa, established in accordance with the Higher Education Act (101/1997). UNISA is regarded as a mega university, as it has over 100,000 active students in its degree enrolments (Daniel, 1996). UNISA was the first and only university in South Africa to offer correspondence courses on a tertiary level for more than 50 years (Lawlor, 2007). UNISA operates on a centralised basis (Steyn, Alexander and Rohmn, 1996) to meet geographical and cost-consideration factors. UNISA uses a regional learning centre approach; these centres are spread out in South Africa, the African continent and the world (Finlayson, 2005). The ethos of UNISA is to provide equal opportunities for all (Harley, 1992). With specific reference to UNISA, Lephalala and Pienaar (2007) conducted a study on the reasons why previously disadvantaged groups favour UNISA as a place to study. Two dominant

themes emerged: 1) low tuition fees compared with full-time universities and 2) distance learning providing flexibility to work and study, which seemed an imperative for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. The study by Lephalala and Pienaar (2007) highlighted the possibility of a causal link between the popularity of distance education amongst previously disadvantaged groups and their socioeconomic standing.

1.4.1 History of UNISA

UNISA's history began in 1873 with the establishment of the University of the Cape of Good Hope (Lawlor, 2007), an examining agency for Oxford and Cambridge universities (myChoice, 2011). By 1916, and through an act of law, UNISA was established (Boucher, 1973). The establishment of UNISA also led to other universities being instituted through acts of law:

- Act 4 of 1948 established the University of Natal

- Act 21 of 1949 created the University of Orange Free State

- Act 15 of 1949 established Rhodes University (Boucher, 1973:192; Council for Higher Education, 2010)

1.4.2 UNISA's Demographics

The majority of UNISA students are from previously disadvantaged groups. In 2005 and 2006 black Africans had the largest representation by race count (58%) (myChoice,

2011). The least represented groups were the coloured and Asian groups, with a combined share of 16%. Lintvelt (2008:72) identified some common reasons for enrolment with UNISA, especially amongst previously disadvantaged groups. These include: a) convenience with regard to geographical distance; b) cost consideration in relation to full-time study; c) convenience that allows students to study and work at the same time; d) flexibility with regard to time; and e) perception of good quality of education. These findings confirmed previous work (Lephalala and Pienaar, 2007). Interestingly these studies seemed to point to the existence of a causal link between the popularity of distance education amongst these race groups and their socioeconomic standing.

1.4.3 UNISA's Teaching Approach

Noting that learners have different learning styles, UNISA has incorporated a blended learning approach by using video conferencing and audio facilities (Schulze, 2009). This approach and the embracing of Information Communication Technology (ICT) have made it possible for UNISA to teach and reach a greater number of students. These technologies allow UNISA students to receive learning material from remote locations. Students are encouraged to return at least one assignment for each module they are enrolled for in their course. The number of assignments to be completed is usually dependent on the structure of the course and the preference of the tutor. When the finished assignments have been submitted by the student, they are then marked and returned by post to the student with the solutions for each exercise. Some major centres in the regional towns host satellite broadcasts. These are usually live or prerecorded lectures and tutorials transmitted via television (Wessels, 2010). UNISA also employs

Web 2.0 technology as a platform for interaction, collaboration and student participation (van Jaarsveldt, 2011). At UNISA, this entails the use of social networking websites, blogs and wikis (Naidoo, 2012). UNISA strives to include the use of ICT to eliminate any barriers in teaching and learning (Czerniewics, Ravjee and Mlitwa, 2005). However, some concerns and constraints still hamper this quest.

1.4.4 Concerns about UNISA

Though UNISA as viewed by Tait (2003) can serve as a useful hub for previously disadvantaged groups, some concerns exist. Interestingly, these concerns serve as constraints to the previously disadvantaged groups. A low completion rate (40%) of university qualifications has been noted amongst UNISA students compared with other students in the South African higher education sector (SAIDE as cited in Nonyongo, 2002). This low completion rate has been attributed factors such as isolation, the need for more guidance in distance learning over full-time enrolment and financial difficulties (Lintvelt, 2008; Venter and van Heerden, 2001).

Venter (2000) also found that UNISA students struggle with basic reading, writing and examination-taking skills in their relevant modules. This problem may be attributable to those students lacking basic proficiency in technology (Lawlor, 2007) or South Africa's educational system (Ellis, 2008). The government has also identified this challenge to be specific to full-time universities (South African Department of Education, 2010) and previously disadvantaged groups in both traditional and distance-learning universities (South African Department of Education, 1997; 2005; 2010). In response to these

challenges, UNISA set up a task team (UNISA, 2005) whose aim was to improve service delivery through quality education and support mechanisms, especially for students who struggle to achieve the required standards. This process entailed a rethink on pillars that make UNISA appeal to previously disadvantaged groups: "removing barriers to access learning", "flexibility of learning provision", "student centredness" and "constructing learning programmes with the expectation that students can succeed" (UNISA, 2008:1).

Another recurring problem with UNISA appears to be the lack of non-academic support (Makoe, 2007). This was a consistent finding in previous research (eg Elsner, 2005), which highlighted that UNISA students had little or no interaction with their university offices and seldom participated in student activities. This often leads to a perception (which needs to be challenged) that UNISA (as a distance-learning provider) offers "second-rate" education when compared with traditional enrolment (Pityana, 2009:15). Eliminating this perception is not helped by the fact that the South African government has set a low standard of completion requirements for distance-learning students when compared with those for their counterparts in enrolled at a distance learning university (South African Department of Education, 2001:23). A final challenge facing UNISA is that of the digital divide. This phenomenon has been defined by Cullen (2003:247) as the "metaphor" to describe the "perceived disadvantage of those who either are unable or do not choose to make use of ICT in their daily life." Though this challenge has been contextualised to be evident in a higher education setting like that of UNISA (Teferra and Altbach, 2004), some believe it is a wider societal issue with origins in apartheid South Africa (Martindale, 2002).

Van Belle and Trusler (2003) viewed the challenge of the digital divide as being rooted in the high level of inequality, poor infrastructure, lack of government commitment and pressing demands of public-service delivery in South Africa. Wilson (2006) appeared to corroborate the views of Trusler and added the lack of financial constraints amongst the population as widening this gap. An explanation emerges from the recent South African census (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The census revealed that 64.8% of households had no access to the Internet, and the sizeable number of households with access to the Internet (16.3%) accessed the Internet using a cell phone. In South Africa the use of distance learning was believed to have ramifications in bridging the digital divide through the access of ICTs (Van Belle and Trusler, 2005. UNISA has thus embarked on a project aimed at fully utilising ICTs in education delivery (Prinsloo, 2012). This has been found to free students from constraints of time and place whilst offering a flexible learning approach (Prinsloo, 2010) albeit continuing challenges (Park and van der Merwe, 2009).

1.5 THE FOCUS OF THE STUDY

Interestingly no study in South Africa has sought to quantitatively investigate the career development of previously disadvantaged individuals in a distance-learning context. Distance learning appears to be a key way in which previously disadvantaged individuals can develop their careers. In addition, previously disadvantaged individuals are targeted by social justice interventions in South Africa because of policies of redress. This study aims to pay specific attention to this context and sample group. This study also answers a call for what Kim and Berry (1993) term indigenous psychology, which does not separate

psychology from the local condition of the people. Put differently, and given the historical condition surrounding previously disadvantaged individuals, this study seeks to give voice to these individuals given the focus around them as important in redressing imbalances brought about by apartheid (South African Department of Education, 2010). Added to this, previously disadvantaged groups remain an "understudied" sample in South Africa (Schreuder and Coetzee, 2012:4). This is an avenue with a potential theoretical contribution. This research thus argues for a qualitative investigation of career development using a sample of previously disadvantaged individuals in South Africa.

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE, QUESTION AND CONTRIBUTION

The objectives of the research are as follows:

- This research seeks to investigate the nature of career development amongst a sample of previously disadvantaged distance learners in South Africa.

- The research seeks to investigate this through understanding the subjective lived experience of the individual through narratives and stories.

The research question guiding this work is framed as follows:

"How do the personal narratives and stories of career-development processes

amongst South African distance learners manifest, and to what extent are the

elements of previous disadvantage the source of this?"

After analysing the career development narratives of 35 previously disadvantaged distance learners, this research illustrates how a sense of a career emerges in the life of the individual. A sense of a career based on participant stories emerges through five ways. These include: a) role-play in childhood; b) influence of teachers; c) the feedback from academic performance; d) the influence of career interventions; and e) the role of the media. These activities not only provided a way in which participants learnt of careers but they subsequently formed an impression of a career that lasted even later in the lives of the individual. This research also identified various stumbling blocks affecting the life of an individual and their career development. These stumbling blocks included: a) circumstances of upbringing; b) poverty; c) failure; d) financial constraints; e) family crisis; f) death; g) dealing with redundancy, retrenchment and unemployment; h) being a parent; and i) challenges in post-democratic South Africa. As a way of progressing, the role of enacted negotiation was identified as important based on the stories of the participants in this research. In this process, the research participants narrated how they had negotiated the difficulties (stumbling blocks) presented to them in their career paths, and how they had used different resources around them to move forward. Some of these resources included family, friends, teachers and community members.

1.7 THESIS STRUCTURE

The thesis consists of six chapters.

Chapter 1 introduces the background of the study. It states the problems that this thesis will address. This includes the journey from traditional methods of studying careers to the "new" careers agenda (Chudzikowski, 2012:298). The role of education, particularly distance learning, as a vehicle for career development in relation to the previously disadvantaged is also presented with a focus on the South African setting.

Chapter 2 presents a literature review of the previous research relevant to the current study. This includes a critique of the empirical work done internationally and in South Africa within the careers literature stream. The chapter concludes by arguing for a qualitative investigation of career development especially in a South African context.

Chapter 3 presents the methods of inquiry used for this research. This chapter begins with a section dedicated to a justification of the background of the research setting. The rest of the chapter explores the ontological and epistemological considerations, the data collection strategy, the research procedure, and the procedure for recording and analysing the data; the ethical considerations conclude the chapter.

Chapter 4 reports on the main finding of enacted negotiation based on the participant stories and narratives. In showing the role of enacted negotiation, the chapter first explores how a sense of a career emerges based on the findings of previously disadvantaged

individuals. The chapter then presents the various stumbling blocks affecting individual career development and the extent of their influence. Finally, the ways individuals work around these stumbling blocks through enacted negotiation is presented.

Chapter 5 consists of a discussion of the main findings of this research. The chapter also details how the research question posed in preceding chapters was answered. The discussion of the main findings is presented in relation to the extant literature presented in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6 details the contribution of this research and its limitations. An agenda for future research is proposed. A Career Development Activity/Constraints/Context Framework (CDaCCF) based on the findings from this research is presented in this chapter. The chapter also draws attention to the theoretical, methodological and practical contributions of the research. The chapter also outlines some limitations present in this study and sets a future research agenda.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and analyses the academic literature concerning career development. Its aim is to investigate the nature of career development as it has been characterised by empirical work and theories. The review asks two questions. First, what has been learnt over the years within the careers literature stream? This is important in identifying the key debates and theories shaping thought within this literature stream. Second, what is still to be known within the careers literature stream? This is useful not just in charting a way in the next phase of career research, but also in identifying a niche for this study. Through summary and synthesis of the empirical literature and theories, these two questions are addressed in the present chapter. From this the research question and objectives for this research are derived.

2.2 CATEGORISATION OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORIES AND MODELS

Specific attention is now given to some salient career theories and models that have shaped thought within the literature. The notion of salient theories is emphasised because space limitations do not permit coverage of the broad range of career theories that exist. Stead and Watson (2006:13) warned of a possible "dilemma" when attempting to

collate all the theories together in determining "what to review". A possible categorisation of which theories and models to review is proposed (Taveira, 1997, 2001). This categorisation is based on the content of the various career theories. These categories include:

a) **Career development as expressed in normative career theories through the life stage approach in enacting career choice.**

b) **Career development as part of career decision-making considering the process of making decisions by identifying and evaluating options through information.**

c) **Career development as a type of information-seeking behaviour. Taveira and Moreno (2003:190) highlight the goal here to be of investigating notions around a career as a "problem-solving behaviour".**

d) **Career development as a lifespan process. The consideration here is to account for "complex" processes that affect the individual and that are not fully accounted for in the previous theories (Taveira and Moreno, 2003:190).**

This categorisation is not used as the absolute and only acceptable template in framing the broad range of career theories. It does, however, serve as a useful starting point amidst the

complexity of representing the many career theories. Some career theories and models will not be covered in this chapter, though their arguments are acknowledged. Amongst these is the Work Adjustment Theory (Dawis, England, Lofquist, 1964; Dawis, Lofquist and Weiss, 1968), a theory detailing how individuals remain and adjust to their time in a work environment. This theory was omitted as it may be specific to individuals within a work environment given its emphasis on job tenure, job performance and work adjustment (Stead and Watson, 2006). Furthermore, extending this theory to cover those individuals not working but seemingly engaged in career behaviour may be difficult. A number of theories specific to career counselling are omitted. These include the Comprehensive Counselling Model (Crites, 1981); Eight Stage Process of Career Counselling Model (Yost and Corbishley, 1987); and the Career Counselling Model (Isaacson and Brown, 2000). These theories provide explanations specific to the career counselling context and have been reviewed extensively in previous work (eg Subich and Simonson, 2001). These theories and models were not within the scope of this review as these theories and models focused specifically on career counselling. Only theories specific to the career decision-making processes as reflected in the research question receive attention in this chapter. Career theories are now presented, including empirical work that hinges on these theories. This section, in reference to Stead and Watson (2006:13), seeks to "provide parameters within which we can understand and hypothesise about career behaviour and choice".

2.3 CAREER DEVELOPMENT: NORMATIVE CAREER THEORIES

2.3.1 Donald Super's Career Development Theory

One of the most notable career development theories stems from the contribution by Donald Super (eg Super, 1957; 1963a; 1963b; 1990). Super's work has been so influential that it has extended from the realm of empirical research into career counselling practice. Super assumed that career development was age dependent and that the nature of career development experienced by an individual was determined by where they were in their life course (Super, 1990). Super believed that individuals develop in a predictable stage-by-stage format, in response to their choices or commitment to work or a goal. Furthermore, Super believed that individuals achieve this well when they have a crystallised self-concept (Super, 1984). This crystallised self-concept was thought to be enabled through individual abilities, interests, personality traits and values in the making of career choices. Super further argued that the ability to make career choices changed over time (Super, 1957), eventually leading to vocational maturity, a flexible concept viewed in relation to the past, present and future of a person's life (Super, 1957; 1990).

Some questionable assumptions emerge from Super's work. For instance, Super believed that individuals assume a number of individual life roles as expressed in his Life Career Rainbow concept (Super, 1980). These roles varied from being a child, student, leisure seeker, citizen, worker, spouse, homemaker, parent and pensioner. The belief here was

that individuals assume these roles in a progressive, systematic and linear fashion. Empirical work exists to question this progressive systematic and linear view. Bosch et al (2012), using a sample of black dual-earner couples in South Africa, found a conflation of roles in their sample. The findings from this empirical work, though hingeing on Super's assumptions, question the idea of a systematic and linear progression in life roles.

Given that Super's work has mostly relied on the use of the survey-based approach, some questions can also be raised concerning this aspect of his work. Stead and Watson (2006) mentions that instruments used in these surveys were developed in Western countries, chiefly the US. These authors add that, when adopted in countries outside the US, these instruments may not adequately capture the specific needs of those community groups. Others, like Barret and Tinsely (1977), add that Super's concepts appear simple to describe on paper and yet are difficult to measure in reality. In addition to these concerns, findings hingeing on Super's work appear to be inconclusive. For instance, O'Hara and Tiedeman (1959) used a quantitative approach hingeing on Super's crystallised self-concept amongst their sample of 9th-grade to 12th-grade learners in the US. These learners (aged 14 to 18), according to Super's theory, are at the exploratory stage of their lives. The study found these learners to have a future orientation and planning focus on career development that allowed them to make career choices with ease. However, using the same sample group in South Africa, Stead and Watson (1998) found their sample was more concerned with developmental schooling activities and seemed to lack a future orientation and planning focus.

A possible source for the variation in findings could be cultural differences. The US

and South Africa are two different contexts, each compounded by unique challenges. These differences could have a bearing on the nature of career development as a process that happens in context. However, the instrument used in both studies hinges on Super's crystallised self-concept. This concept may have more significance in the US than in South Africa. Others (eg Paa and McWhirter, 2000) add to the debate by questioning the findings of O'Hara and Tiedeman's study. Their concern was that, at the ages of 14 to 18, individuals are more concerned with attaining post-high-school certification and pursuing extra-curricular activities. This may be a possible reason for the inconclusive findings.

A further shortcoming of Super's work as viewed by Brown (1990) is how it fails to integrate aspects of the individual life as a cohesive unit but rather fragments it. Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) cite the neglect of economic and social factors as well their influence on the individual life in early career development research. With this is the failure to capture and account for the dynamic interaction between the person and their environment (Vondracek, Lerner and Schulenberg, 1983). Super later conceded this lack of integration in his theory as a concern in his work (Super, 1990). Finally, Arthur (2008) argued that, in present-day economies, tenets from Super's work may not be supported. These are economies that are not stable (Baruch, 2006), where individuals appear to have multiple identities (Ibarra, 2003) that in some cases are not unified (Hall and associates, 1996) with demanding commitments (Cohen, 2003) through a variety of obligations (Burke, Greenglass and Schwarzer, 1996; Wiley, 1987). An evaluative comment is given that lifestyles in present-day economies may not support the prescriptive, linear notion of a career assumed by Super (Savickas et al, 2009), and the

theory has been argued (eg Hackett and Watkins, 1995) to just serve the purpose of identifying differences amongst individuals.

Emerging empirical work (eg Bright, Pryor, Chan and Rijanto, 2009; Gerber, Tschopp, Brueschweiler, Grote and Staffelbach, 2009; Henneberger and Sousa-Poza, 2007; Hirshi and Vondracek, 2009) appears not to support career development as viewed by Super but instead suggests a process that is unpredictable, dynamic and unstable. The present chapter applauds the contribution through the work of Super to the careers literature. However, as argued by Stead and Watson (1998), there is a need to extend understanding of career development beyond Super's assumptions. Also required are alternative viewpoints that address the shortcomings of Super's work as highlighted in this chapter. There appear to be two ways of getting to these alternatives: first, a consideration of viewpoints that incorporate Super's work, and, second, a total move away from Super's work.

One notable viewpoint that incorporates perspectives of Super's lifespan is in the work of Gottfredson (1981; 1996; 2005). This contribution is believed (Hesketh, Durant and Pryor, 1990) to be an attempt to integrate theories of career choice (eg Holland, 1985) and those concerned with lifespan career development (eg Super, 1980). Gottfredson argued that through circumscription individuals eliminate inappropriate career choices based on the criteria of gender, prestige and interests. On the other hand, Gottfredson also referred to compromise as playing a role when individuals abandon their initial occupational choices for those they deem as less desirable but

achievable. Compromise has been argued by Blanchard and Lichtenberg (2003:251) to be a way of dealing with issues that "inhibit" achievement, the making of occupational choice and attainment of occupational goals. Put differently, Gottfredson's (1981; 1996; 2005) contribution to career development highlights how individuals eliminate alternatives not possible to them (conscription), and compromise is when individuals give up on alternatives they like for those most accessible to them. These vocational experiences are believed to have a lasting impact on future educational and occupational choices (Hartung, Porfeli and Vondracek, 2008; Magnuson and Starr, 2000; Porfeli, Hartung and Vondracek, 2008). Also, some empirical evidence exists to show adults citing their childhood experience as influential in their occupational choice (Trice and McClellan, 1994). Whereas the contribution of Gottfredson is a viewpoint that incorporates Super's work of lifespan development, the next section presents alternatives that move away from Super's work.

2.4 CAREER DEVELOPMENT AS PART OF CAREER DECISION-MAKING

Career Decision-Making (CDM) makes the assumption that individuals have choice available to them and a basis by which decisions are made (Stead and Watson, 2006). The role of organised information is viewed as critical within CDM (Jepsen and Dilley, 1974), and is considered even if it may not support the preferred choice (Janis and Mann, 1977). One of the most influential contributions in this regard is the work of Frank Parsons. He developed a comprehensive process through a model of self-knowledge, world of work knowledge and true reasoning (Parsons, 1909). This work by Parsons has

underpinned the body of thought in the careers literature in theories and models (McMahon & Watson, 2012). This has led to a number of career development measures being developed and used relying on the ideas of CDM and the work of Parsons, eg The CDM (Harrington and O'Shea, 2000) use Holland's domains of personality, ie Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional occupational themes (RIASEC) (Holland, 1997), The Vocational Exploration and Insight Kit (VEIK) (Holland, Gottfredson and Power, 1980; Weinrach and Srebalus, 1990), The Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI) (Holland, 1987) and The Career Attitudes and Strategies Inventory (CASI) (Holland, 1996; Holland and Gottfredson, 1994). The aim with these inventories is based on the idea that career development can be seen as following an occupational hierarchy and that a match can be achieved between the individual and career choice by considering individual traits (Höpfl and Atkinson, 2000; Savickas, 1995). The next section presents one such theory through the contribution of John Holland.

2.4.1 Trait and Factor Theories

The main idea underlying trait and factor theories of career development is summarised by Stead and Watson (2006:144) as follows: attaining knowledge and information about oneself with specific focus on the world of work enables one to make informed career decisions. With this in mind, the RIASEC framework (Holland, 1985; 1997) is believed to be able to achieve a match between an individual and their optimal career choice. Huang and Pearce (2013:316) give the example of individuals with strengths in

the realistic, investigative and enterprising areas as being best equipped for careers in engineering where "practical, hands-on, problem-solving and project management" skills are required. The thinking here is that career decision-making can be an interplay between the individual and their traits, the aim being to achieve a match between interest and career choice, subsequently informing the career decisions made based on this match. Empirical support exists for the RIASEC framework and other related frameworks based on John Holland's work on individual career decision-making (eg Betz, Borgen and Harmon, 2006; Hansen and Dik, 2005; Huang and Pearce, 2013; McKay and Tokar, 2012; Oleski and Subich, 1996). As a result, Woods and Hampson (2010) argue for the RIASEC framework as a popular inventory.

The work of Holland has been tested in various contexts yielding inconclusive findings. Yang, Stokes and Hui (2005) evaluated Holland's ideas as not supported amongst their Chinese sample. The researchers suggested that the version of inventories used needs to be specific to the Chinese context, as values in China and the US differ. A study by Flores, Robitschek, Celebi, Andersen and Hoang (2010) found an excellent fit using Holland's domains of personality (RIASEC) (Holland, 1997) and propositions of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent, Brown and Hackett, 1994; 2000) in their Mexican-American samples. The excellent fit could be due to the notion that the greater the similarity between a foreign culture and the US culture, the greater the likelihood of support of Holland's theory (Farh, Leong and Law, 1998). Given the proximity and similar cultures of the US and Mexico, this may be reason for the excellent fit in the research by Flores and her colleagues. These two studies point to how measures used in Holland's theories are influenced by culture, and this may be a notable

shortcoming not just with the model but with instruments accompanying it. However, given these concerns, Holland's work is still popular in career guidance interviews (Bimrose, 2010) and career assessment (Zunker, 2002).

Aspects of contextual specificity have been noted as significant within careers research and allowing for variation with regards to findings (Creed, Patton and Watson, 2002; Patton, Creed and Watson, 2003). With regards to trait and factor theories, Ghiselli (1966) questioned the use of tests rooted in such theories in occupational training programmes. The reliability of the items in the measures was raised as a concern, as well as issues regarding the cross-cultural applicability of such measures in non-Western countries (eg Nsamenang and Dawes, 1998; Stead, 1996; Stead and Watson, 2006). Holland (1987) also highlighted problems pertaining to research design in relation to the use of trait and factor theories. This included the use of homemade variables as opposed to established variables from theory, and the use of weak techniques in estimating congruency. Another issue of concern is around predictive accuracy. Herr and Cramer (1992) also questioned whether traits and factors can be accurate predictors of individual careers. In addition to traits and factors, there are other important influencers of careers, although these were omitted in this study. These additional influencers can include individual background, including the nuances of socio-economic factors. It is in the quest for objectivity and measurement that a linear cause/effect outcome often results from the match in trait and factor theory, such that Stead and Watson (2006) argue that there is a neglect of other important factors and processes. This often results in trait and factor theories giving an over-simplified view of a career.

Finally, issues of a Western focus raise concerns with the applicability of Western theories

in contexts such as South Africa. Western societies have been framed as industrialised where there is an assumption of a coherent individual lifestyle (Wijers and Meijers, 1996), one that is undivided (Meijers, 1998). Others like Savickas (2000) argue that ideas based on trait and factor approaches have served 20th-century organisations well but raise concerns as they rely on stable occupations and predictable career paths. Crompton and Harris (1998) add that modern societies are characterised by broken employment patterns and part-time employment in the life of the individual. It can be assumed that, given structural inequality, achieving a successful match between traits and careers to be difficult. Du Toit and de Bruin (2002) argue that the main reason for the popularity of measures based on trait and factor theories has to do with a lack of competing indigenous models and theories. The next section considers career development through the lens of learning and information-seeking behaviour.

2.5 CAREER DEVELOPMENT AS PART OF LEARNING AND INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

Career development can also be viewed as part of "learned behaviour" (Inkson, 2007:83) and the reliance on information (Taveira and Moreno, 2003). A number of theories hinge on this view, with the social learning theory (Bandura, 1997) being most influential. A discussion of this follows next.

2.5.1 Social Learning Theory of Careers

The social learning theory of careers (Krumboltz, 1988, 1994; Krumboltz, Mitchell and Jones, 1976) is a prominent perspective. The thinking here is that individual choice of occupation results from interaction amongst individual self-beliefs, outcome expectations and goals sets. Through positive or negative reinforcement, occupational aspirations are believed to be realised (Krumboltz, 1994 Krumboltz and Worthington, 1999). Stead and Watson (2006:22–23) summarise the thinking behind the social learning theory of careers as part of four factors by which career choices comes about:

a) Genetic endowment and special abilities – Krumboltz (1988, 1994) was of the view that individuals are born with special abilities and qualities that extend into learning activities and subsequently into individual career choice.

b) Environmental conditions and events – Krumboltz (1988, 1994) believed that the skills developed by an individual through their environment have a bearing on their career preferences.

c) Learning experiences – Krumboltz (1988, 1994) identified learning experiences as being instrumental or associative in nature. The former relies on the individual's reaction to events around them, the reaction of others or seeing results of actions. Through reinforcement, these experiences provide learning experiences and a

basis on which decisions are made. The latter (associative learning) emphasises how individuals learn to have either a positive or negative opinion of paired events or situations around them.

d) Task approach skills – Krumboltz (1988, 1994) believed that individuals develop a certain skill set known as task approach skills that are later used when making career decisions. These skills range from problem-solving skills to emotional and cognitive development skills. These skills change over time as the individual progresses in life.

The relevance of social learning theory in relation to the careers context has been demonstrated empirically and theoretically (eg Bandura, 1977; Noe, 2002; Wexley and Latham, 1991) through activities such as observation, up-skilling, re-skilling, feedback from academic activity, formal/informal learning and imitating role models. Through such activities, individuals learn about a career as well as gain an understanding of how career development works (Krumboltz, 1979; Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1999). Gibson and Mitchell (2003) add that such activities also help the individual prepare for the world of work and the accompanying roles. In this, the individual has a way of understanding where they have come from through what they are doing and what they are becoming (Gibson, 2004). Janis and Mann (1977) view individuals as learning by making small or incremental decisions in preparation for the world of work. This process of making decisions is often referred to as the "art of muddling through" (Stead and Watson, 2006:97) and represents a basis on which

career decisions are made based on learning from an experience.

Like any theory, the social learning theory has some shortcomings. First, the theory is overly focused on the career choice process and neglects the role of adjustment to this process (Osipow and Fitzgerald, 1996). Others (eg Hackett, Lent and Greenhaus, 1991) raise a concern with the adaptation of the theory into a career theory. The concern here is how the new theory fails to validate itself through further research (Stead and Watson, 2006). The SCCT (Lent, Brown and Hackett, 1994) would build upon the social learning theory of Krumboltz (1979). The focus here is on the role of self-regulatory and motivational processes and how they reinforce behaviour in addition to social learning.

Again, as with Super's theory, the argument for context resurfaces even with social learning theory. The majority of inventories used with/based on these theories have their origin in a Western context, usually the US. For instance, a popular inventory based on the social learning theory of careers is the Career Beliefs Inventory (CBI) (Krumboltz, 1991; 1992; 1994). The CBI is an inventory that identifies career beliefs and assumptions that block clients in their career construction. Given that career beliefs and assumptions may vary owing to contextual and societal differences, the CBI may not be suitable in contexts outside the US. Even when adapted in contexts such as South Africa, as previous empirical work has done (Schultheiss and Stead, 2004; Stead and Watson, 1993), concerns about cross-cultural applicability have been raised as a shortcoming of these instruments and inventories (Stead and Watson, 2006). A possible avenue of inquiry here could be to use methods that allow for expression rather than

impose values on individuals.

The social learning theory view of career development appears to neglect the role of chance events and their impact on social learning. There has been acknowledgement (eg Patton and McMahon, 2006) that events of chance, luck and happenstance, though important in individual career development, have been given less attention in the careers literature. This has led to the Chaos Theory of Careers (CTC) (Bright and Pryor, 2007; Pryor and Bright, 2003a; 2003b). This may extend understanding of careers away from/to include the social learning theory by arguing for a career to be seen as a complex system, capable of self-organising but at the same time open to unpredictable change (Pryor and Bright, 2007). This may help account for factors not accounted for in seminal career theories, such as happenstance, uncertainty, serendipity, chance and synchronicity (Pryor and Bright, 2003; 2007).

Others (eg Gleick, 1987) have argued that chaos is difficult to predict, particularly within a careers setting (Peake and McDowall, 2012). Another viewpoint also linked with proponents of social learning theory is planned happenstance theory – one that accounts for events of chance and happenstance as offering opportunity for individual learning (Mitchell, Levin and Krumboltz, 1999). Blustein (1999) has commented on the role of events of chance as encouraging individuals to be open-minded, tolerant to ambiguity and willing to develop an exploratory attitude. The theory of planned happenstance may be similar to Gelatt's (1989) concept of positive uncertainty. The thinking here as argued by Gelatt is that, owing to the contemporary environment, a great deal of flexibility is

needed in dealing with the complexity coming with this environment. Flexibility in this regard emerges as an important skill in dealing with complexity. In dealing with events of chance and happenstance, Williams, Soeprapto, Like, Touradji, Hess and Hill (1998) view some people as being challenged to greater effort towards an action and developing a sense of motivation. In this, the individual uses the event of chance or happenstance in a positive way, though it be negative. Krumboltz (1994) views individuals as interpreting events differently. Mitchell et al (1999:118) hypothesise five skills that help individuals to recognise, create and capitalise on chance or unplanned events. These include:

Curiosity: exploring new learning opportunities

Persistence: exerting effort despite setbacks

Flexibility: dealing effectively with changing attitudes and circumstances

Optimism: viewing new opportunities as possible and attainable

Risk taking: taking action in the face of uncertain outcome

The five skills identified by Mitchell and colleagues could be thought of as responses to events of chance, luck and happenstance. These not only afford an opportunity for learning but a direction for individual career development. Other career theories have paid specific attention to the specific needs of individual groups. For instance, career development amongst young people is accounted for and emphasis given to social context and decision-making as important influencing factors, including the

interaction between the individual and stakeholders (Hodkinson, Sparkes and Hodkinson, 1996). It appears the interaction amongst factors provides an avenue through which individuals not only learn but make career choice. In this theory, emphasis is given to three factors:

Pragmatic rationalism – career decision-making is not rational or irrational but constrained or enabled by "horizons for action" – the thinking here is that what is available affects what we perceive to be possible and what we perceive to be possible and what we perceive to be desirable can alter the available options (Hodkinson et al, 1996:3).

Social interaction – this consists of the factors that affect the process of deciding through negotiations, bargaining and struggle. The interaction of these factors links with the preceding idea of pragmatic rationalism.

Progression over time – this consists of periods referred in the theory as "turning points" (Hodkinson et al, 1996:142). These "turning points" refer to 1) unexpected external events; 2) those events built into the structure of life; and 3) those initiated by young people. Other theories pay attention to the challenges affecting women, Brown (1990) noting that within the careers literature women are often neglected. This places focus on the next set of career theories that pay attention to the specific needs of individuals during their lifespan.

2.6 CAREER DEVELOPMENT AS A LIFESPAN PROCESS

The lifespan view of career development is seen as a response to the developmental normative view of career development (Super, 1953, 1990). The developmental view of career development and its notion of career development as being linear, organic and/or mechanistic (McMahon and Patton, 2006) is viewed as an "outdated concept" (McMahon, Patton and Tatham, 2003:3). The lifespan process of career development views the process of career development as a cycle and recycle through varying tasks and stages affecting the individual (Super, 1990). Career development as a lifespan process takes into consideration how individuals draw meaning from their careers, negotiating changes in their lives and the process of self-management in response to these changes (Savickas, 2006). The focus in the lifespan view is on the individual as an active agent (McMahon and Patton, 2006b; Reid, 2006; Savickas, 2011b, 2011c) in relation to complexity around their career development (Herr, Cramer and Niles, 2004; Patton and McMahon, 1999). The present section presents three theories that take into consideration some of these views. First, a theory specific to the career development of women and minority groups is presented. Second, a systems theory view of career development is set out. Finally, career as a construction completes this section.

2.6.1 The Career Development of Women and Minority Groups

The Ecological Model of Career Development (Cook, Heppner and O'Brien, 2002) considers the career development of women and minority groups in their lifespan.

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Indeed, said model represents a move away from mostly using privileged white middle-class males from the US in theorising. This theory attempts to understand the career development of minority groups, especially women. The Ecological Model of Career Development emerged because of questions regarding certain assumptions made relating to seminal career theories. The assumptions may be problematic, particularly for minority groups and women. The assumptions are as follows:

- That work is central to people's lives.

- That work is the primary place where identities are developed.

- That work is the primary means of meeting one's needs.

- That paid work role can and should be isolated from other major life roles such as family roles.

- That career counselling should be separated from personal or lifestyle counselling.

- That career achievement is accomplished independently; in other words, achievement is completely in the control of the individual and based solely on ability and initiative.

- That discourses around structure of opportunity characterise occupational choices as made freely without barriers, limitations or stereotypes.

- That career development is progressive, rational and linear (Cook et al, 2002).Issues faced by minority groups and women appear to differ from those faced by men. Women occupy multiple roles different to those of men. These roles concern home and family duties (Davey, 1998; Eccles, 1987). These roles may also imply complexities with regard to the career development of women (Phillips and Imhoff, 1997). As a result, women experiencing such complexity seek a state of balance between their professional

and personal life (O'Neil and Bilimoria, 2005). The accompanying activity of managing such roles may nullify the assumptions made by seminal career theories, namely that a career is linear, progressive and rational.

In the South African workplace there is a noted increase in the number of women and minority groups (Bosma and Levie, 2009; Omar and Davidson, 2001). There is also acknowledgement that to create a "healthy workplace" that manages the diversity and personal development of these groups attention must be given to their experiences (The South African Board for People Practices Women's Report, 2012:2). The career experiences of such groups can also help in their personal development within organisations. However, given the scant attention paid to women and minority groups as argued earlier, assumptions held in seminal career theories may not be applicable for such sample groups in South Africa. A raft of literature is available that highlights challenges faced by women in South Africa. These challenges can be grouped as those found in society and those found in organisations. Rigid patriarchal attitudes remain widely entrenched in society (Wolpe, 2006), thus leading to gender stereotyping of roles (Booysen, 1999; Munetsi, 1999), usually favouring boys over girls. These societal challenges also encroach on the organisational setting.

In organisations, the glass ceiling effect is recognised as stopping the advancement of women in their careers (Mathur-Helm, 2006). Previously disadvantaged women in South Africa have been found to lack political connections within organisations, as a result affecting their career advancement (Ramashamole, 2010). In the judiciary, the existence of

"exclusive clubs" has impeded white and black women from practising and leaving to join multinational companies (*The Sunday Times*, 2013:1). The overall commentary appears to concede that the current competition for jobs in South Africa is unfair for blacks, all women and people living with disabilities (Msimang, 2001).

Within SET sectors a gender imbalance was found to exist not favouring women owing to the barriers of entry in these sectors (Moletsane and Reddy, 2008). Nkomo and Ngambi (2009) found limited educational attainment, balancing multiple roles and subtle discrimination as affecting women in management and leadership positions in general. Others (eg Naidoo, 1997) attribute the lack of upward mobility for women to be rooted in cultural and social barriers. This may be in part due to the sexist society in which women live (Bernstein, 1985), a situation that has led to the suggestion that women face triple challenges on the basis of their gender, race and class (Ngoako, 1999; Pretorius, 2010). This often results in women being marginalised in the economy (Nkomo and Ngambi, 2009). Figure 1 presents a summary of the challenges faced by women in South African organisations and society.
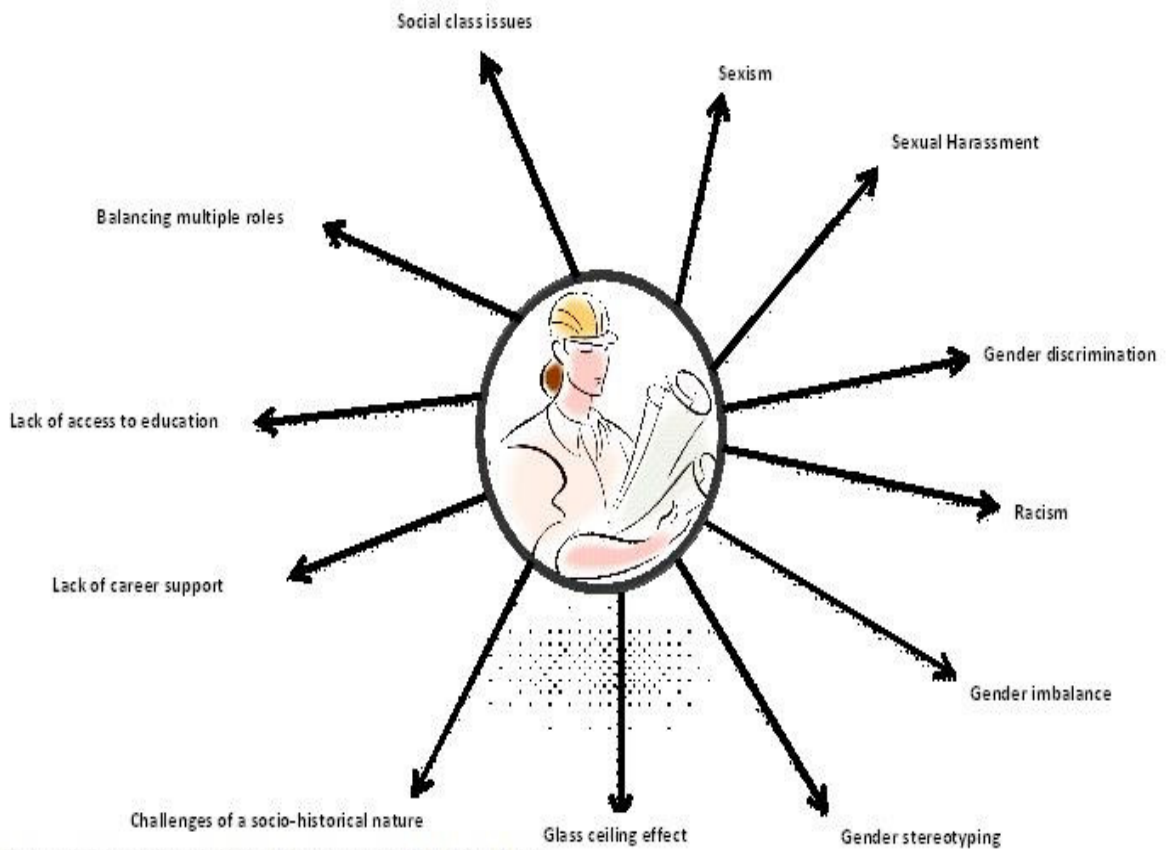
Figure 1: Challenges affecting women in South Africa

The identified challenges facing women (figure 1) through changes in the world of work, as well as organisational and societal values, impact the meaning and experience of career development (Pretorius and Morgan, 2010). Given such complexity, ideas of career development as a stable, linear and fixed process may not be supported. It can be assumed here that, given the complexity surrounding women and minority groups in South Africa, this does away with ideas of a career being stable, linear and fixed. The support here is for a dynamic and complex process to career development (Savickas, 2005), with the consideration for complexity magnified in the next framework.

Though the focus of this thesis is not on gender (as argued for in the ecological model), some insight can be gained from the work published to date in this field extending to the focus on previously disadvantage people. First, the challenges affecting women and minority groups in South Africa (like those affecting previously disadvantaged individuals) have been attributed to the historical apartheid legacy (Finnemore and Cunningham, 1995). This legacy acts as a present-day constraint to the advancement of such population groups. Porter (2011) argued that these constraints shaped not just present life situations but also future life chances. The role of such constraints stemming from the social context has been expressed in the theory of occupational allocation (Roberts, 1984, 1993, 1995, 2000). In South Africa constraints appear to emerge from issues around gender (Cook and Simbayi, 1998; Geldenhuys and de Lange, 2007; Gerber, 2000; Stead and Watson, 1994; Watson and Stead, 1990; Watson et al, 2003) and socioeconomic standing (Geldenhuys and de Lange, 2007) and its impact on the process of career development. These issues act as structural constraints that context exerts on career development (Roberts, 1984, 1993, 1995, 2000). Second, the plight of women (like that of previously disadvantaged individuals) is at the centre of social and economic transformation in South Africa (Mahlomaholo, 2010) through various activities, eg government initiatives and bursaries (Madikizela and Haupt, 2009); organisational policy (Mathur-Helm, 2005); promotion opportunities (Prescott and Bogg, 2011); and access to education (Finnemore and Cunningham, 1995). There is thus noted similarity in the challenges and the ways of dealing with these challenges not just for women but also previously disadvantaged individuals. The next framework is noted for also accounting for the career development of women (Fitzgerald and Harmon, 2001) and considers the role of cultural and structural factors in career development (Stead and Watson, 2006).

2.6.2 The Systems Theory Framework (STF)

Though not a career theory, the STF is constructed to act as an overarching framework covering essential concepts of career development that are addressed in most career theories (Patton and McMahon, 1999). Stead and Watson (2006) view the STF as a comprehensive model that considers the individual lifespan, including factors such as time and possible complexities in individual career development. Figure 2 presents the STF:
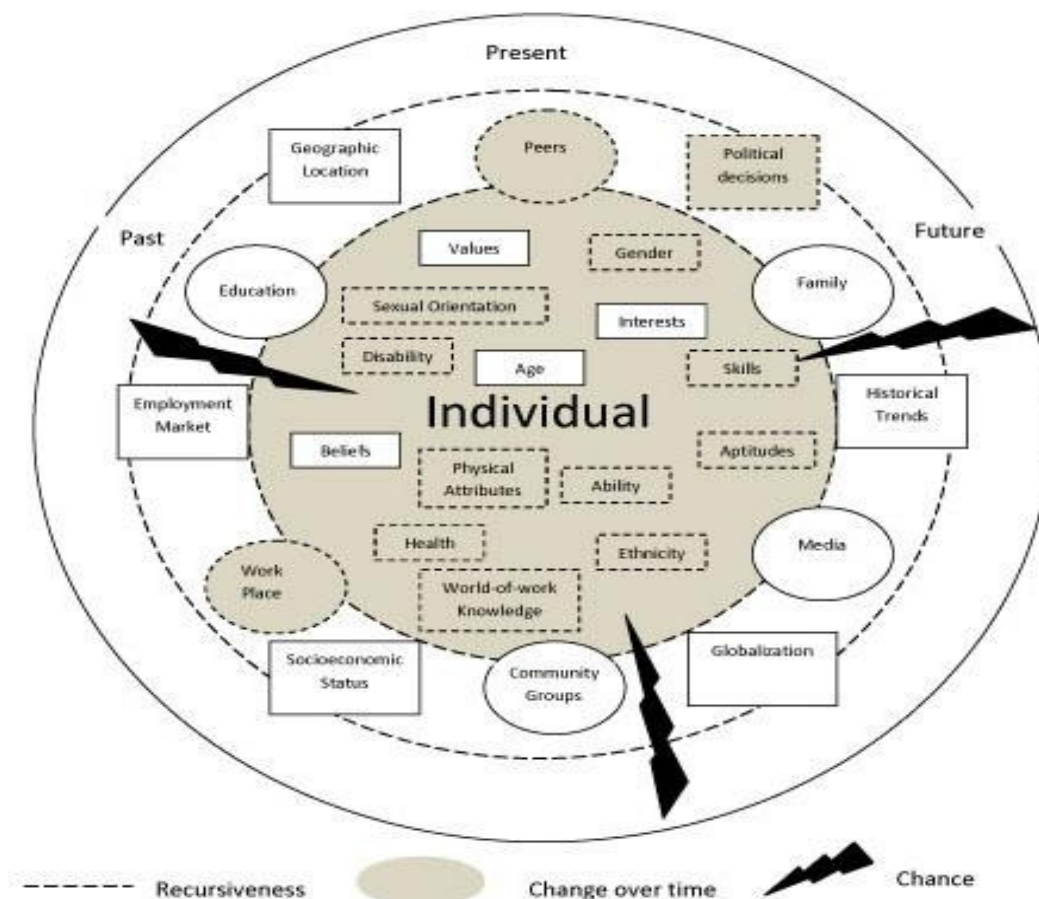
Figure 2: Systems Theory Framework of Careers

The STF highlights how a range of interrelated systems influences careers. These include the intrapersonal system of the individual, and the environmental/societal system (Patton and McMahon, 1999:10). The STF also reinforces these sub-systems and how they affect an individual at different points in their life as well as how they exert recursiveness on the entire system (Patton and McMahon, 1999:10). The final element of the STF accounts for the role of events of chance that can occur and influence career development. There is similarity between the STF and the ecological model of women's career development. First, both models emphasise the influence of roles and responsibilities as key in career development. The STF outlines this as happening with contexts such as family, individual spaces, the workplace and the community. Second, both models emphasise the role of relational and collective factors in individual career development. Emphasis is on the influence of the complexity of such factors on individual career development.

The STF attributes variables that are individual and specific to influencing career behaviour. There has been acknowledgement and emphasis on the inseparability of career behaviour and the influence of personal issues specific to the individual (eg Betz and Corning, 1993; Cochran, 1997; Krumboltz, 1993). Seminal career theories have primarily focused on the influence of specific discrete concepts for the individual as influencing career behaviour (Patton and McMahon, 2006). The STF also ascribes the influence of the role of the social system to career behaviour, a notion that is also consistent with theorising that highlights inseparability of psychological development from the context (social, historical, political and economic) (eg Cushman, 1995; Martin and Sugarman, 1999; Young, Valach and Collin, 1996). Changes that are occurring in the global competitive business environment, coupled with the increasing demand for

employability in the knowledge economy, have resulted in changes in the workplace and career development (eg Arnold and Cohen, 2008; Baruch, 2004). Bridges (1988) suggested that the notion of secure jobs (including medical benefits, promotions, weekends and holidays) and traditional long-term careers is becoming less common. Indeed, these changes in the business environment may result in individuals pursuing diverse career paths and shifts in organisational loyalties (Baruch, 2004; Marshall and Bonner, 2003; Suutari and Taka, 2004).

The next theory that receives focus is the career construction theory (Savickas, 2005), which, with an emphasis on individual life cycle and inquiry, seeks to explore meaning through individual self-construction (Maree, 2012). Like the STF, the career construction theory draws attention to the shortcoming of previous career theories, advocating a move away from the prescriptive to the process view of careers; from linear causality towards non-linear dynamics; and from scientific facts to use of narrative reality (Savickas et al, 2009). The career construction theory receives attention next.

2.6.3 Career Construction Theory

Proponents of career construction theory (eg Guichard, 2005; Young and Collin, 2004) argue that "the behavioural sciences" of which career development is part "are in a developmental stage" (Isaacson and Brown, 1993:20). Rather than relying on seminal career theories, this body of work suggests that there is an opportunity to study careers as

an emergent phenomenon, a phenomenon that is not separate from the context the individual resides in, as argued in psychological approaches to career theory (Brooks and Forrest, 1994). This brings into focus understanding the subjective experience of career development (Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom, 2005; Heslin, 2005; Ng, Eby, Sorensen and Feldman, 2005). Accordingly, the individual is seen as a career 'constructor', ie one that builds a career from the resources that are around them (Baruch, 2006; Chen, 2006; Maree, 2002), with this construction being viewed as not separate from the individual's context. It is because of this consideration of complexity that career construction theory is receiving attention amongst some authors (eg Bloch, 2004; Bright and Pryor, 2005). Methodologically, it implies a subjective qualitative investigation of careers believed to allow for a more detailed examination of the individual (Mallon and Cohen, 2000). Career construction identifies "vocational choice, adjustment and development" as being a "fluid process" based on generating meaning (Hartung and Taber, 2008:77). Savickas (2002) indicates that there are four elements to this process:

A grouping of work and roles that shape life structure.

Taking cognisance of adaptive coping strategies in dealing with individual issues such as developmental tasks, transitions and change.

The use of narrative stories that show motivational themes of the lived experience.

Paying attention to individual style such as abilities, interests and personality that form a self-concept.

The career construction approach thus argues for a view of individual career development

as a dynamic process (Savickas, 2005). Maree and Beck (2004) view a subjective investigation as fitting in with the understanding of career development as an individual construction, more often than not including the role of emotions, individual feelings, fears, hopes and aspirations in the making of career choices (Baruch, 2006). This has been labelled as the "new" agenda within the careers literature (Chudzikowski, 2012:298), given its move away from seminal theories and its taking into account the role of social and cultural context in framing reality (Stead, 2004).

A career construction approach through qualitative methodology is beginning to gain popularity (McMahon and Watson, 2006; Savickas et al, 2009). The popularity of the career construction theory can also stem from the way it also integrates a number of the career theories in its approach (Savickas, 2005). Some further reasons can be suggested from the literature. First, a career construction approach that relies on qualitative research is believed to allow for a deeper understanding of issues influencing individual career development, although this may not have been adequately captured in seminal career theories. For instance, Broadbridge (2004) examined career development using the career stories of male and female retail managers. The study found that females, when compared to males, construct their career behaviour differently. Added to this, specific challenges to individual career development were identified. The method used here allowed for a deeper investigation into the role of sociocultural factors on individual career development (Reckwitz, 2002). The emphasis in this study (Broadbridge, 2004) was on aspects of self-promotion. The study managed to draw deeply upon the lived experience of the participants and revealed that career development is an emerging process. This view of career development was consistent with the views of Gysbers,

Heppner and Johnson (1998:12), who concluded that a career is "the drama of the ordinary which is unfolding and evolving every day". A qualitative understanding allowed for this focus and a contradiction to the linear view of a career proposed in some career theories.

Second, a qualitative understanding of careers allows for a focus on understanding complex issues surrounding individual career development that may not be captured adequately using quantitative methods. The work of Bimrose, Barnes and Hughes (2008) used a five-year qualitative longitudinal study and evaluated the effectiveness of career guidance in England. The study tracked the career trajectories of participants and showed these to be shifting, reversing and also remaining static over the five-year period. In addition, participants were found to be in movement, eg changing jobs, moving from unemployment to employment and up-skilling or re-skilling. The study provided some insightful findings, particularly with regard to the complexity of individual career development. Such complexities can be viewed as being important to the way careers unfold. The longitudinal qualitative method may have helped in achieving these insights.

Third, a qualitative understanding of careers helps account for the nature of emotions and transitions influencing individual career development. Sinisalo and Komulainen (2008) analysed the career narratives of a woman working as a small-scale entrepreneur. The study showed how coherence in career narratives is created through transitions and experiences of the individual. Indeed, the research challenged the assertion by Briscoe and Hall (2006) that career research must adequately explain the role of career actors so

that they can be made aware of their orientation, opportunities and context. Work by Sinisalo and Komulainen (2008) provided an insight into how this happens. Importantly, the qualitative method allowed for this focus. This was also a response to calls for studies that capture the role of emotions on individual career development (eg Savickas, 2007, 2011c, 2011c). Another study by LaPointe (2010:1) challenged the linear, stable and fixed notion of a career and found career development to be the contrary. The authors used career identity and conceptualised it as "a practice of articulating, performing and negotiating" positions of career experiences. Although LaPointe (2010) used only one story as a basis for empirical illustration, this study was able to show the contribution of culture to the individual and their career development. The study placed importance on a qualitative method with which to understand complex concepts such as culture as argued in previous work (Bimrose, 2008).

Finally, a qualitative understanding of careers is useful in order to understand environmental factors, such as culture, and their influence on careers. McMahon, Watson and Bimrose (2010) showed using individual career stories across the lifespan through interviews with children, adolescents and adults. They emphasised the richness that could be gained from using narratives and stories across various lifespan and the challenge towards individual career development. By using such an approach, the researchers were able to highlight the importance and role of environmental factors in career choice. Furthermore, Bimrose, Barnes, Brown and Hughes (2011) conducted a cross-country comparative study in the United Kingdom (UK) and in Norway. This was done by exploring career adaptability as career behaviour through reflective accounts of

participant experiences. Semi-structured telephone interviews were used as a means of data collection. The findings showed that participants who do not engage in developmental activities (eg up-skilling or re–skilling) run the risk of being "locked into" a way of working (Bimrose et al, 2011:i). These people in turn become vulnerable in a changing context, and hence there is a need for career adaptability. The qualitative longitudinal nature of the study may have been helpful in capturing such complexity.

This section has attempted to bring together some salient theoretical considerations that have informed our understanding of a career and career development. Career theories and models were reviewed and a critique presented. The next section presents and gives a critique of the empirical work carried out in South Africa. This sets the scene for the study reported in this thesis.

2.7 CAREERS EMPIRICAL WORK: A SOUTH AFRICAN CRITIQUE

Table 1 presents an overview by Schreuder and Coetzee (2010:6) of the studies together with the dominant themes within the careers research stream in a South African context between 1950 and 2008. The majority of these studies have focused on discrete aspects of career development rather than a holistic overview of the process, eg career adjustment, role conflict, person–job match, career success and career maturity. In addition, the majority of these studies have relied on the quantitative research approach and also on instruments developed mostly in the US. This section gives a

critique of empirical work within the South African career research stream, considering the samples used, methods incorporated, the instruments and inventories adopted. Based on this critique, the chapter argues for a narrative approach to understanding career development. According to Cohen and Mallon (2001:48–49), a narrative inquiry entails understanding "ways in which individuals make sense of their careers as they unfold through time and space, attending to both the holistic nature of careers as well as to specific career transitions." Narrative inquiry consists of a scheme by which human beings make their experiences meaningful (Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988); one such way can be through the stories they tell (Abbot, 2002). Consistent with the narrative inquiry is the view that life career action is an "ongoing, ever-changing and holistic experience" in the individual's life (Wise and Milward, 2005:401). Stemming from this, narratives based on the stories individuals tell can tap into highlighting the complexities brought forward by micro and macro factors and their influence on individual career development.

Table 1: Overview of South African career research themes (Schreuder and Coetzee, 2010:6).

Time period	Dominant themes
1950–1959	Personality and occupational adjustment
1960–1969	Retirement planning; Vocational guidance; Role conflict (career women)
1970–1979	Career stages
	Occupational choices of women; Career counselling of black people;
	Career mobility of black people and graduates
1980–1989	Career planning and development; Career advancement; Mid-career transition
	Quality of work life; Organisational choice and personality
	Occupational concerns, needs and aspirations of women
	Career orientations leadership styles
	Promotion of black managers
	Black advancement
	Person–job match
	Self-concept (black executives)
	Time orientation, psychological depth orientation and occupational choice
1990–1999	Mentorship and coaching (women)
	Job-hunting skills (graduates)
	Career exploration
	Career self-management

	Career advancement (black people and women) Job insecurity
	Personality and careers
	Career resilience
	Career patterns and career orientations and personality
	Career maturity Career expectations
	Career salience Career adjustment Meaning of work
	Qualifications and career success
	Employability of graduates
	Employee opinions of the psychological contract
	Job loss and outplacement
	Learning styles and occupational choice
2000–2008	Psychological career resources
	Employability
	Career orientations
	Work–home interface
	Work–life balance
	Job insecurity
	Career maturity
	Career success and satisfaction
	Career advancement
	Career development Job loss
	Working women
	Work experiences of gay people
	Personality and career preferences

2.7.1 Sample and Context

Research samples used in empirical work in South Africa have tended to be skewed. The majority of samples have tended to be white males (Hickson and White, 1989; Stead and Watson, 2006). The reason for this was that most of the instruments used were developed for a US audience of white males. Research in South Africa has tended to follow after this as a basis for comparison (Stead and Watson, 2006). This will be elaborated in section 2.7.3. This can be problematic as it neglects the views of other population groups outside of white South African males. Research exists (eg Stead and Watson, 1994) to show differences between population groups in South Africa. For instance, black first-year students were found to be less career mature than their white counterparts. This was attributed to differences in opportunity by race grouping and attributed to South Africa's socio-historical situation stemming from apartheid. Neglecting the views of sample groups other than white males can be prejudicial, especially in South Africa with its rich diversity. There is need to pay attention to these groups as well in expanding the literature base and as a basis for practical interventions. These studies appear to argue for the role of context in career decision-making amongst individuals (McMahon and Patton, 1995). A number of studies in South Africa also attest to the role of context and to using a mixture of student samples in researching careers, notably:

High-school students (eg Arkhurst and Mkhize, 1999; Creed, Patton and Stead, 2002; Cook and Simbayi, 1998; Euvrad, 1996; Hickson and White, 1989; Langley, 1990; Stead and Watson, 1994; Watson, Creed and Patton, 2003; Watson and Stead, 1990, 1993; Watson, Stead and Schonegeval, 1997; Watson and van Aarde, 1986).

Tertiary students (eg Geldenhuys and de Lange, 2007; Jordaan, Smithard and Burger, 2009; Myburgh, 2005; Muofhe and du Toit, 2011; Nicholas, 2002; Sadler and Erasmus, 2005; Watson et al, 1995; Watson, Brand, Stead and Ellis, 2001).

Through the use of these samples, a range of factors related to education has been found to influence individual career development, eg lectures and learning experience (Geldenhuys and de Lange, 2007; Jordaan et al, 2009; McMahon et al, 2005; Myburgh, 2005; Nicholas, 2002; Watson et al, 2003), educational level (Jordaan et al, 2009; McMahon et al, 2005; Stead and Watson, 1994; Watson et al, 2001; Watson and van Aarde, 1986; Watson and Stead, 1990) and further study programmes (Gerber, 2000). An often neglected sample group is that of distance learners, the majority being classified as previously disadvantaged individuals (The South African Department of Education, 2010) and as having career experiences that are "understudied" (Schreuder and Coetzee, 2012:4). This presents an opportunity for this work to investigate the career development of previously disadvantaged individuals.

2.7.2 Methods Adopted

Schreuder and Coetzee (2010) conducted a literature search of empirical work in South Africa within the careers stream. The majority of this empirical investigation incorporated a quantitative approach. This predominant use of this method has also

extended to psychometric testing within a South African setting (Stead and Watson, 2006) and also career assessment and counselling practice in general (Super, Osborne, Walsh, Brown and Niles, 1992).

In South Africa, the use of quantitative methodology and psychometric tests has raised concerns. Stead and Watson (2006) cited these methods and tests as favouring dominant cultural groups in South Africa (eg, the Afrikaans and English-speaking groups). This has the potential to neglect or not accurately represent the career development of groups outside the Afrikaans and English-speaking groups. Interestingly, an often neglected constituency in South Africa includes those who were previously disadvantaged as a result of the apartheid policy, and consists of mostly the black population. These voices also deserve equal attention. Some solutions have been proposed. These solutions do not suggest doing away with psychometric testing, but rather also incorporating qualitative methods in combination. Qualitative assessments emphasise the role of contextual factors and the meaning attached to individual characteristics and environments (Lamprecht, 2002). Using such combinations of methods may aid a better understanding of career development.

Added to these concerns, psychometric tests strive to achieve objectivity and may attempt to frame a career as fixed, linear and stable (Maree and Beck, 2004). As a result, individuals are seen as on a quest for progressive upward steps and responding to hierarchy as a source of authority and responsibility (eg Brousseau, Driver, Eneroth, and Larsson, 1996; Hall and Moss, 1998; Milward and Brewerton, 2000). On the contrary, career development could be a process that does not follow these ideals of being fixed,

linear and stable. Given the rapid social, economic and political change in South Africa, there is need to also consider incorporating other methods in addition to psychometric testing.

2.7.3 Instruments and Inventories

Developed instruments and scales from the US have been used in empirical research in South Africa to inform an understanding of career development (eg Creed et al, 2002; du Toit and de Bruin, 2002; Langley, 1990; Patton et al, 2003; Schultheiss and Stead, 2004; Stead and Chetty, 2002; Watson et al, 2001). These studies have been helpful in identifying factors that influence individual career development. These include:

Influence of Individual Factors: Individual's age (Arkhurst and Mkhize, 1999; McMahon et al, 2005; McMahon and Watson, 2006; Watson and van Aarde, 1986), gender (Cook and Simbayi, 1998; Geldenhuys and de Lange, 2007; Gerber, 2000; Stead and Watson, 1994; Watson and Stead, 1990; Watson et al, 2003), language group (Watson and Stead, 1990), culture (Creed et al,2002; du Toit and de Bruin, 2002; Stead, 2004; Stead and Watson, 1998), self-efficacy (Watson et al, 2001) and socioeconomic status (Geldenhuys and de Lange, 2007; Stead and Watson, 1994, 1998; Watson and Stead, 1990).

Influence of Significant Others: Parents, relatives and teachers (Myburgh, 2005), role

models and friends (Arkhurst and Mkhize, 1999).

These quantitative studies help identify the influence of individual and significant others in the individual career development process. However, there is also a need to go beyond simply identifying factors and seeking to understand how these factors holistically influence career development (Del Corso and Rehfuss, 2011). Added to this, there is need to understand the nature of complexity amongst these factors with regard to individual career development.

Career instruments and inventories, owing to their US bias, have been flagged as not being applicable given cultural issues in South Africa (Stead, Watson, Gallant and Sauls, 2001). Naicker (1994) adds that these instruments and inventories also fail to fully account for environmental and social factors that have a bearing on individual career development. An example to illustrate here is the through the work of Watson, Stead and Schonegeval (1998). A Career Decision-Making System Scale (CDMS) (Harrington and O'Shea, 2000) was used amongst a sample of grade 10 to 12 black adolescents in South Africa. This work was based on the work of Holland's (1985) trait and factor theory. The study found the structure of Holland's Hexagon to be misshapen and not adequately relevant to the lives of the black adolescents. The measure and its items also had a poor fit (Myers, 1962). The items of the scale were not adequate in their ordering of interest measures amongst the grade 12 black students in South Africa. The findings from studies hinging on scales as used in this example may be seen as spurious (Foxcroft, 1997) and due caution needed when making practical interventions for career counselling based on this (Stead and Watson, 1998).

This study argues for consideration of indigenous methods that are familiar with the local people (Kim and Berry, 1993). In other words, methods that are applicable to the local conditions are needed, as no two places are the same (Simpson et al, 2004; Sturges et al, 2008). Put differently, not only is a voice on careers and career development needed in the South African context, but attention should also focus on the means of getting to this voice. This section has perused some of the epistemological challenges revolving around the field of career psychology in South Africa. This research argues for the need of a qualitative approach to study careers in order to meet the challenges presented in this section. This is the subject of discussion in the next section.

2.8 A QUALITATIVE RATIONALE FOR INVESTIGATING CAREERS

The efforts of quantitative empirical work are praised for advancing the careers literature in South Africa. However, reflecting on this, there are certain issues that raise concern. Quantitative studies have helped to answer questions such as "what can I do?" and "what shall I do?" (Botha and Ackerman, 1997:72). Importantly, beyond this are issues of processes and nuances that may not be adequately accounted for in quantitative studies. For instance, to what extent do people go about making sense of a plethora of factors around them and how do these influence the notion of individual career development? This appears to be a plausible question, one that quantitative approaches alone cannot answer. A qualitative study thus has merits for a number of reasons.

First, it can involve samples that would have previously been neglected. In South Africa, this is important, as the field of career psychology has been accused of favouring dominant groups in society, such as the Afrikaans and English- speaking groups (Stead and Watson, 2006). Second, owing to changes in the sociopolitical arena in post-democratic South Africa, the voices of these neglected groups are important given the priority they have received through government policy and initiatives. Third, a qualitative approach could enable a contextual understanding of careers based upon generating subjective data, thus helping in the development of theory from context-specific cases. Finally, a qualitative research agenda could also capture in greater detail cultural, contextual and social nuances that a quantitative approach would not capture well. For example, one such important dynamic regarding careers and career development is the role of emotions, an issue that is a matter of intense subjective investigation in the international literature (eg Gati and Saka, 2001; Germeijs and De Boeck, 2003; Gordon and Meyer, 2002; Morgan and Ness, 2003; Tien, 2005). Finally, a qualitative investigation has the benefit of allowing for the study of complex social phenomena tied to historical and cultural issues that are often neglected as distinct dimensions when they could be related to the individual (Collin, 1997) as an active career constructor (Chen, 2006). Given that such complex phenomena characterise discourse in South Africa, a qualitative method to studying careers and career development would be beneficial. This chapter will now present a review of the empirical studies in South Africa that have investigated careers and career development from a qualitative angle.

2.8.1 Empirical Studies Incorporating Qualitative Design

Attention to qualitative studies of careers has been growing. A number of different methods have been employed; these include: focus groups (Adams, Cahill and Ackerlind, 2005; Liang, Spencer, Brogan and Corral, 2008); semi-structured interview techniques (Fouad, Kantamneni, Smothers, Chen, Fitzpatrick and Terry, 2008); auto-ethnography (Wang, Lo, Xu, Wang and Porfeli, 2007); grounded theory technique (McMahon, Watson and Bimrose, 2012); and narrative inquiry (eg LaPointe, 2010; Reid and West, 2011). In South Africa the use of qualitative methods appears to be emerging (eg Geldenhuys and De Lange, 2007; Maree and Beck, 2004; Maree, Ebersöhn and Molepo, 2006). The use of qualitative methods in South Africa, especially in empowering and giving voice to the career development of previously disadvantaged groups, has been encouraged (Maree et al, 2006). A qualitative inquiry has the potential to magnify issues that are dominant within the South African context. These may include issues of redress (The South African Department of Education, 2010), issues affecting specific population groups, eg previously disadvantaged groups (Hammond, Clayton and Arnold, 2009), and the relationship between individual disadvantage and career development (Geldenhuys and de Lange, 2007). This study put forth an argument for the qualitative design in understanding processes that a quantitative stance may not effectively explore.

The scant attention when it comes to qualitative work on careers in South Africa presents an opportunity. A review of the empirical work done in South Africa seems to suggest

a focus on understanding careers by mostly dwelling on the role of factors specific to the individual. Although identifying factors that influence careers and career development is important (as contributed in quantitative research), the processes around this also deserve attention. This study uniquely considered the arguments put forward in the literature review through the various theories reviewed that point towards the importance of a subjective investigation of career development. This is important in South Africa given the various challenges presented affecting previously disadvantaged individuals. This research argued for a qualitative research design amongst a sample of previously disadvantaged distance learners in South Africa. The research question is set as follows:

"How do the personal narratives and stories of career development processes amongst South African distance learners manifest, and to what extent are the elements of previous disadvantage the source of this?"

Within this research question, mention is made of narratives and stories as research methods. Narrative analysis serves particularly well in this research as a device used to make sense of individual situations (Weick, 1995). Burger and Miller (1999) argue for the use of narratives as a powerful tool to tap into emotional experience, thus gaining an indirect access to experiences specific to the individual that would not be easily captured by other methods. Polkinghorne (1988) adds that, through the stories individuals tell, narrative can be deduced, allowing the opportunity to make sense of individual experience and the events affecting this experience. This gives advantage to narrative analysis, which has the added appeal of being able to accommodate all segments of a population regardless of "age, social class or level of literacy" (Boudens, 2005:1287).

The next chapter deals with the methodology used for this research and expounds on these methods.

2.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a literature review within the careers research stream by considering empirical studies, theories and models of career development. The chapter considered a categorisation of the many career theories along four dimensions: career development as a life-stage process; career development as part of decision making; career development as part learning and information-seeking behaviour; and finally, career development as a lifespan process. Notably, the chapter argued for a qualitative investigation of career development, given the specific challenges relating to previously disadvantaged individuals in South Africa and the noted shortcomings of quantitative research again addressed in this chapter. A research question guiding this thesis was proposed in relation to the literature review presented in this chapter. The next chapter addresses the methodological approach used in this thesis.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH APPROACH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review section of this thesis has identified that the majority of studies (internationally and in South Africa) within the careers literature has tended to take a quantitative survey-based approach (Stead and Watson, 2006). An argument for the qualitative paradigm is made within this thesis, given the backdrop of challenges outlined facing previously disadvantaged individuals in South Africa. The chapter considers how interpretivism may be used to produce an understanding of the lived experience (Creswell, 2009; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). As a result of this, the researcher is an active part in the data-generation process together with the participants to the research (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Silverman, 2006). A method based on narrative analysis is used in this research. This journey will be detailed later in this chapter.

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows. The chapter begins by narrating the journey towards a qualitative interpretive research philosophy. After this the ontological and epistemological concerns regarding this work are presented. The chapter then makes an argument for using narrative analysis as a research method. The data-collection process including data analysis, issues of reflexivity and concerns then follows. Finally, the chapter concludes by outlining the challenges faced in conducting this research and ways of dealing with these.

3.2 JOURNEY TOWARDS A QUALITATIVE INTERPRETIVE PHILOSOPHY

A qualitative investigation was followed in this research by adopting an interpretive research philosophy (Creswell, 2009). There is acknowledgement (eg Hallebone and Priest, 2009; Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2004) that using such an approach allows for understanding of experience and the interpretation of it from the individual viewpoint. This research through the approach adopted in this research allowed the researcher to explore individual interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation, as detailed in the research question. Included in this investigation are aspects of the individual's environment that feature in their career stories, and how they use them to build a sense of a career and individual career development. The focus here is on understanding human experiences from a holistic and in-depth perspective (Vishnevsky and Beanlands, 2004), rather than it being fragmented as often employed in survey-based techniques.

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, a number of different qualitative methods have been employed to study careers; these include: focus groups (Adams, et al, 2005; Liang et al, 2008); semi-structured interview techniques (Fouad et al, 2008); auto-ethnography (Wang et al, 2007); grounded theory technique (McMahon et al, 2012); and narrative inquiry (eg LaPointe, 2010). In this chapter I will detail the chosen research methodology and the reasons for coming to this. There are some of the key developments that help establish the position for a qualitative investigation of careers and career

development. First, there is an increasing awareness of career development as a social construction rather than an objective reality (Cohen and Mallon, 2001). This is a construction that is dynamic rather than static (Savickas, 2005) and a reality that is evolving given historical and cultural contexts (Stead, 2004). This research thus seeks to take this into consideration in its investigation of career development amongst previously disadvantaged distance learners in South Africa.

Second, Sullivan and Arthur (2006) evaluate the careers literature as one mostly dominated by studies from a Western context and adopting mostly a quantitative research paradigm. One such reason could be the reliance on objective measures developed in these countries when studying careers (Dries, Pepermans, Hofmans and Rypens, 2009). However, this focus appears not to capture the complexity around career development, especially in a South African context (De Vos and Soens, 2008). This research presents an alternative approach to the popular methods in investigating career development in the use of qualitative methodology without this inherent bias (Stead and Watson, 2006). Savickas (2011) notes the ramifications of this approach in proposing new solutions to modern career challenges. From this there are implications for career theory (Derr and Briscoe, 2007) and practical organisational interventions (Coetzee and De Villiers, 2010; Lumley, 2010; Coetzee, Bergh and Schreuder, 2010). This study contributes towards this through investigating career development qualitatively.

In addition, South Africa has been/is undergoing a cultural change owing to socio-historical issues (Stead, 2004). In the last chapter it was highlighted that predominantly white male sample groups have received more attention than any other group. This may

prejudice non-white sample groups, especially given the rich diversity in cultures, gender and races in South Africa. There is also a need to be conscious of this diversity and incorporate other sample groups outside the dominant sample groups that have received the most attention. A qualitative approach uniquely helps call attention to the complexity of career development when using such groups. Third, it has been argued (Stead, 2007; Stead and Chetty, 2002; Stead et al, 2001) that the quantitative domination in the careers literature seems to address the interests of mostly a Western and often prosperous subject audience. The research recounted in this thesis offers insight using a sample of previously disadvantaged distance learners in South Africa around how they conceptualise and experience their career development. Crucially, by using unstructured, narrative interviews, the South African respondents were able to choose their own terms and issues of importance, free from the constraints of a Western agenda (Nsamaneng and Dawes, 1998; Stead, 1996; Stead and Watson, 2006).

Previously disadvantaged groups represent an often neglected and "understudied" (Schreuder and Coetzee, 2012:4) constituency. An opportunity thus exists to generate qualitative data in the careers research stream (Lamprecht, 2002) using this important sample group. This is an agenda regarded as forming the "new" careers literature agenda (Chudzikowski, 2012:2) and one where attention is given to individuals often neglected in the literature. The focus here is on understanding diverse and individual explanation or sensemaking of careers rather than testing overarching theories. This will be done using a method that allows individuals space to express themselves away from methods that seem to inscribe values on individual participants (Stead and Watson, 2006). One such qualitative method allowing for this space of expression is the use of narratives

(Riessman, 2008).

Within organisational studies there is an increasing use of narratives as a research method in exploring various aspects of organisational life. A stream of work has used narrative as a tool in studying how identity evolves over time including the sense made out of that experience in organisations (eg Boudes and Laroche, 2009; Cunliffe, 2001, 2002; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Weick, 1993; Wright, Nyberg and Grant, 2012; Ybema, 2010). Others (eg Browning and Boudes, 2005; Currie, Finn and Martin, 2010) used narrative to illustrate the interaction between macro and micro level practices on role transition and work-related emotions. Another stream of work used narrative in studying aspects of culture, leadership, entrepreneurship and strategy in organisations (Fenton and Langley, 2011; Haack, Schoeneborn and Wickert, 2012; Kociatkiewicz and Kostera, 2012; Luhman, 2000). Finally, some work used narrative as a tool to research the impact of time on organisational life and the meaning of work (eg Cunliffe, Luhman and Boje, 2004; Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2000; O'Connor, 2000). This research takes a different approach from these studies in organisations. First, there is no organisation present; the participants in this study are not making sense of organisational life but making sense of their whole lives through narratives. Second, though some insight can be gained from these pieces of organisational research, there are other things to consider outside organisations. An argument is made (Currie et al, 2010:954) that individual construction and sensemaking is "grounded in everyday interactions" and that some of these interactions may be outside the organisational setting and specific to the individual. This provides a platform for understanding how individuals make "sense of events" affecting their lived experience (Gephart, 1991:37) and a source of individual knowledge

(Czarniawska, 2004). This research thus argues for understanding career development not as a shared narrative in organisations but as something that is expressed through individuals' construction of meaning of the lived experience and interaction (Bruner, 1991; Rhodes, 2000).

Within the careers research literature there is also increasing usage of narrative analysis internationally (eg Blustein, Kozan and Kellgren, 2013; Cohen and Duberley, 2013; LaPointe, 2010; Reid and West, 2011) and in South Africa (eg Geldenhuys and De Lange, 2007; Maree and Beck, 2004; Maree et al, 2006). This research makes the argument for the use of narrative to explore how individuals make sense of their lives (Josselson, 1995, 2004, 2006; Mishler, 1986, 1992, 2002; Riessman, 1993, 2002, 2003) and considers the therapeutic motive in using narratives (White and Epston, 1990, 1992). The next section looks more into the nature of narrative inquiry.

3.3 NARRATIVE INQUIRY

The research question stated earlier is as follows:

 "How do the personal narratives and stories of career development processes amongst South African distance learners manifest, and to what extent are the elements of previous disadvantage the source of this?"

This section outlines the rationale for the use of narrative inquiry in this study. Czarniawska (2004) defined a narrative as an account of events and actions in a chronological order. On the other hand, a grouping of these chronological compositions from narratives becomes stories or the individual life story (Riessman, 2008). Thus, narratives appear to serve the purpose of establishing meaning and order in the individual experience. Narratives also reflect people's accounts of their life events (Epston and White, 1992; White and Epston, 1990). This is to say there is a beginning, middle and an end (Bujold, 2004) to these events. The use of a narrative inquiry is seen as allowing for a "practical, comprehensive and holistic approach" (Del Corso and Rehfuss, 2011:338) to understanding individual lives. Focus here is not just on traditional lines of qualitative inquiry but on doing narratives. This appears to make good sense, especially in light of the new careers literature agenda (Chudzikowski, 2012).

Within narrative inquiry, data can be generated through participant stories. Mishler (1995) suggested that through condensing individual stories into coherent accounts the researcher is also constructing a narrative from this. Thus, the researcher is a part of the data construction process based on how they understand individual narratives. This journey will be detailed at great length in the section on reflexivity. Using a narrative inquiry through participant stories has potential advantages in a South African context.

Though quantitative studies have been useful in identifying factors that influence career development, there is also need to understand how these factors holistically influence the career development process as a whole and not in fragments (Vishnevsky and

Beanlands, 2004). This is where a qualitative understanding of careers using narratives can be worthwhile, especially when investigating "personal" and "highly complex" dynamics in career development (Wise and Milward, 2005:401). Second, a narrative inquiry as a qualitative methodology does not impose a view as to the nature of career development, unlike the methods used in seminal theories discussed in Chapter 2. A narrative inquiry allows for meaning to be deduced without making any preconceived assumptions.

Third, narratives provide a key scheme by which human beings make their experiences meaningful (eg Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988). This can serve as a benefit in understanding even the role of past experiences through individual stories and how they relate to the human experience (eg Abbot, 2002; Polkinghorne, 1988). Given a context such as South Africa with a past such as apartheid, a narrative inquiry has the potential in understanding individual lives given this consideration. This is a significant move away from surveys that presuppose influencing factors of individual career development based on a researcher's frames. This has the potential of producing novel insights on issues (Alvarez, 2003). Finally, the use of narrative inquiry in understanding career development seeks to add to a growing body of work using such methods internationally and in South Africa (eg Blustein et al, 2013; Cohen and Duberley, 2013; Geldenhuys and De Lange, 2007; LaPointe, 2010; Maree and Beck, 2004; Maree et al, 2006; Reid and West, 2011). This seems a promising avenue of inquiry with potential methodologically and also from which practical interventions can be suggested. The next section considers the ontological and epistemological concerns regarding this work.

3.4 ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONCERNS

This research views the ontology of the stories that have been told by participants as processes of individual "sensemaking" and a basis for understanding individual "action" (Cohen, Duberley and Mallon, 2004:410). Such an approach is useful in understanding the ways in which individuals make experiences meaningful (eg Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988). It should be noted here that this research is not using narratives and stories to get to the truth of what participants said. Rather, the focus is on using narratives and stories to explore how participants made sense of their careers and the developmental processes around this. The epistemological assumptions behind this research are outlined next.

Epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge that is generated about the world (Hansen, 2004). The dominant strand within the careers literature has been to opt for positivist epistemology relying on quantitative studies. This is also common in the South African scenario as well (eg Bosch et al, 2009; Coetzee, Bergh and Schreuder, 2010; Ferreira, Basson and Coetzee, 2010; Gerber, 2000; Muofhe and du Toit, 2011; Patton et al, 2003). Savickas (1995) commented on this as resulting in individuals being seen to advance or develop skills as they move on in an occupational hierarchy. An assumption here is of careers being linear (Hacket and Watkins, 1995). There is merit in certain instances of this in developing an understanding of careers. However, this research argued for narrative as a social construction for two reasons.

First, there is increasing acknowledgement of the influence of social and cultural factors on individual career development (Stead and Watson, 2006). Interestingly, these factors are often neglected or not captured fully using a positivist epistemology (Stead and Young, 2007). Given the extent of influence in South Africa of these factors, narrative as social construction is argued for ahead of a positivist epistemology. Second, there is also an acknowledgement that a strict reliance on the test of hypothesis and quantitative methods is not sufficient to explore the richness and complexity in the individual experience (Blustein et al, 2005). Understanding narratives as social construction serves as an opportunity to gain the deeper understanding of this richness and complexity (Gergen, 1999). In addition, Blustein et al (2005) argue that an opportunity is presented to the researcher with their participants to join in the construction of meaning. This is a notable move away from the traditional scientist role to a collaborative relationship of understanding individual experience (Chartrand et al, 1995). The epistemological consideration here is therefore not objective but subjective, interpretative reliance on the sensemaking of narratives to understand and elucidate participant stories.

Narrative inquiry was selected over other qualitative methods mentioned in the last chapter owing to the strength it offers as a research method. First, there is consideration given here to the value of oral tradition already existing within an African and especially a South African context (Stead and Watson, 2006). Given this, the assumption here is that participants would be familiar with the use of stories, thus making the data-collection process manageable. Second, focus groups were not used in this research; the objectives of this research were focused on the individual experience of meaning as a unit of analysis not group thinking in the career-development process. Third, written narratives

manifest in already published books, short stories, plays and television programmes; however, these were not used. This was due to the difficulty in access to this material which is not well developed with a focus on previously disadvantaged groups and individuals in South Africa. Fourth, unstructured interviews were preferred over semi-structured interviews. Stead and Watson (2006:86) argue that semi-structured interviews tend to imply a "search for specific course of events". The focus of this research was to not impose any predetermined structure in understanding career development; semi-structured interviews would assume this predetermination. Finally, grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) could have been used, but as argued by Seaman (1995) this is a time-consuming research method requiring a great deal of skill, especially in the analysis process. These five reasons are the rationale as to why narratives were picked over other qualitative methods mentioned in the last chapter. The next section presents the description and choice of research participants.

3.5 DESCRIPTION AND CHOICE OF PARTICIPANTS

A total of 40 participants were recruited to take part in the study. All participants to the study had to be enrolled as distance learners with UNISA and at the start of the interview participants had to produce a valid UNISA student card. The rationale for using only registered students was motivated by two factors. First, there is growing acknowledgement of the role of distance learning in informing policies of redress (eg Council for Higher Education, 2004; The South African Department of Education, 1997, 2005, 2010). Given this acknowledgement, I felt the need to work with students who are

currently enrolled as distance learners as the acknowledged role is usually based on research on current students. Second, given the time constraints in completing this project, using currently enrolled UNISA made it easy with regards to access as all interviews were at a central place accessible to these registered students. Other potential participants besides UNISA students could have been used, eg UNISA staff members. However, these were not used in the main study but in the pilot study conducted in 2010. The purpose of using these staff members was for fact-finding and seeking to understand the UNISA model of learning.

Whilst in the field, notes were kept in a research diary. A new entry was usually made at the start of each day outlining the plans and any reflections that may have taken place. In addition to this, notes were made in the diary after each interview. The keeping of these notes in the research diary enabled for a deeper degree of reflexivity, this given my role in the construction of meaning together with the research participants. In 2010 I wrote some notes whilst interviewing a UNISA staff member, Mbuli:

Diary Entry: 12 June 2010

Interview with Mbuli (Career Officer)

"We (UNISA) are a receiving ground for all sorts of students.......those that have failed their matric, those that have failed to get into or cope in full-time universities, the poor, previously disadvantaged and those working and studying. The distance learning context offers great potential to understand career development issues. Maybe from this we can have theories specific to the real issues affecting our students. "

This meeting with Mbuli pointed out some concerns that may exist within the distance-learning educational delivery. Mbuli had worked for over 10 years in a career advisory role with UNISA and appeared to be aware of some specific issues pertinent to previously disadvantaged distance learners. In a way I interpreted the outcome of meeting Mbuli as pointing to the need of this study for also informing career counselling practice. Though staff members like Mbuli would have been good potential participants to the study, the scope of this work was focused only on the student as the end-consumer. Other potential participants who could have been used would have been UNISA graduates. However, given the time constraints, it would have been difficult to access such a pool of participants, as most of them would be working. Thus, the scope of this work was on using currently enrolled distance learners.

Figure 3 gives a description of the initial 40 participants recruited to be part of this study. It also illustrates those participants included and excluded in the study. These participants came from a wide array of areas of specialisation and varying levels of study. Added to this, most of the participants were Xhosa speaking. There was no deliberate attempt to make sure that most of the participants were Xhosa speaking. However, this was probably because the region in which the study was conducted was a predominantly Xhosa-speaking region.

3.5.1 Exclusion of Interviews in the Analysis Stage

From the initial 40 participants, the interview material from 35 participants was used for the analysis stage of the research as shown in figure 3. The reasons for excluding 5

participants to the research are given next and form a reflection from the field notes entered in the research diary. It should be noted that excluding participant data in the analysis stage is acknowledged as common when working with qualitative research (eg Charmaz, 2006; Crouch and McKenzie, 2006; Morse, 2000; Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003). Here I reflect on three broad reasons why five participants' data was excluded and not quoted in the analysis stage. Some of the excluded interviews were difficult in conducting and in some cases ended abruptly with participants pulling out voluntarily. A case in point was that of Andre. The interview with Andre was recorded in my research diary:

Diary Entry: 8 July 2011

Interview with Andre

Andre is really the one that got away. After interviewing Andre for over 30 minutes. His phone began to ring and he kept rejecting the call. After a few minutes it would ring again. He stated he did not like answering calls from unknown numbers. I just smiled and continued with the interview. Given that it was now distracting I asked him to take the call and we could continue after that. Upon answering the call, Andre was told that his brother had just been stabbed in one of the coloured townships (Korsten). Everything just changed thereafter as Andre's attention had shifted. I informed him of his rights and that I could destroy any interview material. Andre refused and gave permission I use whatever data I had collected but he had to leave……he left the interview room

Upon analysing Andre's interview, it appeared there was some information missing from this story that only Andre could provide and finish. Thus, the interview data, though offering insights, was also incomplete. This interview data was not used in the analysis. However, given Andre gave permission to use the interview, I would like to write an article on the importance of complete stories when working with narrative work. Another difficult interview with missing data was that of Thando. The reflection from this interview was recorded in my research diary:

Other difficult interviews were with three participants (Buntu, Lunathi and Mzimkhulu). These participants were all in the first year of study, and at the time of the interview were enrolled in the UNISA Access Programme. This is an alternative route to getting university admission for students who have failed to get high school exemption. This programme ran for 6 months to 1 year. This route guarantees students admission into university programmes pending satisfactory progress and completion of assignments set by UNISA. A common feature amongst these three participants was the lack of detail in their stories. This was coupled by communication challenges. One such experience was recorded in my research diary after interviewing Buntu:

"I met Buntu earlier in the wek and he preferred that the interview be on a Sunday This was strange as no other participanmt at least to this point had agreed to meet on a Sunday. The reason soon emerged. Buntu attends tutorials on a Sunday at the Unisa campus. As we began the interview I could sense that Buntu was finding it difficult to communicate in English. At times he gave back one word answers. In the end he gave up."

Another interesting similarity could be observed between Buntu, Lunathi and Mzimkhulu. All three were clad in khaki clothing with a cap during their interviews. This was to show they had undergone the Xhosa passage of manhood called "umgidi". This cultural practice entailed being circumcised in the bush and undergoing various teachings and cultural rituals. Umgidi usually lasted between 2 and 3 weeks. Upon return from this ritual it was mandatory for the men to wear khakis signalling their passing through this ritual. At the time of the interviews these three participants had just come back from "umgidi" as evident from their clothing.

Having undergone this practice, it may have influenced their attitude towards me as a researcher who is an outsider to the Xhosa culture. Though the participants agreed to take part in the study, I felt that they may also have felt an intrusion by me through the questions I was asking. Perhaps my foreignness and inability to converse fluently in Xhosa exposed me to this treatment from my participants. The answers from these participants were short and usually accompanied by "andi qondi", meaning "I don't understand."

Given that the interview was a social construction between myself and the interviewees, my being a Zimbabwean might have caused problems with this particular group of men. These men appear to be wrestling with the concept of being a man as opposed to being a boy. Perhaps they wanted to assert this role of a man over a foreigner like me. This highlights the importance of the researcher being part of the data generation process deliberately or not deliberately. This may be a notable shortcoming of the narrative method.

Five interviews (Andre, Thando, Buntu, Lunathi and Mzimkhulu) were deemed not well-formed stories (Labov, 1972, 1982). These interviews had some important components missing from them that might have added richness to them. In some interviews, there was no resolution to issues that were raised by participants. Either these participants did not finish the interview (as with Andre) or simply did not want to answer the question. Added to this, some interviews had missing components about the time, place and situation. The absence of these components made these stories incomplete. To use these interviews would have been speculative and not an accurate portrayal of the response from the participants.

A total of 35 interviews subsequently formed the basis for analysis (as shown in figure 3), with 20 being female and 15 male. It was not deliberate that the majority of participants were female; thus this is a notable shortcoming of this research with specific regards to issues of sampling. The idea from the outset was to achieve a variety of participants in terms of gender, age and ethnicity. However, owing to time constraints in conducting research, a sample most accessible was deemed usable. The allocated time for the data collection was 3 to 4 months (between June and September 2011). It soon emerged that this was a bad time with regard to the academic calendar. UNISA students take their examinations between May and June. They then take academic recess all of June and come back for a new semester in July. Data collection was thus difficult in these circumstances. Participants were recruited based on their availability and accessibility. It so happened that most of the recruited participants happened to be female. There is an acknowledgement here that most previously disadvantaged distance learners in South Africa and at UNISA happen to be female (The South African Department of Education, 2010).

Participation in the research was voluntary. Participants were approached randomly at the UNISA campus and informed verbally about the study and the nature of their participation. Whilst emphasising this, rights of participants were stressed. This included the right to withdraw at any point in the interview. Subsequently, this meant any data collected would be destroyed in the presence of the participant. Participants were also informed of the right to anonymity and also that pseudonyms would be used just for the purpose of reporting the data. Added to this, apart from the data being presented in a thesis, it would also be used when writing for academic journals.

3.6 INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND RESEARCH TIME FRAME

To solicit participant stories, unstructured interviews were used. These helped to allow participants to share freely their situation from their own point of view (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006). Through unstructured interviews it was also deemed possible to assess how individuals make meaning of their lived experience (Walter, 2006). Participants could open up memories, reflect on experiences, elaborate on ideas and clarify responses during the course of the interview (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). The technique of using unstructured interviews allowed participants to generate stories rather than give brief answers or general statements (Riessman, 2008) and avoided reducing the interview to a discrete exchange of questions and answers (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). This type of interview must be viewed as a social encounter, a conversation between myself as a researcher and the interviewee (Gubrium and Holsten, 2009; Riessman, 2008). This is around a specific issue of career development and one in which the goal is to understand this experience.

The interview strategy used was one that aimed for a non-confrontational approach. In this, participants were free to express themselves in any way they wanted. All interviews began with a similar question asked with the aim of putting participants at ease. This question was: "Could you please tell me what you are studying and at what level?" Thereafter, open-ended questions were asked seeking to understand the individual career experience. Participants through probing were asked to recall events and stories around this experience. The aim here was to put participants at ease with the hope of generating rich, detailed accounts.

A briefing session before each interview allowed for participants to receive any useful information about the research, ie research rights and expectations. Upon agreeing to be part of the study, participants were directed to a dedicated office. All the participants were recruited from the UNISA campus and, upon agreeing to be part of the study, were directed to a dedicated office allowing for privacy. Upon agreeing to be part of the study, participants were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix A). Following the interview, a debriefing form was given to each participant who took part (see Appendix B). The length of the interviews varied from 40 minutes to 1½ hours. Interviews with participants excluded because of stories not being well-formed were shorter and ranged from 15 minutes to 30 minutes. Participant interviews were audiotaped, typed and transcribed verbatim. Transcription of interviews was done within 24 hours of them being conducted. The interviews were typed in MS Word whilst replaying audio recordings. The interviews were then exported into QSR NVivo 9, a data analysis and management software package (Caldeira and Ward, 2003). This software was useful for the data analysis phase. With regards to the time frame for data collection, the entire process took 3 months. Appendix I outlines this.

3.7 RESEARCH SETTING

3.7.1 Choice and Description of Interview Site

Initially, the idea was to recruit participants for the study from the UNISA headquarters in Pretoria or Johannesburg. However, during the pilot study I was robbed in Pretoria, an experience I wrote about in my research diary:

Diary Entry: 4 June 2010

Event: Robbed in Pretoria

Just got robbed. I guess this is the dangerous side of doing research. I had to part away with money in my wallet or risk being stabbed or even killed. Thankfully, he (robber) did not bother to search my bag. This is so traumatising. Pretoria and Johannesburg scare me. My problem was not with the data collection but if only I could collect data without the fear of being hurt or death.

Given this unfortunate experience, I chose the Eastern Cape and Port Elizabeth as a research site, being motivated by concerns for personal safety and security. I was also familiar with this area, unlike Pretoria or Johannesburg, having studied there for five years. The process of negotiating access was, however, a difficult one. Correspondence was first entered into with the Regional Manager of UNISA in the Eastern Cape, Mr Motale Nkgoang, to whom I explained the nature of the study. After agreeing to take part in the research (see Appendix C), the next step was to obtain ethics approval from the

host institution, UNISA. This was approved (see Appendix D) after 4 months. The difficulty here was that the UNISA Ethics Committee has a set time when it meets, and so I had to wait till the next seating. Whilst waiting for this, I applied for ethics approval from The Open University Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee (see Appendix E). This was approved. Upon arriving in Port Elizabeth, I had a meeting with Mrs Sharon Abrahams, who is the Student Advisor at the UNISA campus in Port Elizabeth. The meeting served as a basic introduction and an opportunity to explain the nature of the study. Since Mrs Abrahams had received beforehand all the important documentation (permission letters and also letters confirming ethics approval), she suggested the first week be used to get acquainted with how things operate on campus. After this week of orientation, I was ready to start the data collection.

The office used to interview participants was located on the UNISA campus. Whilst I was in the UK, UNISA staff contacted me to inform me that an office was to be reserved for my use for the purpose of data collection. I requested that the office contain a table and two chairs and be free from any disruptions, especially noise. This was because the UNISA campus served as a hub for students to meet other students and faculty members, making privacy a priority. A placard was placed on the door to read "Do not disturb" when an interview was in progress and "available" when the office was free. All this was done to ensure a smooth interview process. Given the issues of privacy, it may have put participants at ease during the data collection process.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis technique used was based on previous work done using narratives in understanding human experience (McCormack, 2000; Rhodes, 2000). This followed three levels of meaning-making.

First, the content of each interview was briefly summarised, and then a longer narrative about each participant was composed. The purpose here was to help develop a good understanding of the career development experience. This was done by rereading each interview and listening to audio recordings. McCormack (2000:221) advised that each narrative be scanned for "markers" of stories, namely orientation, abstract, what happened, evaluation and coda (Labov, 1972; Labov and Waletzky, 1967). The basic goal of this stage was to enter into the emotion and details as defined by the storyteller. This type of interrogation was viewed as allowing for a key question to be answered about each interview: "What kind of story is this?" (Thornhill, Clare and May, 2004:188). Table 2 gives a summative explanation and evaluation of this means of structural analysis used in this research.

Table 2: Summative Explanation of Labov's Structural Analysis

Element	Explanation
Abstract	How does the participant story begin?
Orientation	Who/what does it involve, and when/where?
Complicating Action	Then what happened?
Resolution	What finally happened?
Evaluation	So what?
Coda	What does it all mean?

Using the structure outlined in table 2 allowed for the identification of key episodes or turning points in narratives (Denzin, 1989). This structure as used previously (eg LaPointe, 2010; Löyttyniemi, 2001) also helped reveal significant parts of text that may warrant further investigation. This method also allowed not just for the identification of key events but also the plot behind the individual story (Fisher, 1987), including complexities in individual life as a way of sensemaking (Maree and Beck, 2004). This analytical frame helps sort large amounts of data that are gathered in narrative interviews.

Some concerns have been raised with this means of structuring narratives (eg Gale, 2007). This means of organising narratives seems to narrow down human experience to six elements in a linear and logical fashion. Perhaps a similar concern can be flagged with using quantitative surveys in the careers research (Stead and Watson, 2006). These

concerns are noted. However, given the volume of data collected (which included over 230 pages of transcript data) and considering the constraints of time, Labov's structural analysis helped identify key patterns within individual narrative. In this regard, the six elements identified by Labov are not findings of this study, but as put by Labov (1982:242) are "frames" to understand the narratives. It is from these "frames" that findings from individual narration can be established. Thus, these "frames" serve as a basis to identify themes that form the core of the findings.

The use of structure in analysing narratives is beneficial given the nature of the data collected. Participants' stories were not confined to one time frame of the individual but consisted of understanding past, present and future experiences. Through this structure and as put by Mishler (1995:95) there is an understanding of the difference between "the order of the told" (ie chronological order) and "the order of the telling" (the ordering of events as represented in narrative). In this, through elements such complicating action and resolution, is provided an understanding of experience as told by the individual in relation to the time aspect. I have used Labov's model of structural analysis to summarise my participant interviews. Based upon this, a basic understanding of each participant's story was compiled.

A second level of meaning-making was also incorporated. This involved identifying the narrative themes that were conveyed by the participant and their career development experience. Preliminary themes from each interview were identified whilst setting out for cross-case comparison. This also entailed a process of coding that was based on classifying responses into meaningful categories (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996). By

identifying common themes and regularities, the aim was to discover how widespread the career development experiences were amongst all of the participants' stories. To achieve this means of analysis, the use of narrative processes as tools with which to enhance and give meaning to a story was considered (McCormack, 2000). A final means of data analysis entailed analysing the content of the gathered narrative accounts and themes (McCormack, 2000). This was done by identifying themes and using quotes based on consistencies across participant stories (Rhodes, 2000).

3.9 REFLEXIVE ISSUES IN MY RESEARCH

Reflexivity has been defined by Nightingale and Cromby (1999:228) as "an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter whilst conducting research". Conversely, Etherington (2000) argues for the importance of reflexivity as an awareness of the personal, social and cultural contexts, as these may well influence the way in which the world is viewed and investigated. In this regard, reflexivity takes stock of the fact that a researcher's background may well have influence over a research study. Thus, the purpose of this section is to declare and identify this influence, whilst also analysing how it may have affected the research. A number of these issues were recorded in my research diary.

3.9.1 Motivation Informing This Research Topic

Personal interests and influences are acknowledged as possible motives when undertaking research projects (Etherington, 2005; Lowe, 2007; Roberts, 2007). For me these appeared to be the most dominant reasons for undertaking research within the careers research stream. The major influence came after I took an undergraduate module called Career Psychology 3 (CP3) under the instruction of Mrs Fayruz Abrahams. The module had a theoretical component that required students to engage with seminal contributions within the careers literature. One such critique was based on the work of Donald Super.

Interestingly, the initial idea for the PhD entailed testing the veracity of Super's Vocational Self-Concept Crystallization (VSC) (Super, 1990). Mrs Fayruz Abrahams had spent a great deal of time giving a critique of the work of Super. Though this was in 2005, almost five years later and presented with an opportunity to study for a PhD, I found myself wanting to continue this ambition set by my instructor. However, the problem was not just in critiquing Super's work alone, but the entire literature including the methods of research within the career stream. This was exposed in the second component of the CP3 module, which entailed students going into deprived schools in South Africa and conducting a career workshop dubbed the CP3 workshop.

It appeared that, upon arriving in these deprived township schools, the students did not understand the language the presenters were speaking. For instance, in using

Super's VSC, not only was this a difficult term to translate into the vernacular, it was a difficult term to explain to the high-school students. This event appeared to reveal the disconnection that may possibly exist between Western theories like that of Super and contexts such as South Africa. Thus, the research question emerged from the process of interrogating literatures and also from the experience of the CP3 workshop and the pilot study. Though given these warning signs, as a researcher I persisted with the idea of testing the VSC through a quantitative study for my PhD. However, another disconnect existed when conducting a pilot study in Pretoria. This trip was an eye-opener, and at the suggestion of one of my supervisors, Dr Caroline Ramsey, I kept a research diary. After collecting data through asking participants to narrate their career experiences, I penned in my diary:

Upon further reflection the problem was also influenced by the perception that a PhD based on qualitative methodology is not acceptable. This view appeared to be reinforced during my formative degree in South Africa. For example, the Industrial Psychology Department to which I belonged emphasised that the best way to do research is by using the quantitative paradigm. The perception here was that qualitative research methodology does not offer the same rigour found in quantitative methods. As a result, as budding research students, we avoided the qualitative paradigm in favour of quantitative research.

Date: June 4 2010

Event: "Eureka – I have found it"

"I got robbed today at Park Station, this was a harrowing experience. In as much as I can see my attacker's face in my head, I also remember the great work done this past week. At first I felt a stranger to my participants, talking about Super, Holland and the other seminal career theorists. My participants just did not relate with these views. However, when I just asked them to narrate experiences, the stories kept coming. Perhaps, my experience and findings during the CP3 module keeps being confirmed, I am the one running away."

This possibly explained the inclination towards using the VSC as it was an already established measure and the perception was that it would make life easier for me. Added to this, the experience of working on my first academic publication (cf Chinyamurindi and Louw, 2010), which was a quantitative piece of work, reinforced the need to continue in this tradition. Upon returning to the UK, I had to submit a probation report. This was arguably the turning point in abandoning the quantitative research tradition instilled in me and venturing out to see what other methods could offer in understanding careers and career development. I also acknowledge that the experience from the CP3 module (which took place long before I had thought to study for a PhD) appeared to confirm my findings from the pilot study. Upon my return I started to rethink the method I was going to use to study careers and career development in a South African context.

3.9.2 Motivation Informing the Research Method

Once again, I drew from personal experience in the selection of methods to use for my PhD. First, I grew up in the Zimbabwean townships not free from their problems. These included youth delinquency, a high teenage pregnancy rate, drug addiction and alcoholism. In most cases, young men grew up with their grandparents, most times a grandmother. To me, this abnormal society became not just acceptable but an environment in which I thrived.

My grandmother grew up in the era when radio was the most popular mode of receiving information. One programme she enjoyed was *Story Time in Africa*, presented by British missionaries for the natives in Malawi. My grandmother would share these stories each

night to my twin brother and me. These stories were not just profound but were told in an interesting and informative way that kept us awake until the early hours of the morning.

When our cousins came to visit, my twin brother and I soon realised that the art of storytelling had been passed from my grandmother to us, her grandchildren. Storytelling appears a common method of sharing information within an African context. I enjoyed reading the works of people like Chinua Achebe, Chenjerai Hove, Lovemore Mbigi and Aaron Chiundura Moyo. These authors remain some of the greatest African storytellers. This is not to claim that storytelling is an inherently African mode of transmitting information; its popularity cannot be ignored especially when reading such work. This may have been one of the reasons for the interest in stories and narratives as a way of understanding career development. In this I admit I am exploring the topic through the lens of a method with which I am also well versed, owing to my upbringing.

Stories appeared to allow me to delve deep into subjective qualities that govern behaviour (Darlington and Scott, 2002). In this regard, this was a notable shortcoming of quantitative methods that I for so long had promoted as being the best way to conduct research. Qualitative research emerges as necessary to enhance an understanding of the varying issues affecting people in society (Dickson-Swift et al, 2006). The aim, apart from understanding how people make sense of their lives from their own perspective (Darlington and Scott, 2002), is really to give voice to people who may not have had a chance to be heard. This was not only revealing for me as a researcher but also difficult as I challenged my stereotypical views of conducting research. Another reason was the great

changes happening within the careers literature globally and in South Africa. As noted by (Chudzikowski, 2012:298), this was a move towards the "new" careers agenda. This paradigm shift in thinking about careers also played a part in the selection of research methods.

3.9.3 Motivation in Using Previously Disadvantaged Individuals

Upon a review of the empirical work done in South Africa, less attention is noted as given to studying the career development of previously disadvantaged individuals (cf Watson, McMahon and Longe, 2011). I think that it was largely due to the politics of the time that these samples did not get attention. Added to this, there existed some inherent assumptions in instruments and surveys used in conducting career research. This appears to be reflected in the disconnection cited earlier and revealed through the CP3 workshop and the pilot study.

However, another motive for the use of previously disadvantaged individuals stems from my political and social justice activism work. From a young age, I studied the works of Steve Biko, Chris Hani, Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, all of whom fought against the oppression stemming from apartheid. Another influential activist was Thabo Mbeki, who coined the ideology of the "African Renaissance". To Mbeki, this serves as an opportunity for Africans to influence the world by having their voices heard. This focus is important particularly for those previously disadvantaged by the policy apartheid. For me as a researcher, previously disadvantaged individuals as a sample appealed to my

personal convictions and activism work as they were a suppressed voice (through no fault of their own). Using such a sample has weighty implications, not just theoretically, but also in a context such as South Africa, where social justice initiatives are being used to redress past imbalances. I see no difference between the apartheid in South Africa and what we went through in Zimbabwe under British colonial rule. Historians in Zimbabwe declare the influence of British colonial rule to still have an impact on the present situation in Zimbabwe (the works of Terence Ranger taught to me in high school detail this). So I also grew up in a situation of disadvantage and knew this so well. My interest in researching previously disadvantaged individuals in South Africa stems from this early upbringing.

3.9.4 Motivation in Using Distance Learners

The distance learning component of the sample comes about owing to three reasons.

First, there is a perception in South Africa that distance learning is not real learning (Pityana, 2009). As a result, most students strive to get into full-time enrolment and shun distance learning. In 2002 I enrolled as a full-time student at the University of Port Elizabeth. In my first year I soon made friends with four black males (all South African), only one of whom stayed on to graduate; the other three dropped out owing to financial reasons and began studying via distance learning. To me distance learning has an attractive, pragmatic lure in that it's more cost effective than full-time study. Second, the

statistics released (The South African Department of Education, 2010) show that most students enrolled in distance learning are from previously disadvantaged groups. For me it appeared interesting to investigate the distance learning context given its importance to the previously disadvantaged cohort. Finally, given that my PhD registration was with The Open University, a distance-learning university like UNISA, negotiating access was not as difficult, owing to the already existing partnerships between the two universities.

3.10 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING THE RESEARCH PROCESS

During the process of conducting the research, I encountered a number of challenges. Some of these were recorded in my diary at the start and end of each day. Some of the challenges were uncontrollable. For instance, on one morning it rained so much in Port Elizabeth that I was stuck indoors the whole day. On this day I wrote in my diary:

Date: 6 August 2011

Event: "Noah's Rain

"the friendly and windy city of Port Elizabeth has become the rainy city. Could it be Noah's rain? It's been raining for over 3 hours now. Regrettably, Vuyo [a research participant] called to cancel our appointment this afternoon as she has no transport. Thankfully, I spent half the day transcribing interviews from earlier interviews."

Other problems stemmed from the interview process. I seemed to have a wide array of

participants. Some were shy and I had to probe them a lot. Others were very vocal, and at times I had to assert control over the interview. This encounter with Vuyo and her story was piercing for me as a researcher. I began to see my life story juxtaposed with hers. We spoke for over an hour about her life experience. I had to hold back my tears when she began to cry. I insisted we stop the interview to let her get her composure back, but she insisted we continue. Dealing with emotions through the eyes of the participants and also personally was a difficult part of the research process. Topics such as death have been documented (eg Lee, 1993; Arber, 2006) as evoking emotional responses not just in the participants but in the researcher as well.

Other problems stem from dealing with personal feelings and emotions, especially when conducting research. These ranged from a sense of euphoria in hearing how individuals triumphed over adversity to melancholy in hearing how participants had to deal with challenges in their lives. Anger was also a common feeling. This was largely directed at the unjust effect of apartheid not just in the past but also in present-day South Africa. Watt (2008) identified the effect of such varying emotions as offering an opportunity to understand more about the research topic. So whilst collecting data I was also learning more about myself.

3.10.1 Dealing with Challenges

Writing provided a way of escape from the challenges encountered during the research process. I bumped into a colleague who was encouraged by the work I was doing, and she

asked me to write an article for a local newspaper. Inspired by one of my participants, Vuyo, I decided to write about her life based upon the experiences she had narrated. Vuyo gave permission for me to write her story for the newspaper. I wrote this article with the hope of encouraging other people in a situation similar to Vuyo's. Interestingly, writing the article provided healing for myself, not just as a researcher, but as the individual conducting this difficult research. Appendix F presents this article as published in *The Herald Newspaper*.

Hearing stories such as Vuyo's and the stories of the other participants to the study resulted in me not just feeling a deep empathy for these people but also being speechless and hurt by their harrowing experience. A popular book I read in South Africa during the research period was called *Country of My Skull*, which detailed challenges faced by individuals when narrating the harrowing experiences from the apartheid ordeal. In this book, Antjie Krog (1985:55) writes, "The arteries of our past bleed their own peculiar rhythm, tone and image." After spending time and hearing the stories of individuals affected by apartheid, she was lost for words. During the research process, I found myself revisiting this great work and even renting the movie. This helped me to come to terms with exactly what I was dealing with, and to a certain extent I felt the PhD was not only going to be emotive but charged with political undertones based on the initial stories from participants. Other mechanisms for coping during the research process included:

Familiarity with the local environment. I stayed in Port Elizabeth for five years, and this helped me move around with ease and comfort, in stark contrast to my experience in

Johannesburg during the pilot study when I was robbed.

My values such as spirituality. In the morning and evening I would engage in prayer and meditation. During weekends I would also get a chance to attend church services. I also started reading the Bible, especially the story of Nehemiah, who was tasked with rebuilding the ruined city of Jerusalem. Nehemiah's journey as narrated in the Bible was one of rebuilding not just a ruined city but also broken people. I likened my research activities and my task of data collection to those of this biblical prophet. From this I drew not just inspiration but also strength and resilience.

Another mechanism for coping with the challenges was pacing my workload, thereby allowing myself time so as not to rush the process of data collection. In a typical week, two interviews were conducted, with transcription starting as soon as the interview ended. Though this extended the data collection process to five months, it resulted in richer data.

Playing sport was a useful outlet for the stress of doing research. I also found morning and evening walks a refreshing way to deal with the challenges before me. Finally, some problems concerned logistics, for instance, getting participants to keep their appointments. The solution to this was to be patient and persistent in making sure interviews did take place despite last-minute cancellations.

3.10.2 Reflexivity in the Interview Process

Some issues are worth mentioning with regard to the interview process. These issues may have had a bearing on the way data was collected for the purpose of the research. For starters, the hosting institution went all out to prepare for my arrival. This included publicising my arrival and sending emails to all students on their mailing list. Though this made my tasks more manageable, it is worth mentioning the potential interest the hosting institution had in the data collection process and the findings of the study, as these may have had a bearing on whether to establish a career counselling office at the site.

With regard to the venue for the interviews, the hosting institution UNISA provided an office in which participants were interviewed at their site. This site was strategic in that it was readily accessible and available for students with queries about their enrolment. Some personal factors may have influenced the recruitment of participants. The way I was dressed may have been a factor. I tried to maintain formal business attire during the research process. This may have helped in being taken seriously in recruiting participants.

Second, as evident from questions asked by participants during the interview process, it was clear that my accent was not a South African accent. I frequently had participants ask me questions about my origins given the way I spoke. This may have been influenced by my international travel, being a Zimbabwean who has stayed in South Africa, Ireland, the UK and Malawi. Perhaps this curiosity regarding my accent was an advantage in recruiting participants and during the research process.

However, my accent may also be a potential turn-off and may also have influenced the research. This is because in certain communities within Port Elizabeth there is a strong aversion towards foreigners. This is acknowledged especially with regard to the xenophobic crimes committed against undocumented Zimbabweans and mostly foreign nationals from East Africa. Perhaps my status as a foreigner deterred potential participants at the recruitment stage and also during the interview process.

During the interview process, it soon emerged that participants were also interested in knowing about me. This may have been due to my showing interest in understanding more about what they had to say (Dickson-Swift et al, 2007). Given this, I felt that it would be unfair of me as a researcher to expect my participants to open up and be honest if I was not also willing to do the same (Dowling, 2006). This was an opportunity for me as the researcher to be humanised in the eyes of my participants and build up rapport in the entire interview process (Bourne, 1998). This lessened the hierarchical nature of the research encounter (Sword, 1999).

Some common questions asked included:

● My age: "How old are you?" This was followed by the question "Are you not too young to be studying for a PhD?"

- My accent: "Which country are you from?"

In some cases it was important to emphasise to participants that there was no right or wrong answer. Some participants would ask me if an answer was correct and needed affirmation of the response. In this case, as a researcher I would inform participants that there was no right or wrong answer, and that I was seeking their experience of the subject matter at hand. In as much as other participants asked questions to the researcher, others did not. Some participants built rapport through identity. Often participants like Rayline identified with my race and would make statements such as "You know as black people, you and I face so many challenges." This racial identity was most common and often referred to by participants as also including me as a researcher. This may have been a way to say to me, "Owing to your race, you should understand and know the situation black people have faced in South Africa."

In this I became both an insider and outsider (Bonner and Tolhurst, 2002) during the data collection process. This may have affected how data was collected, including the responses of participants. Personal factors such as dress and how I presented myself were things I could control and manage as a researcher. However, my identity as a black man was something over which I did not have much influence. Whilst this helped in getting me ahead, factors such as my identity as a foreigner may have resulted in some apprehension in the participants. As suggested by DeLyser (2001), it's a struggle to balance these multiple roles when conducting research. In the process I struggled as I conducted the research. Related to reflexivity is the consideration of ethical issues.

3.11 ETHICAL ISSUES

3.11.1 Informed Consent

Of major importance was the need to protect participants to the study. This was done by getting informed consent from all participants verbally and by later getting them to sign a consent form. Participant confidentiality was reinforced by using pseudonyms when reporting and presenting findings. Added to this, participant anonymity was communicated to all participants and provisions for this made in the consent form.

3.11.2 Research and Participant Roles

Attention was given to issues around researcher and participant roles. Spradley (1979) argues that the clarity of this from the onset of an interview is important. In this regard, I introduced myself as a PhD student based in the UK and working on a research project to understand career development within a South African context. In addition to this, participants were informed of what I expected from them. With regard to this, I explained to the participants my desire to understand their career and life experiences.

Clarifying this role may have had an influence on the data collection process. Introducing myself as a student may have put me on the same level as my participants, as they were also students. However, one attribute that may have elevated my status was being based in

the United Kingdom. Most of the participants interviewed followed up with questions concerning this in particular. In all cases it was not just a favourable response; it led to further queries. I did not want to deny my participants any information connected with my role. Thus, I felt clarifying any questions raised by participants was not just ethical but helpful in building rapport. I reflected on this in my research diary:

Diary Entry: 18 August 2011

Subject: "Hi I am Willie, a PhD student based in the United Kingdom"

I thought it sound and ethical that I also answer questions from my participants. One popular questions was around my current identity: "a PhD student from the United Kingdom". Participants had varying queries:

- "So have you been to a English premier soccer league game?" Sivuyile
- "You must be happy to be in warm South Africa than the United Kingdom" Steven

I answered these questions and queries truthfully. Perhaps this helped me put my participants at ease.

I also clarified to participants my expectations of them. This included answering the questions asked truthfully. Since I relied on stories, I informed participants of the need for them to recall events to the best of their ability. Participants were also informed of their right not to answer any questions. This right was respected as part of my role and promise as a researcher.

3.11.3 Beneficence

Beneficence is defined as an "ethical principle of doing good for others and preventing harm" (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden, 2000:950). Apart from using pseudonyms to protect participants' identities, attention was also given to protecting participants during

the interview process. This entailed adhering to guarantees regarding integrity (Shamoo and Resnik, 2009). In this I aimed to keep my promises and agreements. These ranged from keeping appointments to dealing with participants' problems during the interview. This presented some ethical dilemmas that were not anticipated (Field and Morse, 1992).

For instance, I had not anticipated having some "Kleenex" in the interview room. However, after interviewing a participant who broke down (Rayline), their need was justified. There was an ethical dilemma here, to continue the interview or not. I reflected on this:

Diary Entry: 22 July 2011

Interview with Rayline

...I could sense that Rayline was getting charged up during the interview. Her son had been murdered......who would not be charged up.........[3 minutes later] tears started to trickle down Rayline's face......[a short silence].......I informed Rayline we could stop the interview and I would delete any material collected thus far. She refused and wanted to continue with the interview......her response: "it's been difficult especially now as I look at things, I realised everything I have done is being motivated by the death of my son......it makes sense now..."

In the event that Rayline refused to continue, I was willing to respect her decision. However, I realised that, for participants such as Rayline, being interviewed was a process of catharsis, self-acknowledgement, awareness and healing (Hutchinson, Wilson and Wilson, 1994). Though this points to the benefit of using interviews over surveys, there was a degree of trepidation in me, especially when seeing a participant break down.

3.12 CONCLUSION

The objective of this chapter was to outline the research methodology to be used in this study. This chapter outlined the ontological and epistemological reasons for using the interpretivist paradigm and detailed the attributes of qualitative research that make it the best paradigm for use in this study. The chapter also outlined the research problem and the research objectives that served as a guide to aspects of research philosophy, approach and strategy. Aspects of ethical consideration also received attention as these are essential tenets when conducting research. Finally, this chapter has paved the way for a chapter that shall report on the results of the justified research philosophy, approach and strategy. Prior to this, however, the next chapter gives the findings of this research.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of this research. The chapter first presents the summary of the findings, which is then followed by an in-depth focus on the findings presented in the previously mentioned section. This includes how the individual participants interviewed developed a sense of a career based on their upbringing. Linked to this is a presentation of the stumbling blocks that impede not just the lived experience but also career development. The chapter then concludes with a focus on a process defined as enacted negotiation that individuals used to work around these stumbling blocks.

4.1.1 Summary of Findings

Participant narratives revealed individuals as having or developing a coherent sense of what a career is or which career path to pursue. This coherent sense of a career appears to give individuals hope and a sense of aspiration. The individuals interviewed in this research narrated a life of struggle and challenge as affecting not only their personal lives but also a sense of a career or the journey towards a desired career path. This chapter presents these struggles and challenges and the impact that they had. The turning point as revealed in participant stories seems to be reached through a process referred to as

enacted negotiation. This process appears to be a way individuals deal with struggle and challenges to fulfil desired career aspirations. In discussing the role of enacted negotiation, the chapter details first how the previously disadvantaged individuals who took part in this study developed a sense of what a career is. This helps detail not only the emergence of a career picture but also the processes surrounding this formation. The chapter then presents various individual struggles and challenges that affect this career picture. Finally, using Labov (1972), the chapter characterises how the individuals deal with these struggles by developing the process of "enacted negotiation". Enacted negotiation, though driven by the individual, mediates between the individual and their community. Enacted negotiation emerged as a key component of the career development narratives of the study participants. Through enacted negotiation, educational attainment and skills development are emphasised as important values. Enacted negotiation emphasises how individuals take action as a result of their negotiation with the different values, significant individuals and struggles that surround them. Extracts from the participants' narratives illustrate the way this process works.

4.2 THE EMERGENCE OF A SENSE OF A CAREER

The participant narratives revealed that the previously disadvantaged individuals who took part in the study already had a sense or were developing a sense of career in multiple ways. These included: a) role-play in childhood; b) influence of teachers; c) the feedback from academic performance; d) the influence of career interventions; and e) the role of the media. These activities are indicative of the value of social learning in individuals learning about careers and adult roles. Feedback from such activities either enforced or inhibited interest in that activity and subsequently formed an impression of a career. These channels are illustrated and discussed in more detail next:

4.2.1 Role-play in Childhood

Examining childhood stories revealed the influence of role- play in forming a sense of a career. Through role-play individuals had opportunity to learn more about that particular career. A number of participant experiences were recalled during the interview process. These childhood recollections in some cases though not concrete appeared to show how from an early age an identity of adult life and its roles was formed. Also interesting from this was how from an early age poverty and deprivation could be seen as acknowledgeable impediments in the development of this sense of a career by participants. Xanti provided an example of a childhood role-play and its influence in building a sense of a career. Xanti recalled this experience:

" … growing up I actually wanted to be a judge. When I would watch movies about court systems, it felt as if being a judge was about having power. My uncle was also a judge and I could see he had power. He would tell us how he could put someone in jail and he could take them out. That really fascinated me. My young brother wanted to be a policeman, and so he would arrest them and I would judge them."

This quote by Xanti illustrated the influence of role- play, but referred to his young brother and how together through daily activities they related career paths. Though Xanti mentions the influence of two factors, movies and also his uncle, who happened to be a practising judge, he does not state the exact influence that made him want to be a judge. However, to Xanti a sense of a career appears to emerge as one synonymous with ideas of having the power to put people in jail. What Xanti does next is

to present some challenges that affected this career sense of being a judge.

"Yes, I wanted to be a judge; however the problem came when I passed my higher primary education. My mother suggested I go to a school that emphasised more on the technical. Being a judge would have meant attending an expensive school; technical schools are not that expensive … ."

It appears Xanti's progress towards being a judge is hampered owing to cost considerations, although the sense of a career appears to have already developed. Xanti starts to build a future around the idea of studying at a technical school and abandons his childhood dream of becoming a judge.

Another participant, Vuyo, in her story also presents the emergence of a career through role-play in childhood. In her recollection, Vuyo was honest to admit that:

"I wanted to do a lot of things. I wanted to be a professional singer. It was one of those things from a young age I was good at. From a young age I sang in church, I sang at home, I sang in the bus … I sang everywhere … though people wanted me to be a doctor, I wanted to be a singer."

Vuyo attributes her interest in music to the experience of singing in the many social spaces in which she found herself. Though this role-play from childhood allowed Vuyo opportunity to put her talent into practice, it also shows elements of a vocational aspiration reflected in her statement: "I wanted to be a professional singer." Such experiences from a young age illustrate the emergence of a sense of a career in the life of

an individual. The turning point for Vuyo is reflected in this quote:

"Later in life I wanted to study for a Bachelor of Arts in music. However, I got a bursary to study medicine. But I did not want medicine; I wanted to study music. I guess I did not study music because I had no funds. I abandoned my interest in music and opted to study for a science degree."

Vuyo's career switch appears motivated by her consideration of her disadvantage. This led to her abandoning her love for music and a possible career in music. However, though studying for a science degree, Vuyo appears to have had a plan:

" … my plan was to choose courses that were also related to music whilst studying for the science degree. I thought I would include music courses like theory and practice of music. I thought Rhodes University would allow me to do this. But they said no. They wanted to train me as a scientist instead. It was getting too complicated, as my timetable in the sciences would clash with those in the arts. I was disappointed. However, I have found a channel where I can still use my music, at church."

Music may be perceived as Vuyo's aspiration or fantasy. A possible career in music for Vuyo was honed through putting her singing into practice. Vuyo's story also illustrates a level of uncertainty in terms of which career path she should commit to. This was evident from the fact that she wanted to mix science and music courses together. However, the limiting factor with regards to Vuyo not pursuing music was the consideration of her disadvantage and inability to afford paying for a music degree. This consideration appears to douse her childhood aspiration of music as a career.

Kuda, an accountant, also used the experience from growing up to develop a sense of a career. Kuda described his experience from childhood as motivated by a keen interest in accounting and mathematics:

"It's always been my passion to go into accounting from a young age, and in 1998 I knew accounting was for me. When I was young, I enjoyed and excelled at working with numbers. I could count way ahead some of my peers. When I started accounting in high school, I knew accounting was for me. I also knew from people around that people had problems of a financial nature, and if I can chip in to help someone, that would be great."

From this childhood experience, Kuda ventured into an accounting career. There appears to be a similarity and a difference in the stories of Xanti, Vuyo and Kuda. The similarity in these three stories is this emergence of a sense of a career from a young age. This sense of a career appears to offer these individuals from a young age an opportunity to imagine themselves in adult roles, and also serves as individual motivation. Role-play appears to provide this window of learning for these individuals. The difference in the stories of Xanti, Vuyo and Kuda is in whether this emerging sense of a career from childhood through role-play becomes concrete or malleable. In Kuda's case it was concrete as he pursued his interest in accounting without any change. However, Vuyo and Xanti appear to have a malleable sense of a career. These two individuals eventually ventured into other career prospects away from their childhood career aspirations. Vuyo and Xanti appear to hit some stumbling blocks that make them veer away from their childhood aspirations. These stumbling blocks and their extent of influence will be presented later.

4.2.2 Influence of Teachers

A variation existed in participant stories away from a sense of a career emerging from role-play in childhood. The influence of teachers appears to be not only a platform from which individuals imagined themselves in adult roles but also a channel to learn about careers. Godfrey identifies the influence of a teacher as helping him not only to learn about career opportunities in accounting but also to choose a career in accounting. This is reflected in his comment:

"I knew from a young age that accounting was for me. I grew up in the Transkei and at school I won a lot of accolades as far as subjects with numbers were concerned … a teacher of mine in grade 11 encouraged me to take accounting seriously and consider studying it at university. I heard what she said but did not believe it."

In some stories the influence of teachers came later in life after individuals may have pursued a career path. Saneliswe, studying science, started off with an interest in being a lawyer and studying for a law degree. Saneliswe dropped out whilst studying for a law degree, and inspiration came from visiting some teachers working in a science laboratory at her university:

"My mind was not into the law course. I was also not really serious. I think I kinda knew that this was not for me … I tried to imagine myself wearing my formal attire and sitting behind the desk all day working as a lawyer, and that's not me. I also know from seeing the lecturers in microbiology from UNISA. You see them wearing jeans and just chilled and that's something like me. There are no politics in that and that's something I want. One of the lecturers advised me to try studying science as I clearly did not enjoy law … I made the change based on this

advice."

Saneliswe appears to imagine herself as a scientist away from law. Subsequently, she feeds this imagination by consulting teachers working in science for advice. Such consultation appears to allow her to make a decision: "I then changed to BSc from BCom Law."

Consistent with the previous stories is that of Godfrey, who attributes the sense of a career as developing to the influence of his teacher:

"Mrs Xobile (teacher) was of great help … she invited some of the black accountants and graduates who were doing well to talk with us … that really encouraged me. I also liked the fact that these people were from the Transkei and had gone to Port Elizabeth and some were in Johannesburg. I will not forget those days and I think it really made me want to continue in accounting."

In Godfrey's opinion, the days of learning about careers in accounting in his youth left an indelible mark in his life. This impression is described as one that he "will not forget" and has given him the intention to study and practise as an accountant.

Thembeka also attributed her interest in following a career in the sciences to her teacher:

"My former teacher who taught me matric was very harsh at times, and some of the students did not like him. I realised he was only being like that to help us become serious with our work. Today I actually thank him for what he has done. If he had not been harsh, I might not have studied chemistry."

Odwa also acknowledged his teacher's influence in his developing a love for music and learning about a career in music:

"My music teacher, Mrs Harebottle, is also my role model. I thank God I met her. She has a love for music and for black kids, and she found the talent in me and others who were less fortunate. The other person is a music coach who has taught me to be a goal-getter. One thing I learnt from her is to start your own thing and run with it."

Teachers appeared to occupy a position of influence with regard to how participants learnt of careers. Participants also described the influence of teachers as helpful in how they learnt new tasks, skills and norms. This was subsequently influential in shaping and helping the individual learn about the world of work and careers.

4.2.3 Feedback from Academic Performance

Participants also cited the feedback from academic subjects as a guide as to which career to pursue or not to pursue. This process helped individuals form a sense of a career based on this feedback. Vuyo, introduced earlier, changed from wanting to pursue her childhood choice of music to a BSc General, leading to a career in the sciences. The move to the sciences was not facilitated by just her consideration of disadvantage, but also her academic performance:

"My grade 11 teacher made me love mathematics. She was a woman who could beat you up if you did not perform. I think this helped my performance and made me love the subject. I think

she also had an eye for noticing which students had the potential to pass her subjects very well. Her goal was to produce an A student every year in her subject and she did this through me. Interestingly, I am working as a mathematics tutor in my community now."

In the quote above, Vuyo demonstrates that her picture of a career developed through intrapersonal influences (eg her dislike of mathematics at first changed to a liking of the subject later); social influences (eg her schoolteacher); and the environmental/societal influences (eg the community in which she lives). Added to this, academic performance provided a learning experience upon which Vuyo could base her decision to study for a BSc degree in later life. Feedback from academic performance was used not only as a means to develop a sense of a career, but also a gauge to determine an entry point into a career. This was shown in Taka's story and this quote:

"Ever since the lower grades in school, I've really enjoyed and loved science, and wanted to do one of those careers that involved science subjects. So I realised that chemical engineering can be the best for me. I was struggling with the other subjects, but in chemistry I just flowed. That's why I believe that I can make it."

Other stories like that of Shakira support this idea of developing a sense of a career from the feedback from academic performance. Shakira reported:

"I always enjoyed numbers. I always had a thing for accounting since matric. I had this dream ever since then to become a chartered accountant because of how I was doing. I think it's also because it's challenging and an interest in the economy. I always enjoyed accounting; my performance was also good as shown in my marks. The money was never the focus, though I don't mind the money."

Some stories showed a counter narrative. Instead of using the feedback from academic subjects as an entry to certain careers, other participants used the feedback to shun these careers. An example is cited in the story of Kwezi:

"In high school I wanted to be a chartered accountant, but after studying accounting I realised I could not do this for the rest of my life. My marks were not good. I knew from this that accounting was not for me."

This was also a consistent narrative in Nwabisa's story:

"I have always loved commerce subjects. In high school I used to flunk my science subjects. I loved mathematics and used to pass it well. So for me it was always between business, economics and mathematics. It was always going to be something within commerce."

4.2.4 Career Interventions

Career interventions also provided an opportunity by which individuals developed a sense of a career or even learnt career roles. These consisted of activities and events that individuals participated in and that subsequently influenced their lives and individual career development. Job shadowing was cited by participants as a way to learn more about individual career choice. This type of experience also offered a way of learning about a chosen career and assisting in individual career development. Ruth described her job shadowing experience:

"Since my degree is about banking, I had the privilege to go to see how things are done. I asked lots of questions about how people in banking work. It made me appreciate banking. After studying For this degree, I want to study further and develop myself like the people I met."

In Sivuyile's story, the role of job shadowing is also viewed as important:

"One time I had to go to court just to sit and listen to hear what is happening; this has helped me as an aspiring lawyer. It was very inspiring to see other successful people in court. It motivated me to work hard and to be like these people. I also came in contact with friends who are working as lawyers. However, they end up telling me how difficult it is to work with people. For me, it's actually a challenge. I want to be there for people; I want to work with them and give them advice. I also give my friends legal advice."

Fezeka also took part in a job shadowing activity that provided a useful insight into her career:

"I have done job shadowing through a contact of my brother who runs a psychology practice. Basically, I would work with clients coming into the practice. I would ask them what they happened last time when they came to the home and also ask for any information they need. This experience made me appreciate psychology as a possible career. I also worked in a sales job and learnt about people, like the job shadowing experience. I guess from this I knew I was a people person."

Nandipha's story reflects the power of job shadowing in not only developing a sense of a career but also making concrete decisions leading to that career. Nandipha decided to be a secretary based on this experience. She narrated this experience:

"When I was in high school, I saw a secretary at our school … I loved the way she worked and she worked nicely. Her duties included typing, making copies and taking calls. I told myself that I wanted to do this course and be like her. I did not even talk to her; I just observed her at work.

She was just like me, a Xhosa and a lady; if she can do it, I can do it as well. I also stand proud and tell myself every day that I can do this because I love the job. Later in life I volunteered and worked in a similar role, and here I am today."

4.2.5 The Role of the Media

A sense of a career also developed from consulting various media outlets intentionally or unintentionally. These media outlets appear to provide needed career information by which individuals learn about careers. Whilst growing up, Sisanda was unsure of which career path to follow. She loved numerical subjects: "My mathematics and physics were very good and I wanted to stick to a career where these subjects are at play." One evening whilst at home:

"I was sitting at home one day and then there was a career show on the radio. I remember that day I was busy washing dishes, and they mentioned different careers and I did not pay attention. However, when they mentioned civil engineering, that caught my attention and I listened attentively and that's how I came to follow engineering."

Another participant, Saneliswe, narrated her confusion in childhood when it came to making career decisions. Saneliswe described how she came to have an interest in the forensic sciences:

"Growing up, I was never the kind of person who wanted to be a doctor or a nurse or teacher or a firefighter. In primary school I wanted to be an accountant, but I never thought about this so much. In high school I wanted something to do with microbiology, as this would lead to me

being a forensic scientist. I think I kinda got inspired through watching this forensic science television series. It's something that I know I can be interested in; it's gross but I think I have the stamina for it."

The next section moves away from the development of a sense of a career to identify some stumbling blocks to individual career development.

4.3 STUMBLING BLOCKS TO INDIVIDUAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A common feature in all the participant stories appears to be the role of stumbling blocks that have an impact on not only the personal lives of the individual but also their career development. These stumbling blocks appear to have varying amounts of influence on the individual. Some identified stumbling blocks based on participant stories included: a) circumstances of upbringing; b) poverty; c) failure; d) financial constraints; e) family crisis; f) death; g) dealing with redundancy, retrenchment and unemployment; h) being a parent; and i) challenges in post-democratic South Africa.

These stumbling blocks receive greater attention in the next section in which they are illustrated in relation to a process of overcoming them, referred to as enacted negotiation. The participant stories revealed the stumbling blocks individuals have to contend with in their lived experience. These stumbling blocks either impede individual development or in some cases make individuals change their focus entirely. Given that these stumbling blocks (as mentioned) will be presented later, figure 5 serves as an evaluative summary of stumbling blocks identified by individuals and their selected quotes. A discussion of the impact of these stumbling blocks and the process of enacted negotiation follows.

Figure 5: Summary of Examples of Identified Stumbling Blocks to Individual Development

Death: *"The passing away of my mother was a major event for me…"* **Xanti**

"the death of my child…made me want to study law to get justice…" **Rayline**

Upbringing: *"My upbringing as an orphan was a challenge for me"* **Thembeka**

'I grew up in a society riddled with poverty and this upbringing really limits you." **Jay**

Unemployment: *"I was unemployed for over eight years this was bad"* **Zanele**

"I searched all over for a job and could not find one…10 years without a job is not a joke" **Nozi**

Socio-cultural challenges: *"As a girl-child you have so many pressing demands"* **Ruth**

"No one thinks of you greatly as girl or woman and you need to face such challenges every-where" **Nwabisa**

Balancing various roles:

"I am going to be a dad and this is going to be tough especially while studying" **Taka**

"I have to work and study at the same time this is a challenge for me" **Godfrey**

Financial issues: *"I dropped out of school because of a lack of funds"* **Fezeka**

"I could not study further to university level because of a lack of money" **Sivuyile**

Transition into the new South Africa:

"Though the new South Africa is about opportunity it has some constraints especially for a black person like me" **Bulie**

"..the challenge is really choice especially given I did not have choice during apartheid.." **Bongani**

Failure: *"I failed administration twice and this affected me so much"* **Nandipha**

"failing meant one thing, not progressing, and I felt stuck and not able to move." **Kuda**

4.4 ENACTED NEGOTIATION: EXPLORING PARTICIPANTS' CAREER DEVELOPMENT STORIES

A process of sensemaking appears to emerge in participant's stories to deal with the various stumbling blocks previously identified (figure 5). This comes through a process referred to in this chapter as enacted negotiation. Enacted negotiation is identified in this research as a process by which individuals put into practice a range of possible solutions to work around these stumbling blocks that affect their lives and career development.

Enacted negotiation in this research is also described through participant experience as a process of exchange between the individual and the factors that influence their career development. These factors may be specific to the individual, inherent in the social setting, and may be planned or unplanned events. They emerge as a key focus in the participants' stories. Enacted negotiation appears to show a messy way of working with stumbling blocks whilst maintaining career aspiration and progress. Each of the dimensions of enacted negotiation is explored next. This includes enacted negotiation as an individual process, enacted negotiation in relation to societal and cultural expectations and, finally, enacted negotiation considering personal circumstance and disadvantage.

4.4.1 Enacted Negotiation as an Individual Process

Tendai's story involved her seeking to break a possible deadlock between what her guardians wanted her to pursue as a career path and her aspirations. Tendai had to convince her guardians of why their expectations of a career choice did not align with her as an individual. They wanted her to become a lawyer, but Tendai wanted to be a

social worker:

"I had to convince them (uncle and auntie) by pointing out to them that my character traits and I can't match being a lawyer … this is because I am a bit too soft … I also had to point out my upbringing, growing up as an orphan; I needed to do something I can relate to given this background."

Negotiation through direct confrontation with her uncle and auntie appeared to allow Tendai to break the deadlock. It would be presumptuous to suggest that without this confrontation Tendai would have followed a career in law despite her preference for social work. Enacted negotiation as described by Tendai allowed her to follow a career as a social worker. The presence of enacted negotiation appears liberating in allowing individuals like Tendai to make career decisions in relation to views of other interested stakeholders. Enacted negotiation also arises in another area of Tendai's story. This time it concerned where Tendai was to study. Tendai's uncle and auntie had wanted her to pursue her law degree with the University of Zimbabwe. However, since Tendai had made a justification for wanting to study social work instead of law, the decision to study at this university was not tenable. This was because Tendai still could not make the grades for social work either. Tendai narrated this experience:

"I could not join the University of Zimbabwe (UZ). The UZ wanted something like 15 points for entrance into their law or social work programmes, but with UNISA it's easier as the entrance requirements are not that difficult."

During the second negotiation, Tendai considered her high school grades when determining which institution to study at. Her preference to study at the UZ was linked to studying law, although this was not to be. Distance learning through UNISA appeared a

negotiated settlement to the question of whether to study full time. The reasons for this were twofold. First, the entrance requirements were not as tough as those for full-time study, and in any case Tendai had not scored enough points to study full time.

Ruth's story appeared to mirror that of Tendai. Ruth was staying and studying in Uganda. Whilst in Uganda Ruth wanted to be a medical doctor, something she had dreamed about from a young age. To achieve this dream, Ruth chose Ordinary Level (O Level) and Advanced Level (A Level) subjects to meet the academic requirements for studying to be a medical doctor. Ruth provided a recollection of this:

"Back in Uganda I did science subjects and specialised in physics, chemistry and biology. I also did some mathematics."

However, Ruth was open to the possibility of negotiation after her results came out:

"I did not get the results that I really wanted … I wanted to study medicine, but with my points I could not do this. I was even offered nursing as a substitute."

Ruth refused to accept this negotiated settlement of studying nursing. Her dream was to pursue her first choice, medicine. However, and significantly, Ruth's career plans took a radical shift when something happened to her sister:

"At the time of getting my results, my sister moved to South Africa and I moved with her. I decided to change my course of study and career path to a focus in commerce. My sister agreed to this and brought me to South Africa to study."

Ruth showed initiative and pragmatism in using her sister's move to plan a way out of Uganda. However, the desire to study medicine was still alive in Ruth. The role of Ruth's sister was important in facilitating Ruth's move from Uganda and also changing her career plans. Ruth's sister advised Ruth to consider a university that was cheap and that would fit her pocket. The dilemma here was that studying medicine entailed registering with the big, prestigious universities that would likely be more expensive. In the long run, Ruth's sister was not going to be able to afford for Ruth to attend these big, prestigious universities. Ruth then justified the reason why she abandoned interests in studying medicine and chose commerce as a discipline and a Bachelor in Banking. Commerce was a negotiated settlement away from her first choice, medicine. Related to this was the rationale for distance learning enrolment:

"Distance learning was the best option for me as it fit within my sister's pocket, though I would have preferred enrolling in full-time study."

Negotiation was demonstrated by the way Ruth decided to change her course of study, career plans and mode of study in consideration of her sister's financial circumstances. This consideration of personal circumstance and disadvantage significantly influenced Ruth's career choice. Ruth's and Tendai's stories are similar. Their career choices and modes of study appear to emerge from this process of enacted negotiation.

Growing up in the coastal town of East London, Xanti was unsure of which course to study or which career path to follow. To Xanti, his social setting and upbringing appeared to have relegated him to a particular way of life. This way of life was described

as one of poverty, and this influenced not just Xanti's perception of career development and school, but the perceptions of others in his community. Xanti paints a picture of his background:

"The place I come from is one where school is not so very important. One ends up working at Mercedes-Benz putting handles on cars. The other popular thing is to drive a taxi bus or turn to alcohol and drugs. You can also be a security guard or a cleaner if not working at Mercedes-Benz putting handles on cars."

The culmination of this social reality and its implications for schooling and career choice offered a reflective process to Xanti. This was one where Xanti was unsure of which career choice to follow outside of those that appeared common in his community. This was followed by an evaluative comment from Xanti: "In this case all I knew as a career was fixing cars and working with my hands."

However, the turning point for Xanti came through some useful advice from his mother:

"My mother suggested I go to a school with more of an emphasis on technical subjects. I guess she suggested this in the event that I didn't get a job after finishing my matric and how I will be able to use my hands."

Xanti appears to take action based on his behaviour of enacted negotiation. This also entailed escaping from a dominant way of thinking, generally deemed acceptable by the population. This way of thinking, if accepted, appeared to limit Xanti's career progression. It appeared that the advice Xanti got from his mother initiated the process of

negotiation. Xanti then moved from East London to Port Elizabeth after finishing his secondary education, and heeded his mother's advice in mapping out a way of escape. He enrolled in a technical subject, in this case electrical engineering. In Xanti's story negotiation was also facilitated by taking practical (and geographical) steps out of his situation. Xanti enrolled on a technical course, although not having enough money meant that he was forced to rely on government loans and financial aid.

After two years of studying for his electrical engineering diploma, Xanti began to question this career choice, and specifically whether it was his own career choice or one influenced by his mother. This reflective process was difficult and made him think of his mother, who had passed away by this time. Xanti here was contending to remain studying engineering, though he did not enjoy it, to keep alive the wishes of his deceased mother. However, the more he thought about this, the more Xanti kept coming to the same realisation:

"I had this thing in me that I wanted to study something else not far from me. So I woke up and decided to study theology."

Like in the story of Tendai, Xanti drew on personal issues of circumstance, disadvantage and upbringing in framing a possible move from engineering to theology. Xanti's portrayal of this is expressed in the following quote:

"When I looked around from where I come from I realised that most people needed help in understanding who they were especially from a spiritual viewpoint. This is around coming to an

understanding of God and His purpose for life. I realised that I wanted to work with such people. I wanted my community to find help from the church. I wanted to do activities like skills development, career guidance and entrepreneurial skills. I wanted to be there for those with HIV and help them."

Enacted negotiation emerged once more during the next stage of Xanti's life. First, he acknowledged that making a shift from engineering to psychology was a difficult decision that took some time to make:

"It took me over a year and a half to decide, and I even lost weight coming to a decision. My mind was everywhere. The main thing for me was to find a path, a way for myself, not anyone else, not even my mother."

Here, Xanti showed us the emotive nature of careers and career development. Herein lay the advantage of a storytelling and narrative approach, in helping tap into these deep issues concerning careers and career development. Second, and much like in Tendai's and Ruth's stories, Xanti's significant others seemed to be allowed to express their opinion regarding individual career decision-making processes:

"Two groups of people existed for me. The first group told me to go for the money by pursuing an engineering career. The other group of people told me to pursue what God wants me to do in my life and encouraged me to pursue theology and stop engineering. I decided to stop listening to people, even my family. They were not happy."

After consultation with family and friends, Xanti dropped out of his full-time engineering course at the University of Port Elizabeth. He headed for Cape Town to study theology. However, Xanti's story continued to highlight the influence of financial consideration and disadvantage in an individual's career development. Xanti did not have any money to study and solicited funds from friends and family. This behaviour also illustrated negotiation in Xanti's life for the sake of career progression. Xanti enrolled and began to pursue a career path that he had always wanted to follow but had not done so previously. After studying theology for three years with the help of family and friends, Xanti had to negotiate another tough hurdle:

"Whilst studying theology, I ran out of funds. I decided to use distance learning to finish my electrical engineering diploma. I have dropped out of theology school and am now back to engineering. This allows me to work and raise funds to finish off theology. Distance learning allows for that flexibility."

Xanti reverted to finishing off the remaining years of his engineering diploma. The thinking was that he would use this course and career path to allow him to earn an income. Eventually, he hopes to return to theology, which is his preferred career choice. Interestingly, Xanti's capacity to negotiate appears to be a turning point in his story. This helps to understand how he has made career decisions. These career decisions, though planned, are neither fixed nor linear but can be malleable or recursive. Second, career development appeared constrained or enabled with consideration for individual circumstance and disadvantage. Xanti's story appeared to show the complexity of career decision making. Xanti reverted to an earlier career choice as a means of earning an income and returned to a career path where his interests were vested.

Another story that illustrates the role of enacted negotiation is that of Benhilda. From a young age, Benhilda wanted to be a secretary:

"I have always wanted to be a secretary. I have always wanted a job where glamour and fame are part of the work life. To me, being a secretary offered this, or at least I thought it did. However, I soon was caught in the routine work and realised that this was not my thing."

Around that time, Benhilda lost interest in working as a secretary. Matters beyond her control soon began to limit her capacity to negotiate within Zimbabwe and she had to move. As in Ruth's story, moving to another country diverted her away from her chosen career path. Benhilda began to negotiate the situation to decide what to do. In South Africa, Benhilda searched for a job, although the only available jobs were either cleaning or working as a secretary. Benhilda, like Xanti, reverted to an earlier career path that was not the preferred choice but that offered the pragmatic benefit of earning an income. Interestingly, Xanti and Benhilda wanted to use the money to pay for their distance enrolment in the career paths that they wanted to pursue. These two stories appeared to display the messiness of career development or even how it is not a rational process but instead a process marred by unpredictability. This is a good example that showed not only how career development processes are malleable, but also how they are unpredictable, messy and intricate.

However, career development was illustrated to be also a complex issue in the lives of Xanti and Benhilda. Interestingly though, Xanti and Benhilda did not want to pursue the engineering and secretarial courses respectively, and reverted to these with the hope that they would lead to their new paths. These stories show the role of enacted negotiation and how past experiences also influence the negotiating process. This negotiative

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action served the purpose of redirecting or rechannelling efforts towards undesired jobs as a way to the desired career paths.

In Jabu's story, enacted negotiation takes a different twist from that expressed in Xanti's story. Jabu's initial career plans were to work in the informal employment sector as a means of sustenance. This was because he had not done well in his high school examinations, though he wanted to go to university. This appears to be a stumbling block to Jabu's individual career development. It appeared that this was a restriction, as he could not go to university. Jabu attributed this to his upbringing:

"You know, growing up in ekasi (township), you just want to make quick money and have girls and drink beer."

To Jabu, given that he had failed his high school examinations, his plans of working in the informal employment sector seemed fixed and an acceptable career path for him. However, the role of his significant others, and specifically his mother, offered a route for Jabu. After encouragement from his mother, Jabu:

" … stayed at home for a year and started studying again for matric … a year later I rewrote my matric, and this time my grades were not that bad."

In order to support himself and his family, Jabu got a job as a cleaner. An uncle of Jabu recommended he try enrolling via distance learning. The rationale for studying via distance learning was unequivocally stated based on individual disadvantage and circumstance:

"UNISA is very cheap my man. I think also UNISA was the only university that was going to accept me, especially given my matric results were bad."

Through a process of enacted negotiation and social interaction, Jabu moved from a position of thinking he was destined to remain in informal employment for his entire life to enrolling for a diploma. During the interview, Jabu offered an evaluative account of his life situation and how he is looking forward to starting his diploma. Interestingly, at one stage Jabu did not think he would go to university, and now that he is there he faces some unique challenges. These challenges also play on his situation of disadvantage:

 "It's tough sometimes to study, especially when you are struggling with school and life. My friends laugh at me sometimes, especially when they get easy money to do what they want to do. So on one side you are trying to study, and on the other side you have to deal with peer pressure. I hope that this won't stop me from studying."

This quote illustrates the negotiation process, especially in Jabu's life. It's not just social interaction; here he is acknowledging the different elements of his life he will have to negotiate with en route to his qualification and career. To Jabu, studying offered an opportunity not just to rise above his disadvantage through career development but also to negotiate out of his personal situation. Jabu's story appeared to corroborate previous stories as to the perception of attaining an education and its implication for career development.

Though distance learning was a pragmatic consideration in that it was cheap, education was viewed as a way of escaping from deprivation or stumbling blocks he may have to face. The attainment of an education thus occupied a place of importance in the stories of

distance learners like Jabu. There appear to be other things that Jabu is negotiating with here:

"I also realise that employers put a lot of emphasis on work experience. I need this right now. I have started volunteering and offering my services basically for free so long as I can get something to write on my CV. Sometimes when I tell prospective employers of this arrangement, they just become afraid. Maybe they think I am a thief and want to use this as an opportunity to get into work. I just want to get work experience. Is that too much to ask?"

Jabu has also used enacted negotiation in allowing himself to get an opportunity to get work experience in spite of the difficulty surrounding this. His persistence supports his need to get work experience but also advance in his life.

Zanele's story also illustrates how enacted negotiation occurs. Zanele had to deal with a range of stumbling blocks in her life. Her initial career plan was to be a social worker. However, not having enough money to go to school, Zanele resorted to a life of selling by the street to take care of herself and her child:

"I really wanted to be a social worker, but for financial reasons I could not take up social work. Policing was the quickest way to be employed, and given the lack of jobs I had no choice. Now that I am a police officer, I am already being directed towards becoming a police social worker. It has worked out well in the end, but I had to convince my superiors of the need for police officers as social workers."

The enacted negotiation in Zanele's story appears when she first works around her situation of disadvantage by getting a job that she did not like. Zanele illustrates the daily challenges of being a police officer:

"It's a challenging profession (policing). Some things happen. One time there was a bank robbery and we had to respond to a call. So during the standoff with the robbers, one of my colleagues was shot dead right in front of me. That affected me so much I had to go for counselling with a psychologist. It was bad to see one of my own go down. I am not a person of regrets and I am not going to quit."

It appeared that Zanele's life as a police officer, together with its day-to-day happenings, was also based on negotiating around various emotional states resulting from the nature of this career. Added to this, Zanele had to negotiate around the physical danger and psychological stress that goes with being a police officer. Another interesting point from Zanele's story was her intention of reverting to her initial career choice of social work even whilst working as a police officer:

"The main crime that we are facing is domestic violence, especially in our communities. I realise that when one is attending to such complaints, the need for a social worker is important. So I guess policing and social work are related. I want to finish my diploma in policing and climb the ranks and then study further for a social work degree and link this with policing."

Zanele merely used policing as the quickest way to get employment and as a means to earn an income. Like Xanti and Benhilda, Zanele hoped to uniquely position herself in the police force in order to pursue an intended career choice of social work. Enacted negotiation appeared to offer Zanele an opportunity to settle for second best in a bid to return to her first preference. Zanele was also pragmatically identifying a route to what she wanted to do. Zanele's story, though demonstrating the role of negotiating through various life situations, also demonstrates the unpredictability and messiness of career development. To this point, enacted negotiation was an active process that was

individually driven.

Rayline's story appeared to offer a counter narrative whilst showing the role of enacted negotiation. Rayline's initial career plan was for a career where she could make money, something that accountancy offered:

"I just wanted something where I could have money to give my mum and dad and provide whatever they want. I thought my appreciation for them would be to buy them things. So it boiled down to chartered accountancy."

Rayline enrolled to study for an accounting degree with the University of Port Elizabeth. She was honest to admit that she was not an excellent accounting student, but rather an average student. The first instance of enacted negotiation came when Rayline changed from a career path she had always wanted to pursue (accounting) to law because she did not get justice in a tragedy that befell her. Rayline narrates this experience:

"It was a personal choice to make the change. I had an incident where my daughter was murdered in front of me and I was the main witness. The judgement given was not fair, though the facts were clear. This made me change my course of study to law … I was really pissed off, so I said to myself, let me see if I can help someone in my position in the future."

After studying law for a year, Rayline found it hectic and lost interest in the subject. Rayline dropped out and abandoned ideas of being a lawyer. Unsure of what to do next, Rayline consulted her mother, who suggested taking a career test:

"So I had to start from fresh now. My mother did the test for me as she said she knows me best, and the results from this showed a career in accountancy."

The interesting thing here was how Rayline offered no resistance to the suggestion that her mother take the test on her behalf. In doing this, Rayline was not willing to negotiate but rather conceded all because her mother, in her mother's own opinion, knew her best. This experience was enough for Rayline to allow her mother to make career decisions for her, and therefore choose not to negotiate. Rayline was unsure about returning to accounting. However, she was contending with her mother's result from the earlier career test, and also the fact it was her mother who took the test. Though not wanting to appear rude, Rayline suggested she also take the test for the basis of comparison. This behaviour from Rayline signified a turn of some form of negotiative action with the purpose of consensus seeking:

"I also did the test on my own behalf and I also did the test after her. Two different findings came out from the test. My mom had a career in accounting and I had a career working with animals."

Rayline then engaged in the same negotiative action of seeking a consensus with her mother and also herself by consulting her friends:

"My friends think I am friendly and talkative or a bubbly character. These are things which do not link with the accounting side of things."

As a form of closure, though being engaged in the negotiative action of seeking a consensus, Rayline continued and is studying for an accounting qualification via distance

learning. However, although occupied with all of this activity, Rayline is unsure:

"I am willing to stop rather than finish studying accounting instead of sulking. I would regret it

in the future continuing when I am unhappy and would rather go to the animal professions based

on my results of the career test."

Rayline's story also illustrated how not all negotiative action around career development

can lead to an individual finding a preference with which to remedy career indecision.

Rayline's story and those of the other participants illustrated the rich learning of careers

that happens by interacting with life situations. Arising out of this was negotiative action,

which provided a path of progression. In an interesting way, this behaviour was a way for

individuals to (re-)construct a sense of which career emerges. This interaction could either

be planned or unplanned, and moreover could be individually constructed or influenced by

others. When starting his final year of high school, Sivuyile wanted to be an engineer.

This decision was informed by subject performance:

"I enjoyed mathematics and science and wanted to be an engineer. Also in South Africa I

noticed the presence of infrastructure that made me love engineering."

However, for Sivuyile there was a turning point: "I also realised that not many of the other

students enjoyed humanities subjects, and so I decided to try law and engineering." This

change to law was quite interesting. Unlike Rayline, who identified a traumatic event as

the basis for her decision, Sivuyile's change was motivated by individual curiosity. Upon

further probing, Sivuyile expanded on his reasons for moving from engineering to law:

"The place where I come from has so many bad things happening there. Last week someone got killed and their head cut off. People are abused and killed and some just need legal advice. I felt that the knowledge of law could at least help others through legal advice."

Sivuyile saw his abrupt change of career plans as being influenced by individual curiosity and also by a desire to occupy a niche in his community by providing legal advice. Such legal advice seemed badly needed. It appears Sivuyile's negotiation comes in avoiding the bad things happening in his community to make sure that his life is different. He later explained how this happened through using support systems around him:

"I was not free from the crime and abuse in the community. I saw it every day in the people around me. It seemed that my life was headed towards this same path, not by choice but because of my being a member of the community. I turned to church, friends in the community and personally staying away from trouble. This was the only way out given that bad things just follow youngsters like me in our townships."

There were some similarities as well as differences between Sivuyile's story and that of Rayline. Both made a change to law from engineering and accounting respectively. The rationale for the move in both cases was sanctioned as a response to an external event. In the case of Rayline, it was the murder of her child; in Sivuyile's case, it was a combination of curiosity and community response to the same serious crime that affected Rayline. A telling difference concerned the role of enacted negotiation. Sivuyile made the change from engineering to law and did not face any opposition:

"When I sent through the change from engineering to law, I explained to them the reason for this

and they just supported me. I think it's because my parents are not educated, and I can actually see the outcome of this."

Sivuyile did not face any opposition concerning career change, unlike Rayline. A notable influence was the role of the parent. In Sivuyile's case the influence was passive as his parents were "not educated". However, Rayline's influence came from her mother who was educated and occupied a position of influence in her professional life. As a result of this, it appeared that Rayline's mother was able to take an active role in Rayline's story. This was in stark contrast to Sivuyile's story. Nonetheless, despite differences regarding the extent of the influence, negotiation was important in both stories.

The attainment of education played a crucial role in the lives of the distance learners. Little was mentioned about difficulties encountered during the learning process but rather attention is given to education in general. The attainment of a certificate, diploma or degree served the purpose of enhancing individual career development. Education was a way of escape from careers in which individuals were not happy or were seeking a change. It was also used to advance where this change was not apparent. In Kevin's story, he is negotiating around his retrenchment, this after he had worked for over 10 years for a reputable marketing company. Kevin described this period:

"I felt bitter and disappointed. It was a stressful period where I needed to make some major decisions. It also affected me being a man; I felt I had let down my family. Thankfully my wife was also still working."

Kevin's next plan was to study and re-skill himself, and through educational attainment

this appeared a way of negotiating around his situation of being retrenched:

"I was doing sales at that point hence I studied marketing. However, moving to psychology appealed to me. Psychology is deeper and you can help people at a deeper level than I would do in marketing. The decision was also influenced by personal circumstances. One day I took my wife to a clinic, I will put it bluntly, in the coloured areas. While waiting to be seen I could see how our people are struggling and suffering. Families are breaking up and there is a lot of child abuse. It also played on me that I can make a difference for the suffering people. I guess that's where psychology comes in."

Interestingly, and from Kevin's account, he would not have considered a career move into psychology if he had not been retrenched. However, he was always involved in his community through volunteer work, which could have possibly led to his desire to study psychology:

"I have always been active in my community. I visit the sick, go to hospitals and I am there for some members of my community."

It seemed to Kevin that a move to psychology and helping the community revealed to him some attributes he may not have known about if he had not made the move. Though his story demonstrated the role of negotiation, it also illustrated how career development occurred within other factors. These included intrapersonal influences (eg his liking for doing community work where his decision to study psychology stemmed from), social influences (eg the deprivation in his community, consideration of family and the role of education in remedying his situation) and environmental–societal influences (eg macro-economic result of being retrenched and unemployed). Kevin's story, like that of

Sivuyile, illustrated how the learning of a career occurs in such a context, with the eventual career progression coming from this learning.

Godfrey classed himself as coming from the rural Transkei, and upon finishing high school considered which universities to attend. Godfrey could not attend universities outside his province of the Eastern Cape. These were too far and would be expensive. The major universities near Godfrey were Rhodes, University of Fort Hare and UPE. Interestingly, all these universities were full-time universities. Godfrey lamented about why he could not join these universities:

"Getting into these universities on academic merit was not that difficult but funding for the studies was to be a major issue, especially based on my poor upbringing."

For Godfrey, he felt that he could enrol in these prestigious full-time universities purely on academic merit. However, the limitation was the cost of these universities. As a result, Godfrey could not enrol in full-time university. He aptly described this as a problem and one that limited his advancement. The process of enacted negotiation emerged from Godfrey's story as a tool that allowed him to meet and deal with his problem. The first instance came through his friends:

"Some friends told me I could get a clerk job in the municipality, but I guess like everything in this country this depends on who you know."

The first option of negotiating around Godfrey's problem was to seek employment, and the source of this idea came through his friends. This option failed as Godfrey could not get a job owing to a perceived unjust system of societal patronage in job allocation. However, a second option came from a teacher, Mrs Xobile:

"Mrs Xobile gave me an idea to apply for a government study loan and move to Port Elizabeth where I would have a greater chance."

Godfrey agreed to this suggestion. Upon arriving in Port Elizabeth, Godfrey consulted friends again about how he could study for accounting. One of his friends told him of distance learning and an institution called Damelin. Upon hearing of distance learning, Godfrey was rather cynical:

"I'd heard about distance learning before, but my view was that it was for people who were older and could not attend full-time."

Godfrey had not thought of distance learning as a possible option. However, when it was suggested by his friend he had to challenge some stereotypes he had about this mode of learning. This entailed a form of internal negotiation. Godfrey went further by:

" … visiting a few colleges offering distance learning courses."

The purpose of this was to challenge his stereotypes of distance learning. Though unsure, Godfrey got help from his friend Thando, who advised him to think about the future in the end. For Godfrey, and since distance learning was not a preference, he wanted a reputable distance learning institution. After a process of consultation and challenging inherent stereotypes, Godfrey chose UNISA. This was because UNISA was the only recognised distance institution and their programmes seemed good enough to get him a job. Added to this, UNISA appealed to Godfrey's situation of disadvantage:

"UNISA is cheap, I mean really cheap, when I compare it with what the University of Port Elizabeth was costing … it fits well for me."

Negotiation regarding the choice of academic institution for Godfrey entailed a socially embedded process of negotiation as well as individual initiative. Significantly, consideration of his disadvantage as a buffer was a priority. This research also identified enacted negotiation as happening in community through examining and challenging a broader nexus of societal and cultural expectations.

4.4.2 Enacted Negotiation in Relation to Societal and Cultural Expectations

Godfrey had to move to Port Elizabeth and study via distance learning for an accounting degree. Godfrey's life has been characterised by negotiation around the fact that he has come from a poor background. Though having government loans Godfrey found it difficult to fund his studies. As a result of this it took longer to register at the beginning of the year as he wanted to find money to supplement his loan.

In addition, Godfrey had to contend with some social challenges at the place where he stays. There appears to be a social expectation for a young man like Godfrey to conform to a particular way of life, something he viewed as a challenge:

"This town though small is rough. It's about the bling here, and that's how you get recognition. School and that stuff are important, but you earn respect from your peers with what you have."

Here Godfrey paints the challenge of conformity to societal and cultural expectations. This was difficult for Godfrey as he described his situation:

"Some of us have it difficult 'cause we don't have much and strive to have things. Sometimes a life of crime is the solution, but that comes with a price, which could be your life."

The contention appeared to be between the expectations of society and that of Godfrey as an individual. Godfrey would want some of these things described as desirable, though his situation of disadvantage appeared to limit him. A negotiation around this came through his friends. In order to pragmatically meet his financial shortcomings, Godfrey had to take up shared accommodation and sharing bills. Individually Godfrey also took up government-funded loans and piece jobs to survive. All these behaviours appear to show Godfrey as negotiating to get to the best possible outcome.

Conversely, the story of Bongani showed a process of negotiation around societal expectations, ie moving away from family careers. Bongani grew up during the apartheid days, and as he put it:

"In those days as a black person you did not have much for you career-wise; you became either a teacher, a nurse or a general hand."

This societal expectation (not by choice) for black people was a set of careers identified by Bongani. In Bongani's family, this was also the expectation:

".My father worked for a school in the townships and was an educator, and he instilled the value of education. I actually think I became a teacher just after him. My two brothers also became teachers and my sister a nurse at Provincial hospital. In any case, it's not like we had a choice."

The societal and family expectation appeared to have a direct influence on career choice in Bongani's family. However, there also appeared to be a more superficial reason for joining the teaching profession for Bongani:

"I also came to teaching because there were a lot of jobs at that time for educated black people."

However, Bongani, after working for over 10 years, felt there were no opportunities for advancement as a teacher. Bongani explained this:

"A teacher is always stuck in the classroom, and the money is not good at all. I needed a change. This came about with the fall of apartheid and a democratic South Africa in 1994. I met a friend who recommended I apply for a post at the municipality. This was an unpaid post with emphasis on learning new skills. I used this to move from teaching to working with computers."

Bongani appeared unhappy as a teacher, and he wanted a career that was not restricted by societal and family expectation. On a personal level, his move to working with computers and then becoming a computer specialist shows how he was negotiating with family and societal expectations. For Bongani, negotiation entailed moving from a career deemed appropriate for the segment of the population to which he belonged, to one he would not have entered if apartheid had not fallen. This contention was also turning away from traditional family careers. This move encountered no opposition and was not stressful for two reasons. First, Bongani was a mature adult and faced no influence from family and friends. Second, a lack of resistance may have been down to the wave of political and economic change that was happening in South Africa. Bongani described this:

"I am happy I changed. You know, as black people who were stopped from getting into some of these professions, this is good for us in the new South Africa. We just need to continue working hard and to show other people not happy with this that we can also do well."

Bongani's story was similar to that of Bulie. Both cited growing up during the apartheid days, a period in time she viewed as offering few or no opportunities for black people. Bulie described this experience:

"I grew up during a time of limited career opportunities in the apartheid days, and so I did not have much of a choice. You could either become a nurse, a career in public management or a policeman and also a teacher."

The fall of apartheid for Bulie and Bongani appeared to be the point at which to move into careers that they were previously prevented from pursuing. Bulie expressed this:

"I felt I needed a change and wanted to study for my degree and left my job as a secretary. I now work as a Learning Support Academic officer. Opportunities in the new South Africa for people like me have opened up. I even see it in my family. When it was for the first time for our black kids to study at white schools, my youngest sister was transferred from the township school to study at the white school."

In Bulie's and Bongani's stories, a new political dispensation in South Africa offered the opportunity to negotiate around careers they may have previously been conscripted into. A closely similar story to that of Bongani was that of Fezeka. Though much younger than Bongani, she had a hazy idea of what career path she wanted to pursue. The difficulty appears to be embedded in family expectations:

"I wanted something that will make me work with people. I am a kinda talkative person, a chatterbox. A career in human resources is more like talking with people. It's deeper and that's like me. The problem was my brothers and sisters who were working within the health professions. The expectation was that I'd also continue in these professions, but I wanted something where I work with people not wear lab coats all day."

Fezeka's story appears complex and a potential clash seemed impending between her choice and the one expected by her brothers and sisters. Like in Bongani's story, but more direct, was the expectation that Fezeka continue the tradition of careers in the health sciences. However, the difference between Bongani and Fezeka was that the source of indifference did not come from the subject (Fezeka) but instead from her family. In Bongani's story, his family offered no resistance to him breaking away from the family expectation and tradition with regards to career choice. Fezeka viewed this as pressure from family and explained the source of this:

"My eldest brother is a medical doctor, my other brother a physiotherapist, my third brother works for the municipality as a casual worker and my sister is a student nurse. My brother did not want to be a doctor and his entry into the medical field was influenced by a guidance teacher."

Fezeka attended the same school where the guidance teacher had influenced her brother into studying and being a medical doctor. A solution and a way of encouraging herself to have this freedom of choice was to avoid this teacher and not listen to any advice. Fezeka's conclusion to this suggestion was: "I think my brother was right." Indeed, she never consulted the guidance teacher.

As a result of wanting to break away from this, Fezeka chose a career in Human Resource Management. To substitute the possible influence of the guidance teacher,

Fezeka went to career exhibitions. This may be seen as a way of negotiating and confirming.

Sisanda's story was also one of challenging societal expectations as to careers meant for women. Sisanda had initially wanted to be a medical doctor but abandoned these plans:

"I realised that to be a doctor you had to be good in biology, and it's all theory. The thing with me is that theory and me don't mix. However, my mathematics and physics were very good and I wanted to stick to a career where these subjects are at play."

Here, Sisanda used her disdain for theory to justify her choice not to study medicine. In this regard, subject choice and performance were used as a means to determine a plausible career path. Sisanda's choice was to study and become a civil engineer, although she had to contend and negotiate with societal expectations regarding women in such careers:

"I chose civil engineering as it's something different from what women usually choose in a career. Women would usually choose accounting, sciences, business and management courses. I chose civil engineering because I have been leaning towards that. My family members would know and say I am more of a boy than a girl."

Sisanda's career choice has elicited some negative responses from some members of society, mainly because of Sisanda being a woman, her position in the firm and her race:

"It was very intimidating. Some contractors think they can bully you into being corrupt and want you to approve things not agreed upon, but as a woman I stood my ground. Even if this person is senior, I stand my ground. Sometimes the person is white and you are black and they want to

drive you around but you stand your ground."

Another method that Sisanda used to negotiate around this was to draw from her childhood experience:

"I also grew up with boys and I know the type of language they use to bully you. When I am at work I don't expect to be treated like a woman, but expect to be treated as a professional. If it means I get inside a trench, I will do that. If it means I climb the scaffolding, I will do that."

In Sisanda's story, negotiation was employed in challenging societal expectations of careers for women. In the case of Sisanda, she stood her ground and tapped into her childhood experiences of growing up with boys to negotiate her situation. Sisanda's negotiation was around gender expectations from society regarding which careers she could and could not enter into.

Similarly, Nozi's story also showed the role of enacted negotiation. This occurred in the face of a societal expectation that a graduate should be able to provide for his/her family. The only problem was that 10 years after finishing her degree she could not get a job:

"I was panicking because I had graduated and I was supposed to be the one who was helping and supporting my parents; instead, I was the one getting the support. I lost my self-esteem when I could not get a job."

This was an emotive event in Nozi's life. To negotiate around this situation, Nozi engaged in some behaviour that influenced her career:

"During that time I would usually get a piece job, usually a contract job for a month. The bad thing was that I got the job not with a degree but by pretending to just have a standard 10 certificate. I also heard that a one-year postgraduate certificate in education will help in getting a job in the teaching field since there is a demand for teachers. So I decided to take the teaching option just for the stable income."

Nozi's story of career development being a negotiation revealed some interesting issues. First was the issue of selling herself lower for the sake of getting a job. Second was the issue of studying in an entirely different field away from Industrial Psychology just for the sake of getting a job. Nozi did all this, not only to secure employment, but also to meet societal expectations, which dictated that a graduate should be the provider for their family.

Based on the stories presented, enacted negotiation also took place in relation to community and consisted of not only examining but also challenging societal and cultural expectations. Within the community were individuals who were inspirational and close to participants interviewed. Their viewpoints were deemed as participants could identify with these people based on issues of disadvantage, family and societal ties, experience and keeping up with the status quo. The individual experience was to work around these issues, and enacted negotiation appeared a possible route for this.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Based on the collected individual stories from participants, one major finding emerged that the process of enacted negotiation explained the career development processes participants narrated. Individuals appeared to have a coherent sense of a career as far back as childhood, and the sources of this have been explored in this

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chapter. Five main factors were identified as influencing a sense of a career: a) role-play in childhood; b) input from teachers; c) the feedback from academic performance; d) career interventions; and e) the role of the media.

The sense of a career was largely influenced by the presence of stumbling blocks that impede the lived experience, including individual career development. Some identified stumbling blocks based on participant stories included: a) circumstances of upbringing; b) poverty; c) failure; d) financial constraints; e) family crisis; f) death; g) dealing with redundancy, retrenchment and unemployment; h) being a parent; and i) challenges in post-democratic South Africa. Third (and the major finding and contribution) is the role of a sensemaking process which deals with the stumbling blocks identified in figure 5 through enacted negotiation.

In this chapter, individuals appear to be empowered to take advantage of the opportunities presented to them in post-apartheid South Africa. However, they do so by negotiating significant stumbling blocks, drawing inspiration from those around them, and sometimes compromising their aspirations. Distance learning is a significant component of this negotiative action. Added to this, the new South Africa appears to offer new career opportunities for previously disadvantaged individuals. This is a move away from predetermined career paths of the apartheid era. New vistas appear for previously disadvantaged groups in career paths such as science, engineering and accountancy. A comment by Bongani appears to summarise these experiences and reflects his journey from being a teacher to a computer specialist:

"You know as black people we were stopped from getting into some of these professions. This

is good for us in the new South Africa. We just need to continue working hard and to show people not happy with this that we can also do well."

The significance of enacted negotiation is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses how career development was conceptualised amongst the sample of previously disadvantaged distance learners in South Africa. The chapter begins by a discussion of the main findings of this work. This is followed by a presentation of how the research question was answered, all of which is in relation to the extant literature.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF MAIN FINDINGS

5.2.1 The Emergence of a Sense of a Career

A coherent sense of a career appears to exist based on the stories of previously disadvantaged individuals. The stories tell of such a sense of a career developing from a young age. Like Gottfredson (2005), I was told stories that even young children think of themselves in adult roles. Participants through their stories provided support for activities that assist in identifying with these adult roles. These include: role-play, observation, role models (Gibson, 2004), and formal and informal learning (Brown et al, 2012; Inkson, 2007). Thus in this work a set of unintentional and intentional learning experiences (Patton and McMahon, 2006; Watson and McMahon, 2005, 2007) helped participants develop this sense of a career. Crucially, this sense of a career, or potential adult role, involved a sense of progression towards an envisaged future, one better than their current position. This experience in childhood and adolescence offers

opportunity in which a coherent sense of career appears to emerge (Gottfredson, 1981, 2005). Participants in their stories cited this experience as having a lasting impact on future educational and occupational choices (Hartung et al, 2008; Magnuson and Starr, 2000; Porfeli et al, 2008) that manifest in adulthood. An example here was shown in the stories of Kuda, Taka and Shakira, who are all pursuing career paths whose aim was revealed from the childhood and adolescence experience. In the narrations of these individuals, there was association with and constant reference to experiences from childhood and adolescence. This is similar to previous work (Trice and McClellan, 1994) that also identifies the childhood experience as having an influence on occupational choice in adulthood.

It was interesting to note that participants in the science and numerical careers, eg accountancy, engineering, chemistry, biology and physics, were the ones who expressed the greatest influence emanating from their childhood experience to the adult stage. These stories perhaps suggest that through outcome expectations and self-efficacy in these subjects, individuals develop interest in these career paths. This is a view expressed in the SCCT (Lent et al, 2002). The participants I interviewed within the humanities and social sciences (eg Xanti, Odwa, Nandipha, Steven) appeared to also use their subject preferences and liking as a way of avoiding the numerical and science careers. This is similar to Gottfredson's (1981, 1996, 2005) idea of conscription, in which the individual uses their interests as criteria for eliminating any possible alternatives. This experience from school subjects in childhood and adolescence led to individuals enhancing or avoiding certain career paths in adulthood. This sense of a career remained a core to the individual even after experiencing constraints.

In addition, the role of parents was described as influential in the stories of individuals' formation of a sense of a career. This role may have been direct where parents made a decision about a career path the individual should follow. In some cases, parental influence was indirect through provision of material and non-material support. Based on this finding, there is acknowledgement of the role of parental influence in individual career development (Super, 1990; Myburgh, 2005). Parents appear to occupy the same role as role models, emulated because of their relevance, credibility and knowledge (Noe, 2002; Wexley and Latham, 1991). In my study, parents of previously disadvantaged individuals were framed as relevant and credible based on the relationship with the participants. These parents, however, were described as not being knowledgeable in academic subject content and having little or no education. This was a trend in the stories of Jay, Odwa, Nozi, Nwabisa, Sisanda, Xanti, Taka and Sivuyile. However, as revealed in participant stories, parents tried to compensate for their inability to make a career choice (based on their lack of education and opportunity) during their time by taking an active role in the career development of their children. This influence appeared to serve as a proxy in making use of opportunities not available to them owing to the apartheid policies. These participants all mentioned the past in terms of the lack of opportunities their parents had because of apartheid. This was motivating to them in their personal lives.

Participant stories appeared to offer a way of understanding where the individual has come from, what they are doing and what they are becoming (Gibson, 2004). Based on these participants' stories, there is influence on career development from a variety of systemic factors within the individual context (Patton and McMahon, 2006). These ranged from intrapersonal factors (eg likes and dislikes towards subjects subsequently

informing career choice) and social factors (eg the role of family, friends, guardians, teachers and the school system) to, finally, environmental–societal factors (eg the role of community and its members in individual career development). In South Africa, participants' stories support previous studies showing the influence of the societal (eg Geldenhuys and De Lange, 2007; Jordaan et al, 2009; Myburgh, 2005; Watson et al, 2001) and cultural context (Creed et al, 2002; du Toit and de Bruin, 2002; Stead, 2004; Stead and Watson, 1998) on individual career development.

5.2.2 Stumbling Blocks to Individual Career Development

This section presents the various stumbling blocks identified by individual participants in their stories. These will be split into two subsections: constraints and context.

5.2.2.1 Constraints

Various constraints acted as stumbling blocks as revealed in the participant stories collected. Some participants (eg Kwezi) cited in their story constraints of balancing various family responsibilities and seeking work–life balance (O'Neil and Bilimoria, 2005). It appears Kwezi's entire life revolved around attaining this balance, which subsequently affected her career development. Some participants (eg Lisa) outlined the constraints affecting them in the form of failure with regard to a course of study. This subsequently brought to a halt any career pursuits participants may have had. The majority of participants through their stories identified constraints of a socio-economic

nature (Osipow and Fitzgerald, 1996). In some stories (eg Xanti), participants had to drop out of their course of study because of lack of money. Other participants (eg Sivuyile) had to work in jobs they did not enjoy to earn money to go back to school. Others (eg Steven) described the effect of constraints such as being unemployed on their personal lives and on their ability to provide for their family.

Constraints as illustrated through participant stories appear to have a dual effect. First, these constraints limit or inhibit the exercise of career choice and subsequent career development. Second, these constraints appear to also be an enabler in the life of the individual to something they kept hoping for and aspiring to and equipping the individual. For instance, Sivuyile described growing up in a community with a high crime rate where young men end up hooked on drugs and alcohol. In this community, Sivuyile had to contend with negative ideas coming from friends as well as his lack of funds to study. However, from such negative constraints, Sivuyile managed to turn the negative into positive, and now works and is en route to becoming a lawyer. Given these two considerations about constraints based on participant stories, constraints appear to be paradoxical in nature.

Some constraints identified through participant stories arose owing to chance, luck and happenstance (Mitchell et al, 1999; Patton and McMahon, 2006; Pryor and Bright, 2003). For instance, Rayline cited the unexpected death of her child as having a tremendous effect on her life. Others cited the death of loved ones who were influential in their lives for moral support and financial support as changing their lives (eg Nozi). Though negative and like in the story of Sivuyile cited earlier, these constraints were

used by the participants I interviewed as "turning points" (Hodkinson et al, 1996:142) and serving an opportunity for career development. For instance, Tendai lost her parents who were supporting her education. After their deaths, Tendai decided to use the experience of growing up as an orphan to be a voice for other orphans as a social worker. The use of constraints as turning points as illustrated through participant stories is similar to the idea that some individuals are challenged to exert greater effort towards their lives and a sense of motivation based on events that may be initially viewed as negative (Williams et al, 1998). Some stumbling blocks to individual career development were also embedded within the context in which the individual resided.

5.2.2.2 Context

Stumbling blocks to individual career development in this work had their origin in the individual's context (Naicker, 1994). This happened in three interrelated contexts. First, the family context was found to have some stumbling blocks that may impede individual career development. For instance, Nwabisa cited the influence of her siblings in suggesting a career choice for her, though she had ideas of working in human resource management. A number of participants cited stumbling blocks in their context, such as broken family set-up (eg Tendai grew up without her parents, and Nwabisa told of her father's alcohol addiction and lack of support towards educating a girl-child). This finding illustrates how family can influence individual career development (Arkhurst and Mkhize, 1999; Myburgh, 2005; Nicholas, 2002). A second notable context shaping individual career development based on the participants I interviewed was the schooling context. In Xanti's story, a mathematics teacher made him hate the subject and any career path where this subject is core. It appears there may also have been some personal

differences between Xanti and the teacher. Some participants (eg Godfrey) in their stories cited lack of resources in scientific equipment as a lack of exposure to career paths he would have liked in the sciences. This finding attests to the influence of constraints within the school system as affecting individual career development (eg Watson and van Aarde, 1986; Watson and Stead, 1990; Stead and Watson, 1994; Gerber, 2000; Nicholas, 2002; Jordaan et al, 2009; McMahon et al, 2005; Watson et al, 2001; Sadler and Erasmus, 2005; Muofhe and du Toit, 2011). The third contextual stumbling block identified in this research was in the macro environment. This included dealing with unemployment, poverty and challenges from the change from pre- to post-apartheid South Africa. For instance, Steven in his story narrated the challenge of being unemployed and how it affected his job search thereafter and family. Others like Bongani in their story told of their move away from career choices such as a teacher, nurse and general hand, all jobs meant for black people during apartheid, to become an ICT specialist in post-apartheid South Africa.

Stumbling blocks in the individual's context illustrated in participant stories appear to espouse similar ideas as those in the theory of occupational allocation (Roberts, 1984, 1993, 1995, 2000). Structural constraints in the context, particularly those concerning social class, appear to affect the individual's career development. These constraints also illustrate the dynamic interaction that can exist between the individual and their context (Vondracek et al, 1983). Based on participant stories, this relationship appears to be not only dynamic but also unpredictable and in some cases beyond the control of the individual. This extends work in South Africa, showing the role of disadvantage as not only affecting individual career development (Geldenhuys and de Lange, 2007; Stead and Watson, 1994, 1998; Watson and Stead, 1990), but also acting as a stumbling block to this

process. Participants as illustrated in their stories, apart from identifying various stumbling blocks in their context and resultant constraints, also narrated some ways of dealing with stumbling blocks (including those of happenstance and those of a socio-structural nature) through a process called enacted negotiation. This receives attention next.

5.2.3 Enacted Negotiation: Dealing with Stumbling Blocks

In dealing with the identified stumbling blocks in section 5.2.2, a process called enacted negotiation was central to the career development of previously disadvantaged individuals. Enacted negotiation was not just a process of exchange between the individual and their situation but a way of overcoming the identified stumbling blocks. This process of enacted negotiation appears to reveal a messy side of career development, one that is unpredictable, dynamic and unstable (Bright et al, 2009; Gerber et al, 2009; Henneberger and Sousa-Poza, 2007; Hirshi and Vondracek, 2009). Career development was illustrated based on participant stories as a dynamic and complex process (Savickas, 2005), with enacted negotiation as a process in dealing with this complexity. This process of career development featuring enacted negotiation illustrated in this work appears to contradict seminal ideas of the process of career development being progressive, following upward steps and being a response to authority and responsibility (Brousseau et al, 1996; Hall and Moss, 1998; Milward and Brewerton, 2000). The process of career development illustrated in this work also challenges the idea of a career as being a linear and predictable process, a view held in seminal theories of career development (Maree and Beck, 2004).

Career development in this research was illustrated as a complex process that may

include broken employment patterns and part-time employment in relation to the opportunities and constraints available at the particular time to the individual (Crompton and Harris, 1998). Part-time employment represented a compromise as argued by Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2005). The participants I interviewed, however, used part-time employment as a way of getting to their desired career choice, not as the best and most acceptable option as argued by Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2005). Participants who, in their stories, appeared dissatisfied in their current situation used part-time work to advance themselves towards their envisaged career path, not settling for less. Part-time work was part of the process of enacted negotiation in dealing with constraints affecting individuals. Their choice was due not only to the necessity of having to provide financially for themselves and their family, but the desire to aim towards a preferred career choice. As a result, participant stories as illustrated in this work reveal the opportunities and constraints available to the individual across time (Crompton and Harris, 1998) en route to their career choice. Through activities such as part-time work, individuals met their immediate economic needs and dealt with stumbling blocks immediate to them. This did not mean the individual had to give up their career pursuits; rather they kept hope alive and a sense of aspiration towards something better. Importantly, a process called enacted negotiation allowed not only for this expression but also an opportunity for a consistent sense of a career, individual progression and the bettering of the individual's life.

Enacted negotiation based on the participant's stories attests to the role of agency (Chen, 2006) as a process influencing individual career development. In this, enacted negotiation is when an individual takes action in dealing with their situation of disadvantage. This action was varied. First, it involved seeking information. For

instance, Tendai's uncle and auntie wanted her to study for a law degree. However, Tendai did not want to study law, but instead preferred social work. Tendai realised that to change her uncle's and auntie's desire for her to study law she needed to justify her position and why it was better. Information in the story of Tendai was helpful in changing her uncle's and auntie's desire for her to study law. Tendai went and collected information from her local library justifying her position to study social work and used this to change her uncle's and auntie's career wish for her. Added to this, Tendai went further to use personal information around her upbringing as an orphan to justify her desire to study social work. Her chosen career path based on her upbringing would allow Tendai to help others in her situation. Information served the purpose of justifying Tendai's career choice over what her uncle and auntie wanted.

Second, enacted negotiation also involved individuals looking for the best solution considering their personal circumstance. For instance, a number of participants (eg Sivuyile, Sisanda, Godfrey, Fezeka, Taka and Zanele) in their stories mentioned having to work around their condition of poverty and working around this for their career development. The best solution was one away from their situation of disadvantage as a personal circumstance to one that allowed the individual to move forward in their life. Third, enacted negotiation also consisted of individuals working in undesirable jobs to save money to get into a particular career. For instance, participants such as Nozi mentioned in their stories working in jobs such as waitressing and administration as a way to earn money. The hope was that after earning money from these jobs this would be directed towards paying for their studies for the desired career paths. Fourth, enacted negotiation also consisted of direct confrontation with regard to issues affecting the individual. For instance, Jay was not happy in his job as a teacher; he really wanted to

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make a career change and used this experience to chart a way forward in his life. Instead of just continuing in the same job and waiting for his big opportunity, Jay confronted his situation head on. The result of this confrontation saw Jay leaving the teaching profession and making a way for his current career path as an accountant.

Finally, enacted negotiation consisted of individuals taking opportunities and consulting others. For instance, participants such as Nwabisa, Bulie, Kuda, Nozi, Lizo and Nandipha cited making use of opportunities in the new South Africa through the policies of Affirmative Action (AA) and Employment Equity (EE), which target previously disadvantaged groups. These opportunities included bursaries for further study, learnerships and internship programmes. Before taking these opportunities, these individuals were dealing with challenges that affected their future career development, chief of which was their situation of poverty. Taking these opportunities not only helped with individual career development but changed the lives of these individuals. Consulting came about when these individuals through friends, family and community members were referred to such opportunities. Taking this advice from friends, family and community members helped introduce participants in this study to opportunities, those specific to AA and EE. Apart from the role of agency, the process of enacted negotiation appears to occur as a socially constructed process of individual performance and co-construction (LaPointe, 2010). Consideration with this as illustrated in the stories is placed on the importance of the recursive themes of not just the individual's past, present and future (Patton and McMahon, 2006) but also that of South Africa.

The concept of "pragmatic rationalism" (Hodkinson et al, 1996:122), introduced earlier

in the chapter, coupled with the idea of turning points can also help in understanding how enacted negotiation as a process works. In this the individual dealing with stumbling blocks before them is affected by their "horizons for action" (Hodkinson et al, 1996:123), given the presence of opportunity before them and how they are perceived (McMahon et al, 2010). From the vantage point of the individual and their situation, "what is available affects what we perceive to be possible and what we perceive to be possible and what we perceive as desirable can alter the available options" (Hodkinson et al, 1996:3). Participant stories support these ideas, with individuals desiring to deal with various stumbling blocks to an envisaged future. Enacted negotiation is different to some career development processes identified in the extant literature. For instance, it is different from what Stead and Watson (2006:97) refer to as "muddling through". In enacted negotiation, there is a deliberate effort by the individual in dealing with stumbling blocks affecting their career development, not just accepting them leading to a desired choice. As a result, enacted negotiation was a way of turning individual stumbling blocks into opportunities with a hope for individual career development. It was an avenue of exchange between interested parties (eg family, peers, and teachers) and the identified stumbling blocks that act as constraints, leading to the exercise of individual choice.

Finally, enacted negotiation is illustrated as a core process in the career development of the previously disadvantaged individuals based on the stories gathered. Enacted negotiation allowed for career plans to move from being concrete to malleable. Individual career plans appeared to start as concrete and subsequently changed later in life. The change may be attributed to a number of factors, such as individual lack of interest in one career and individual desire to change careers (eg Benhilda, Nozi, Sivuyile and Jay), a change facilitated by the fall of apartheid and the ushering in of democracy in South Africa (eg Bulie, Bongani and Steven). Notions of a concrete career were also affected by structural changes in an individual's current job or career

path. This research illustrated the influence of factors such as redundancy, retrenchment and unemployment as seen in the stories of Steven, Bulie, Bongani, Kuda, Lisa and Nandipha. These events changed what may have appeared to be concrete career paths and enabled the individual to work around their situation through enacted negotiation for the best outcome for their career development.

Enacted negotiation was also manifest around issues of choosing which institution to study at and which course to study and achieving a balance in the life of the individual. The salient consideration here involved individual circumstance and disadvantage. This subsequently led the individual to enrol via distance learning. Distance learning allowed an individual to rise above the challenge of disadvantage and also to negotiate around this by attaining an educational qualification. This helped the individual move to a desired career. Although distance learning was a pragmatic choice because it was cheap, education was viewed as a way of facilitating individual career development. The attainment of an education through distance learning thus occupied a place of importance in the stories of the previously disadvantaged distance learners. For instance, Zanele worked as a police officer after being self-employed and described the rationale for distance learning as dual. First, it appealed to her individual situation and circumstance as a poor single mother. Second, the flexibility of distance learning would allow her to work, with the aim to improve her chances of promotion. Distance learning allowed individual participants to work around their personal situation, owing to its perceived cheapness and flexibility.

Finally, enacted negotiation was manifest in dealing with societal and cultural expectations. For instance, participants such Tendai, Nozi, Nandipha, Nwabisa,

Saneliswe and Sisanda mentioned the challenge of being a woman in patriarchal society. Often this resulted in society anticipating these participants to take up careers deemed as those for women and to shun careers for men. These participants cited in their stories working around such expectations and to a certain extent challenging the status quo for their advancement. Interestingly, participants such as Bongani, Taka, Sivuyile, Steven and Xanti also mention challenges men face as being providers and hence their desire to be in careers where they earn more to provide for their family and fulfil societal and cultural expectations. Enacted negotiation through dialogue and even going against expectations of society and cultural expectations provided participants the opportunity to advance with regard their careers. This tends to support previous work that showed how complex recursive interaction can exist in factors such as the influence of culture on individual career development (Bimrose, 2008).

5.2.4 The Role of Distance Learning

The role of education, particularly distance learning, was viewed by participants in their stories as an instantiation of enacted negotiation. This is because it reflects the individual need to earn money and the need for flexibility to achieve a work–life balance and to fit within the consideration of constraints, such as the lack of funds. As such, distance learning appears to emerge as part of the constraints within the individual's context. Previous work in South Africa (eg Geldenhuys and De Lange, 2007; Jordaan et al, 2009; Myburgh, 2005; Watson et al, 2001) has studied career development but has often neglected the distance learning context. This work using participant stories illustrates how career development happens within a distance learning context in South Africa, including the constraints (manifest in stumbling blocks) affecting them. These

include: financial constraints, the failure to make it into full-time universities, poor high school matriculation and individual circumstance. Participant stories also illustrate the way in which individuals deal with these constraints, with enacted negotiation an important process.

Distance learning based on these participant stories serves a pragmatic function that cannot be divorced from individual needs or the circumstances surrounding their disadvantage. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996) would see the reason to enrol via distance learning illustrated in the participant stories as evidencing task approach skills in learning, based on the desire for individual career development. The decision to enrol by distance learning can be seen as acting based on these skills. In essence, distance learning assisted the career development process, with the individual acquiring a qualification or the skills to support this. Distance learning thus created a space not just for acquiring an education but also aiming for mobility away from a life of disadvantage to a better one, considering the individual situation and background in South Africa. Distance learning also appealed to participants who were changing careers (eg Bulie, Steven, Bongani, Sisanda and Xanti). The thinking could be that distance learning allowed these participants to change work through tasks such as re-skilling and up-skilling, allowing them to take necessary action (Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1996:250) of career change. The next section of this chapter refers to presenting how the research question was answered.

5.3 HOW THE RESEARCH QUESTION WAS ANSWERED

By way of recap, the research question was set as follows:

"How do the personal narratives and stories of career development processes

amongst South African distance learners manifest, and to what extent are the

elements of previous disadvantage the source of this?

As discussed in the previous section, personal narratives and stories amongst South African distance learners manifest through a desire to deal with various stumbling blocks before them through enacted negotiation. The aim for this is to exercise individual choice concerning career development. Perhaps one of the greatest stumbling blocks illustrated in this work was individual disadvantage. This, as already stated, was illustrated as a recursive theme in participant stories not only considering the individual's past, present and future (Patton and McMahon, 2006), but also those of South Africa.

Previous disadvantage resulting from individual socio-economic status (Geldenhuys and de Lange, 2007; Stead and Watson, 1994, 1998; Watson and Stead, 1990) served as a constraint and limited individual choice concerning their career development. However, through enacted negotiation, participants used their disadvantage to devise a better future and advance in their lives. First, previous disadvantage limited choice with regard to career choice and the institution of study. Second, participants used their situation of disadvantage as a yardstick for an envisaged better life. These findings will now be looked at in more detail.

5.3.1 Previous Disadvantage as Limiting Career Choice and Institution of Study

Issues of previous disadvantage in this research were illustrated as constraining in the lives of the individual. Limited choice and constraints appeared to exist amongst the sample of previously disadvantaged individuals interviewed. Noteworthy constraints

were issues of a financial nature. Thus this work show support to previous work (e.g. Msila, 2006; Sedibe, 2011) detailing cost consideration as barrier towards access to education. In this work, it was participants cited desire to attend full-time university, but they could not do so because of the exorbitant fees. Distance learning through UNISA appears as a negotiated settlement to this desire in joining full-time universities (Lephalala and Pienaar, 2007).

An individual's previous disadvantage was illustrated to influence their access to career information through formal channels like career testing and guidance. There is support to previous work in South Africa that showing that previously disadvantaged individuals lack access to quality career information (Chuenyane, 1983; Hickson and White, 1989; Stead and Watson, 2006). Participants in this work relied more on informal networks than formal career assessment tools. The latter were out of their reach due to cost. The former were readily available and cheaper, hence favoured.

Interestingly all the participants interviewed cited residing or having stayed in the townships. During apartheid South Africa these townships were a conclave of cheap labour mostly resided by black people (Stead and Watson, 2006). The socio – economic conditions of these areas were not favourable and in most cases relegated black people from being active participants in the economy to a mere periphery for labour. The townships were illustrated in by participants as not desirable due to factors such as crime and poverty. Some participants used this experience as a benchmark of what they do not want to attain based on their locality. The role of distance learning served the purpose of providing access to education to those previously disadvantaged (The South African Department of Education, 2010). Thus distance learning appealed to the

condition of previous disadvantage and afforded opportunity for skills acquisition. Distance learning appealed as a possible remedy to the challenges of previous disadvantage and a means for not just inclusion and access but also enabling individual career development. Thus, the condition of previous disadvantage was a yardstick also for a better future.

5.3.2 Previous Disadvantage as a Yardstick for a Better Future

Constraints towards individual career development appear common and embedded mostly (not exclusively) to the context. These constraints as identified in this discussion chapter range from childhood to the adult stage. Stories in this chapter were illustrated to be located in various contextual spaces that include the home, the work-place, the school-setting and also at a national scale. Within each of these spaces were constraints limiting individual career development. One of the notable constraints within all these spaces was the individual situation of disadvantage. This situation of disadvantage has historical ties, with participants tracing it to generations before them living during the apartheid era. Being previously disadvantaged appeared to be synonymous with a life of struggle, as shown in the participant stories. This was a life of limited access to basic services, lack of information and a condition of poverty and violence in their communities. In relation to career development, individuals used this condition of previous disadvantage as a yardstick for a better-envisaged future. A future that improves especially on their economic situation trickling into their social lives (du Toit and de Bruin, 2002). Participants painted a picture of their life experiences as influenced by positive future aspirations. Therefore from the findings it can be assumed that the distance learners also drew motivation and inspiration from their status constraint of disadvantage. The quest to get an education (in this study through distance learning)

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can best attest to this albeit various challenges experienced by the individual. As a result, this work shows support to previous work that attribute the influence of educational attainment on individual career development (Geldenhuys and de Lange, 2007; Jordaan et al, 2009; Myburgh, 2005; Watson et al, 2001). Uniquely, this work extends this and shows this within a distance learning context by consideration of an individual's disadvantage and driven by their desire for a better future.

The benefits of distance learning as illustrated through the participant stories occupy a pragmatic function; distance learning was illustrated as a mode of study that considers individual needs or the circumstances surrounding the condition of disadvantage. Distance learning therefore created a space for not just acquiring an education but also aiming for a better future whilst meeting these individual variations.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a discussion of the findings of this work in relation to the extant literature. The next chapter outlines the contribution of this research including the limitations and agenda for future research.

CHAPTER 6: CONTRIBUTION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE AGENDA

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the contribution made by this study. A Career Development/Activity Constraints/Context Framework (CDaCCF) based on the findings from this research is proposed. This framework is viewed in relation to other career development theories and frameworks presented in the literature review section. Additionally, the merits of the CDaCCF are argued for in this chapter. The chapter then outlines the theoretical, methodological and practical contributions of the study. Finally, the limitations and a future research agenda are proposed.

6.2 CAREER DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVITY/CONSTRAINTS/CONTEXT FRAMEWORK (CDaCCF)

Based on the findings of this study, a career-building framework is proposed stemming from the stories and narratives of the previously disadvantaged distance learners. This framework is based on three tenets of *Career Development Activity*; *Constraints* and *Context* presented in the previous chapter. This also includes the processes by which these relate to each other from the individual perspective in dealing with stumbling blocks, ie the role of enacted negotiation. Figure 6 gives an outline of the CDaCCF. The remainder of this section explains the framework fully and gives justification for why it is a noteworthy contribution in relation to existing perspectives on career development.
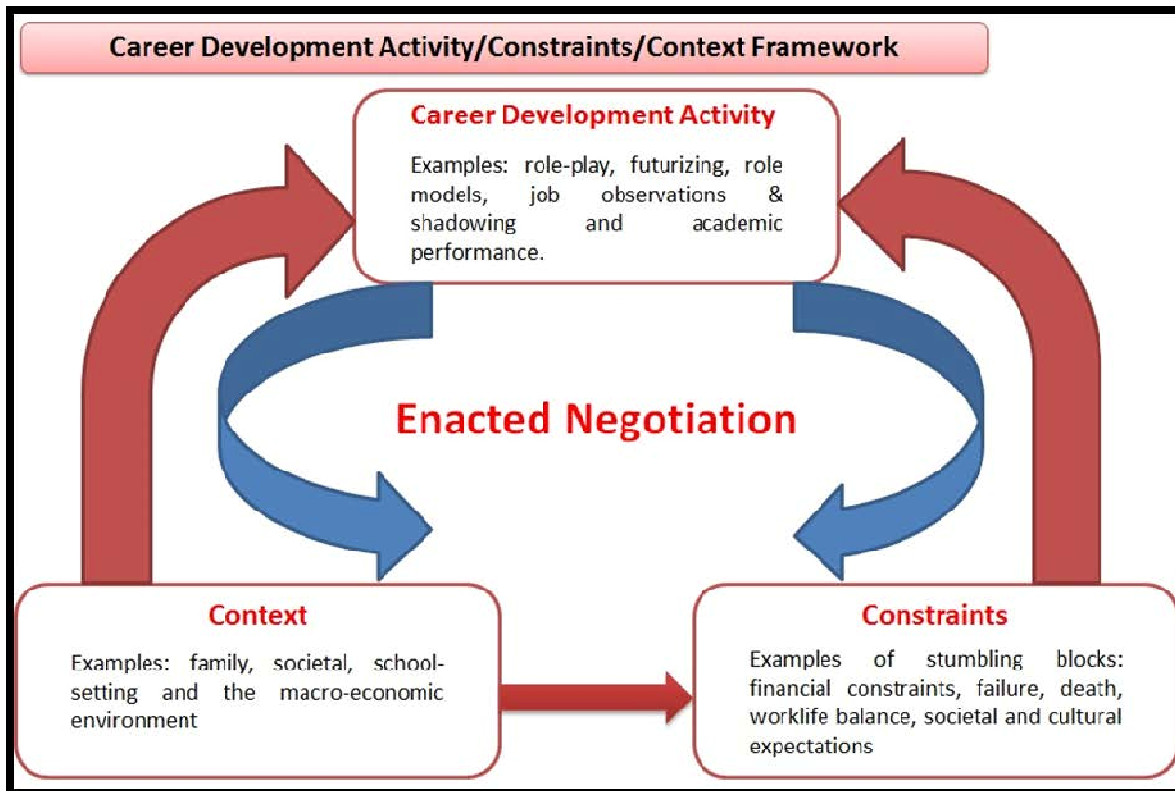
Figure 6: Career Development Activity/Constraints/Context Framework

The CDaCCF meets the shortcomings of previous career theories, which are reductionist and fragmented in nature (Maree and Beck, 2004). This has inevitably resulted in a neglect of some important factors and an over-focus on others. Collin (1997) noted a concern with traditional career theories in that they viewed career development as a distinct dimension of life, to be studied in isolation from the social context. The CDaCCF addresses these concerns by its focus on factors that may have been neglected according to Collin (1997). In the CDaCCF, context plays an important role in shaping individual career development and seen in relation to factors such as constraints, career development activity and a process of enacted negotiation. In addition, traditional career theories have been cited for their neglect of the dynamic interaction between factors in

career development literature (eg, Gati and Saka, 2001; Germeijs and De Boeck, 2003; Gordon and Meyer, 2002; Morgan and Ness, 2003; Tien, 2005). The CDaCCF establishes the existence of interaction between factors influencing individual career development. For instance, the influence of context and constraints on the individual career development activity was a most common theme portrayed in participant stories. Also, the role of a process such as enacted negotiation in the individual's situation echoes the importance of such interaction in the resolution of individual problems. In reality, the CDaCCF does not propose career development to be a linear process but one that is complex, based on the interaction of a number of related factors. The key to the CDaCCF is the integration of individual life as a whole (Brown, 1990) not as fragments. This acknowledges that individual identities are not unified but can be multiple, taking into consideration various life situations that may be undergoing a process of change and transformation (Hall and associates, 1996). Given such consideration and also as illustrated through participant stories, a fragmented view of career development may not accurately represent the views of previously disadvantaged individuals in South Africa.

Apart from emphasising the integration of individual life (Brown, 1990), the CDaCCF addresses concerns around traditional theories, models and frameworks that fail to account for the dynamic interaction between the person and their environment (Vondracek et al, 1983), notably the interaction between economic and social factors (Osipow and Fitzgerald, 1996). The CDaCCF argues for a dynamic interaction as evident by the feedback loops, eg

Context -> Constraints

Context -> Career Development Activity

Constraints -> Career Development Activity

Enacted Negotiation -> Career Development Activity, **Context, Constraints**

For example, **constraints** such as financial difficulty acted as stumbling blocks on the individual. These **constraints** had their source in the individual's **context**, eg their family situation of poverty. Given such a situation, an individual's **career development activities** involved considering possible **constraints** that in some cases prevented the individual from accessing quality schooling or professional help. However, the individual, through a process called **enacted negotiation**, found ways of working around the **constraints** presented to them in their **context** for the purpose of their career development. There appears to be dynamic interaction, as illustrated in the CDaCCF, depicting previously disadvantaged individuals as having multiple related identities (Ibarra, 2003) with demanding commitments (Cohen, 2003) and meeting variety of obligations (Burke et al, 1993; Wiley, 1987). The CDaCCF is a starting point towards future research with specific emphasis on previously disadvantaged individuals whose career experiences remain "understudied" (Schreuder and Coetzee, 2012:4). This research, by focusing on a specific community (ie previously disadvantaged individuals), has demonstrated a complex but still a strategic vision of career development with specific attention to previously disadvantaged people. At this moment, the contribution and relevance of the CDaCCF is restricted to a particular community, and further research will be required to test its relevance to other communities. The CDaCCF proposed in this research has a potential benefit of being incorporated with aspects of other theoretical frameworks and models, eg The STF (Patton and McMahon, 1999, 2006). The STF and the CDaCCF appear to meet the shortcomings of traditional career theories (Brown,

1990) such as trait and factor. This is done by not only identifying but also exploring the relationships of specific factors influencing individual career development. For instance, the STF and the CDaCCF attest to the role of historical issues and socio-economic status in individual career development. Both frameworks appear to argue for context as integral in individual decision-making (McMahon and Patton, 1995). The CDaCCF is not a general overarching framework of career development as argued in the STF (Patton and McMahon, 1999, 2006). The CDaCCF in my view is a specific framework that accommodates the complexity of career development of previously disadvantaged individuals in South Africa. The CDaCCF appears as an answer to calls of models (eg du Toit and de Bruin, 2002) of its kind that are specific and sensitive to the South African context considering the socio-economic changes and social justice agenda deemed key post-apartheid (The South African Department of Education, 2010).

The CDaCCF proposed in this research does not conceptualise career development to be a set of linear stages that an individual must go through. Crucially, the elements in the CDaCCF are not simply passed through, but weave through respondents' stories (emerging and re-emerging), providing constraints and context at several different moments in an individual's life. Career development is thus messy, unpredictable and does not follow a linear progression at all. The CDaCCF can be thought of as an answer to some important calls within the careers literature. On one level it answers calls (eg Stead and Watson, 2006) for an opportunity to learn about careers and career development outside the dominant Western influence from the US espoused in most career theories. On another level, this framework fits into an emerging stream of literature based on calls for more investigations of career experiences through the subjective lens (Chudzikowski, 2012) and seeking to understand career development not as a static but dynamic process (Savickas, 2005). For instance, this research has illustrated through

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individuals chronicling their constraints these to be emotive with fear, hopes and a sense of individual aspiration (Baruch, 2006). These would have been difficult to capture fully in an objective and quantitative investigation of career development relying on surveys. The theoretical contributions of this research are presented next.

6.3 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

6.3.1 Career Development as a Messy Non-Linear Process

Career development as illustrated through participant stories emerged as a messy and non-linear process as often believed in seminal work and other empirical studies. In the participant stories, individuals appeared to draw meaning and sense of direction through dealing with various constraints affecting not only their lives but their career development. This behaviour can be thought of as one of self-management (Savickas, 2006) in response to changes affecting individuals. In dealing with constraints affecting them, participants in their stories did not indicate career development to be a linear process, but one that is messy and non-linear. There is similarity in this work with that of LaPointe (2010), who also challenged the linear, stable and fixed notion of a career. In my research, career development occurred through a process of enacted negotiation that allowed the individual to deal with stumbling blocks to their career development. This process of enacted negotiation appears to nullify ideas of a linear, stable and fixed view of career development and support one that is unpredictable, dynamic and unstable (Bright et al, 2009; Gerber et al, 2009; Henneberger and Sousa-Poza, 2007; Hirshi and Vondracek, 2009). In addition, the view of career development illustrated in my research is one that is performed, emergent and interactional, rather than one that is simple and entails specific identifiable stages. Career development as illustrated in participant stories appears to take

into consideration multiple facets of the individual life and how they integrate around individual career development (Brown, 2009). Participants in my research cited the role of economic and social factors (Osipow and Fitzgerald, 1996) as working together in shaping choices they make in their life and career development. Narratives of participants appear to illustrate the dynamic interaction between the person and their environment (Vondracek et al, 1983). This interaction was also complex as manifest through identified stumbling blocks illustrated in participants' stories. Owing to the nature of this complex, dynamic interaction in this research, career development appears to be a non-linear process and one that is difficult to predict.

Finally, career development in my research was messy and non-linear, possibly owing to the nature of the participants I interviewed as a social group. The previously disadvantaged individuals appeared to occupy multiple identities (Ibarra, 2003). Participants in my research appeared to belong to groups such as their family and community, and also would cite a racial identification of being black. Within each of these groups were possible commitments (Cohen, 2003) and expected obligations (Burke et al, 1993; Wiley, 1987). Such multiple identities appear not to show support for the linear, prescriptive notion of a career assumed in seminal career theories. These multiple identities and the resultant actions appear to show career development as an emergent process with consultation between the individual and their community.

6.3.2 Theoretical Developments and Challenges to Current Theory

This research also challenges current, general and normative models of career development by demonstrating how there are crucial factors that are specific to an identified community (previously disadvantaged individuals). The CDaCCF offers a way of theorising this process, whilst acknowledging that further research will be required to see if the model holds for different communities. On one level, the CDaCCF emerges as a call to models of career development that are familiar with local people (Kim and Berry, 1993) and specific to community groups in a South African context (du Toit and de Bruin, 2002). The CDaCCF gives voice to groups such as those previously disadvantaged who may not have received attention in other models or frameworks. This may be helpful in proposing solutions specific to these groups and also extending our understanding of career development (Derr and Briscoe, 2007; Savickas, 2011a). The CDaCCF illustrates the individual explanation or sensemaking process of career development and pays attention to an often neglected and "understudied" (Schreuder and Coetzee, 2012:4) research sample in previously disadvantaged individuals. The CDaCCF emerges out of a process of using narratives without inscribing values on participants (evident in Western surveys used in a South African context) but rather allowing them a space for expression (Riessman, 1993).

6.3.3 Non-Western Experience

This study has theoretical ramifications, given calls eg (Stead, 2007; Stead and Chetty, 2002; Stead et al, 2001) for studies positioned within a South African context without any Western influence often evident in quantitative studies replicating Western instruments. This non-Western experience appeared to allow participants to choose and illustrate issues of importance specific to them without imposing a Western agenda (Nsamaneng and Dawes, 1998; Stead, 1996; Stead and Watson, 2006). For instance, participant stories illustrated in this research painted career development as involving factors beyond just individual interests and wants established in seminal theories. The process instead consisted of factors such as family, schooling, socioeconomic standing and a historical consideration. From this, there appeared to be issues only specific to South Africa in the stories of the participants. These included how participants had to deal with the effects of apartheid and financial deprivation. These effects were crucial to the emergence of the notion of career development for the respondents used in this research. From interacting with issues of apartheid and financial deprivation, these emerge as structural constraints from context that affect career development (Roberts, 1984, 1993, 1995, 2000). Participant stories illustrated how the process of enacted negotiation is a socially constructed phenomenon and one involving individual performance (LaPointe, 2010). In a South African context, this extends to work demonstrating the influence of context on individual career decision-making (eg Geldenhuys and De Lange, 2007; Jordaan et al, 2009; Myburgh, 2005; Watson et al, 2001) and also works taking non-Western experience of understanding career development through narrative inquiry (eg Geldenhuys and De Lange, 2007; Maree and Beck, 2004; Maree et al, 2006).

6.3.4 Career Development: A Lived Experience Rather Than Discrete Phenomenon

Stories as a research technique made it possible to establish the beginning, middle and end (Bujold, 2004) of events shaping the individual experience. This research took a "holistic approach" (Del Corso and Rehfuss, 2011:338) instead of being restricted to just one moment of the individual experience or treating events in career development as discrete and often fragmented as is often the case in survey-based techniques. Traditional psychological approaches to career theory have been flagged for their separation of the individual from their context (Brooks and Forrest, 1994). Participants' stories used in this research tend to illustrate career development as a lived experience rather than a discrete phenomenon, as outlined in the CDaCCF with emphasis on the stumbling blocks faced by individuals that serve as constraints to the individual and whose origins appear to be contextual. For instance, participants cited constraints that affected their formation of a sense of a career in childhood and adolescence and the resolution of these. Later participants reflected in their stories on how these experiences helped in determining occupational choices as adults. This is a view previous empirical work (Hartung et al, 2008; Magnuson and Starr, 2000; Porfeli et al, 2008; Trice and McClellan, 1994). Participants to my research appear to emphasise the relatedness rather than separateness between events in their childhood and adolescence. The view of career development as argued in this research and as illustrated through participant stories and the CDaCCF places emphasis on the lived experience as a whole and not as a discrete phenomenon. A lived experience in which participants to the research narrated how they made sense of their experience of career development based on their life experience. Career development here is seen as an intrinsic part of the lived experience rather than as a

distinct and separate phenomenon. The methodological contribution of this study is presented next.

6.4 METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION

This study adopted a narrative and story-telling inquiry in its investigation of career development amongst a sample of previously disadvantaged distance learners. The use of such a method represents a contribution to the careers literature internationally and in South Africa. Four reasons are given as justification for a methodological contribution.

First, career development in South Africa has traditionally been investigated through a quantitative approach (eg Bosch et al, 2012; Creed et al, 2002; du Toit and de Bruin, 2002; Jordaan et al, 2009; Myburgh, 2005; Patton et al, 2003; Schultheiss and Stead, 2004; Stead and Chetty, 2002; Watson et al, 2001). Savickas and his colleagues (2009) have argued that such methods often oversimplify the nature of careers and career development. The use of a narrative inquiry gives respondents more space to discuss the issues that affect them as distance learners in South Africa in building their career development. It represented a move from a list approach (often evident in seminal career theories and resultant instruments) to delving into the complex nuances that characterise issues around career decision making. Second, a qualitative investigation of career development enabled an investigation of how complex variables interact and influence career development in South Africa. This method has allowed respondents to talk of how their careers unfolded over time (Cohen and Mallon, 2001) and the resultant meaning from this process (Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988). The stories told by

individuals helped illustrate this through the role of a process referred to as enacted negotiation. A quantitative research approach would not have managed to capture this as fully as a narrative and story-telling approach has done here.

Third, this study sheds light onto understanding career development by using qualitative methodology amongst individuals in disadvantaged contexts such as South Africa (Schreuder and Coetzee, 2012; Maree and Molepo, 2007). This research study extends and answers calls from a growing body of work investigating career development qualitatively in South Africa (Maree and Beck, 2004; Maree et al, 2006; Geldenhuys and de Lange, 2007) and internationally (eg Blustein, Kozan and Kellgren, 2013; Cohen and Duberley, 2013; LaPointe, 2010; Reid and West, 2011). Qualitative investigation of career development allows for a deeper understanding of issues that affect career development, especially the role of often neglected factors (as in quantitative studies) such as sociocultural influences on individual career development (Bimrose, 2008; Reckwitz, 2002). In this research and through narrative inquiry, a career is shown as a social construction rather than an objective reality (Mallon and Cohen, 2000). This is manifest in the finding of a career as consisting of a process of enacted negotiation in response to stumbling blocks to the individual. In this view, a career is presented as dynamic rather than static. This research proposes the CDaCCF as an outcome of using qualitative methods to be able to capture and understand these complexities in career development. This potentially adds useful insight and weight to the growing body of knowledge in South Africa and internationally, as cited earlier.

Finally, the method of using narratives has allowed for the exploration of personal meanings of the lived experience. This is opposed to the quantitative research design, which strives for ascertaining individual self-actualisation (Savickas, 2011a), whereas

this qualitative inquiry seeks to explore meaning through individual self-construction (Maree, 2012) and making sense of the lived experience. For instance, the quantitative research design has been criticised for its failure to capture the role of emotions adequately and its influence on individual career development (eg Savickas, 2007, 2011b, 2011c). Using a narrative inquiry like that shown in this study has placed priority on the role of emotions, especially during periods of transition. In this study, such periods were important in individuals making decisions that may have an influence on their career development. Given this, the quantitative research design would not have captured such influences on career development adequately. The contribution of this research is to be viewed within an emerging trend of empirical work in the careers research stream internationally (Blustein, Kozan and Kellgren, 2013; Chudzikowski, 2012; La Pointe, 2010; Reid and West, 2011) and in South Africa (Geldenhuys and De Lange, 2007; Maree and Beck, 2004; Maree et al, 2006). The practical contribution of this research is presented next.

6.5 PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTION

Perhaps the most practical contribution of this research is how (as detailed in the Methodology section) its findings have led into suggestion of having a dedicated career office at the Port Elizabeth hub of UNISA. A management report based on this research was submitted to the management at UNISA from which this decision is made. I am not sure if this office has been set up yet; however, the UNISA management received the findings of this research with a great deal of eagerness in finding ways to improve their service to students. This is reflected in the communication below, received from one of the managers at the UNISA hub in Port Elizabeth:

Date: December 3 2012
Communication with UNISA manager:

Hi Willie, thanks for sending the report from your research. Important to us was how the individuals you interviewed rated our services. I would be the first to admit that we may not be at our best here but the findings were revealing and in some way showed areas for future growth. I agree with you for the need of a dedicated counselling office here. Having worked at bigger centres like Pretoria there is need for such services in Port Elizabeth. We take on board this suggestion and hopefully next time you visit us I will introduce to the new personnel in charge of career counselling and guidance at our centre. All the best in your new role as a married man.

Other practical contributions are made based on this research. The finding from this study suggested that enacted negotiation was beneficial in the lives of previously disadvantaged individuals in their career development. Importantly, enacted negotiation was a way of dealing with the individual situation of disadvantage; instead of giving up, enacted negotiation allowed individuals to progress in their lives. Previously disadvantaged individuals can use a process like enacted negotiation successfully in their career development not only to change their individual life situation but for their career development. Another practical intervention could be paying attention to (as identified in this research) the ways in which individuals develop a sense of a career. For instance, this research identified the influence of role models in helping individuals develop a sense of a career. Role models were shown to be inspirational because they were from the same disadvantaged background and in some cases identification was by race. Role models offered an opportunity to be empowered in dealing with individual situations of disadvantage. Based on this finding, focus could be on providing these previously disadvantaged role models with career information to help with individual career development. This may encourage participants to take an interest in career paths where previously disadvantaged groups in South Africa are under-represented.

An additional practical intervention based on this study would be to build more distance learning universities of the same status as full-time universities, given that this research has magnified the perceived benefit of distance learning as a mode of study for previously disadvantaged individuals, and given that cost consideration was cited as a stumbling block by previously disadvantaged individuals entering full-time study (Msila, 2006). Innovative ways of encouraging access to university can be suggested based on this. The use of a narrative and story-telling approach has helped show the multi-layered,

unpredictable and interconnected relationships around historical disadvantage and its link with career development. This is useful in order to understand the career decision making pattern of historically disadvantaged individuals to which interventions can be tailored. From a practical perspective, this research reveals the need to utilise research methods such a narrative inquiry in understanding complex yet personal processes such as career development. Given that the majority of the participants used in this study were women, a practical implication from this work could be to come up with interventions based on how women balance life roles with their studies and employment.

6.5.1 Implication for Career Counselling Practice

The findings from the research are likely to be of value to career counsellors who work with clients presenting unique challenges, such as those shown by distance learners used in this study. Understanding how distance learners construct their careers using a narrative and storytelling approach provided a "practical, comprehensive and holistic approach" (Corso and Rehfuss, 2011:338), and the implication is in helping these individuals not just through their distance learning enrolment but career development. This is also important and prudent in informing policy efforts on a grand scale with respect to the implication of distance learning intervention, not just for the purpose of inclusion and access to education but also as a vehicle for career development, especially for those previously disadvantaged in South Africa.

Another implication for practice as revealed in this study involves the issue of striving for balance with regard to study, work and personal–social commitments. There appears to be a paradox here. On one continuum, this balance is needed, with distance learning

allowing for it. However, it appears that maintaining such a balance places a great strain on the individual and a possible stumbling block. Career counsellors can assess their client's commitment towards this balance by drawing on the narratives and ascertaining the practical interventions around such an important construct. One useful way is to offer training courses targeted at distance learners in which aspects of life balance are part of the training. In addition to this, and specifically with distance learners, it may be helpful to make those intending to enrol in distance learning aware of some of the potential challenges, such as striving for balance, that they may face.

Finally, this study is not advocating doing away with objective career assessment tools that still hold popularity to this day. This study instead uses a storied perspective of the narrative of distance learners to reveal some shortcomings of these objective career assessment tools in this chapter.

6.6 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

This research has some limitations that deserve to be noted. First, the sample is not generalisable to the entire population of either distance learners or those who were historically disadvantaged in South Africa. It was not intentional that the majority of participants to the research were black and female. The point here was to work with a sample available, making a theoretical argument for the use of narrative as a research method within the careers research future stream. Future research could consider sample groups neglected in this study, eg coloureds and Indians. Second, though a sample of 40 distance learners took part in this study, only 35 participant stories were used for empirical illustration. Five interviews were not used because there was similarity in their stories not

being well-formed (Labov, 1972, 1982). These five students shared some similarity in that they were all first-year students or studying university foundation courses. Some of the reasons for their stories not being well-formed may have to do with (as they justified) a lack of work and life experience. Added to this, my status as a non-South African may have been perceived negatively by these participants and may have affected how they told (or did not tell) their stories. Further research can specifically focus on the career development of this specific sample group, eg first years only. This allows for a greater focus on the specific issues faced by these individuals. This is an opportunity for further research on such participants, covering their life experience and career formation, which will be in its formative stages.

Notwithstanding such limitations, this study places importance on understanding the role of context, historical considerations and disadvantage in career development. This study also offers an interesting exploration of how these complex variables influence career construction in South Africa, thus appealing to the academic press. A future research agenda can be proposed based on this work. Data collected from this research project demonstrated the importance of empirical work that acknowledges the significance of historical disadvantage on present and future career decision making. Further research and maybe as comparative could look at how previous disadvantage affects career development across this variation. Other important cohorts of previously disadvantaged individuals were omitted. This presents a future research agenda that could aim for a broader representation of such individuals, eg white women, Chinese South Africans and those residing in rural communities. Future research could work with this sample and how their career development has occurred. A cross-comparison study amongst the diverse previously disadvantaged groups would be an interesting future research agenda.

Future research using a narrative approach is recommended. This research has shown the importance of this approach within a distance learning context where participants who work and study were interviewed. Future research could be extended to the organisational setting in understanding the nature of career development within such contexts. Already there is acknowledgement of career development within such contexts using mostly quantitative survey-based methods (eg Bosch et al, 2009; Coetzee et al, 2010; Ferreira et al, 2010; Gerber, 2000; Muofhe and du Toit, 2011; Patton et al, 2003). This presents an opportunity for future research using qualitative methods. The study highlighted the importance of activities such as formal and informal learning as affecting individual career development. Future research could be dedicated to exploring further the role of activities such as this in career development. Added to this, informal networks, and especially those in the community, were found to help inform the nature of career development activity. A study could draw from this the places that focus on ascertaining the role of such networks on career development.

A further focus could investigate nuances of career development in light of community and parental influence. In this study, some participants cited the influence of those in career choice. In some cases, enacted negotiation allowed a process of dialogue between the individual and community members (to include family, peers and teachers). The focus here could be on whose career it is: the individual's or those community members'. This study was focused on the distance learning context. However, previously disadvantaged groups also exist in other learning contexts, such as full-time study,

technical colleges and high schools. Future research for the basis of comparison can be extended into these other contexts. The aim here is to ascertain if the challenges and processes of career development found in this study are unique or similar to those in other contexts. Older participants provided insightful stories and experiences by virtue of their having lived longer. Future research could be focused on these participants and identifying the specific challenges that come with career development at such a stage in life. The career transitions of these people offer potential to understand career development over time. A problem was found with younger participants in this study owing to their lack of life experience. A useful study here could also be dedicated to young people. The focus here would be on identifying how high-school students make course choices and the bearing this has on career development. The CDaCCF proposed in this study needs further investigation to ascertain its robustness or its need for revision. This can be done through a longitudinal study in a bid to ascertain the tenets of the Framework and how they manifest with the progression of time. This testing of this framework can help in identifying constructs that can lead to the design of a questionnaire specific to the needs of previously disadvantaged individuals.

6.7 CONCLUSION

Whilst some limitations in the method and sample used in this research have been noted, the aspiration of exploring one particular group to learn of issues that are specific to that group means that there are inevitable compromises to be made in the generalisability of my findings. I would continue to argue that paying attention to these groups and their specific experiences of career development offers insights not available to those researching

through more general and large-scale studies. The use of qualitative methods as illustrated through this research represents a contribution to emerging sensemaking about career development, not a final word. This work used a narrative and story-telling approach to set the pace for such a research agenda with practical significance. Previous disadvantage represents a stumbling block towards individual career development. However, there is opportunity amidst such constraints (some apparent within the individual's context) through a process illustrated in this research as enacted negotiation, which allows individuals to deal with stumbling blocks towards their career development. Interventions such as distance learning exist as an opportunity for previously disadvantaged South Africans. This is summarised in the quote by Rayline:

"Before in South Africa it was all about white and blacks. As black people we could not get anything, especially if apartheid had not fallen. I would be a maid or a cleaner. Apartheid is finished now. I have and I am now taking opportunities."

CHAPTER 7: REFLEXIVITY OF THE PhD JOURNEY

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks back on the journey of studying for a PhD. The chapter will first identify the lessons learnt during the past three years. Attention will then be given to a reflection on the use of qualitative methods employed in this research. Finally, the chapter concludes by reflecting on the entire process and whether it was worth studying for a PhD.

7.2 GENERAL LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE PhD PROCESS

This section presents four lessons learnt during the period I was studying for a PhD. The lessons learnt include: 1) the importance of a balance; 2) use of networks; 3) passion and persistence as important attributes for success; and 4) the need to develop my academic writing. These lessons represent how my thinking has changed over the years to where I am now.

7.2.1 The Importance of Balance

When I started the PhD in October of 2009, I used to find extra time every week to volunteer at a local charity. It appears this was a continuation of my volunteering experience that had started as far back as 2002 in South Africa. After a year into my PhD, I noticed that I could not afford to give any more time to my volunteering activities owing to the pressing demands of studying for the PhD. After missing a few weeks of volunteering, I began to notice changes in my life. First, I spent a lot of time in the Michael Young Building working on the PhD. This was not a bad thing, as most of my colleagues also spent a lot of time in the same building doing the same work. However, I tended to be in the building for at least 16 hours a day. My housemates even gave me the nickname "the non-resident housemate", and the security guards knew me as the "first one to come in and the last one to leave". Driving this was the fear of failure. Second, I started gaining weight, as I did not have time to go to the gym and also I spent much of the time behind my desk munching snacks as I worked. My sedentary lifestyle probably explained the unwanted weight. Finally, I noticed that, though my mother and siblings stayed in Hertfordshire, at one stage I went for three months without seeing them. I realised that I needed balance in my life.

The importance of balance was again highlighted during the data collection process in Port Elizabeth. I wanted to interview 40 participants for my research. However, I was not able to interview all of them in one month. So, whilst waiting for interviews, I was actually forced to be patient and accommodate other activities, like playing sport, volunteering and attending a leadership and communication development organisation called Toastmasters International. Whilst attending a Toastmasters International event, an old friend shared a story about how she was diagnosed with depression, which had resulted from her hectic

lifestyle. This disclosure was an eye-opener for me, because in my culture depression is something not frequently spoken about. Others have called it "white people's disease", as it is not as common amongst black people. A metaphor I gleaned from my friend's admissionwas that of the "well-balanced three-legged chair". If one leg of this chair was shorter or longer than the others, it ceased to be a stable chair. My friend's argument was for balance; its absence affects the entire well-being of any individual. On my return from South Africa to the United Kingdom, my mother admitted to me having been diagnosed with depression and currently taking medication. This was a shock to me, and actually made me challenge views from my friends that depression is a "white people's disease". My mother's depression was attributed to her lifestyle and career experiences as a mental health nurse. In general, I have learnt of the importance of balance during the PhD process, which can be lonely and isolating. I began to concentrate on exercise and healthy eating. I also started making commitments to visit my family every two weeks and making time for friends. In some way, getting rid of clutter around my desk and a long list of "to do" activities helped preserve my sanity. I am now working as an academic in South Africa, and, when faced with new challenges, I draw on my PhD experience and remind myself of the importance of balance. As a husband I am also realising that I need to strike a balance between my family and the competing interests around me. The importance of striking a balance amongst the many challenges around me in my life was most magnified during the PhD process, and it will be something that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

7.2.2 Use of Networks

I also learnt not to underestimate the value of networking. During my tenure as a PhD student, I attended a number of academic conferences. Most notable was the careers conference held in Cape Town that afforded me the opportunity to meet some influential people also researching career development. Through speed networking at this conference, I managed to get resources that have helped me in shaping ideas for the PhD. Some sources of information also emerged through informal networks. I met Sonia Barnard by chance; she also happened to work for UNISA and was involved in counselling at the Pretoria campus. Through Sonia's help, I managed to get a picture of how distance learning delivery works at UNISA. Sonia also helped me get contacts that subsequently granted me access to the Port Elizabeth hub of UNISA. For me, networks (formal or informal) provided a platform through which I not only learnt but aided the research process.

7.2.3 Passion and Persistence as Important Attributes for Success

There appeared to be a passion that drove me during the high and low moments of the research process. The sources of this passion were varied. For instance, one morning whilst listening to a South African radio station (as I usually did), the presenter (Redi Hlabi) was interviewing Professor Maree from the University of Pretoria, whose work has been cited often in this thesis. For me, though this event was by chance, it ignited a sense of hope and excitement for me, especially as I had research interests similar to those of Professor Maree. At the end of the interview, Professor Maree gave his email address. I contacted him, and he subsequently recommended a book by Graham Stead and Mark Watson that has helped me during my PhD. Passion for me existed in multiple and sometimes

unorthodox ways. This passion also seemed to help me to be persistent, despite some challenges. Notable challenges included: being robbed in Pretoria during the pilot study; struggling to formulate the research question; dealing with fatigue and burn-out; and, finally, in the six months after my viva, making changes recommended by the examiners. One of the notable poems that I printed and placed on my desk at the Open University and my place of residence was *Desiderata*:

"Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit.
If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter;
for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your
achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your career, however
humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution
in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you
to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals;
and everywhere life is full of heroism."

7.2.4 The Need to Develop My Academic Writing

My academic writing has improved since starting the PhD, and this experience has also pointed out the need for further improvement. My first academic article was based on a quantitative paradigm, and in this I used a lot of realist positivist language. The journey to writing in qualitative paradigm as in this work has been difficult for me, given my early

influence. Often my supervisors have had to remind me to avoid writing in realist language in this thesis. For this I also thank their efforts, and at times I could sense frustration not just in person but also when I read their comments. As English is my second language, I also appreciate the exposure I have received whilst studying in the United Kingdom. In my spoken English, I have had to be corrected when I mixed my tenses, something that has been helpful to me. Based upon writing about the experience of the PhD, I admit there is need for constant improvement; I appreciate all the helpful comments about how to improve my writing from the examiners and my supervisors.

7.3 LESSONS FROM USING QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Using qualitative research has been an interesting and often painful process. My views with regard to qualitative methodology have changed based upon the experience of studying for my PhD. I was a great believer in the use of quantitative methods, as no one can argue against numbers. My attitude towards qualitative methods was one of guarded optimism, given that small sample sizes are often used. Despite my initial scepticism, my journey in using qualitative methods has made me a believer in the richness of such methods in understanding behaviour. I used to think qualitative research was easy, as the researcher merely identifies themes from the data before them. My experience has been to the contrary. I thought 40 interviewees was a small sample; however, after data analysis, I was faced with so much data that at one stage I thought I was not going to be able to cope with analysing all of it. Qualitative methods and working with narratives as I did required patience and a lot of commitment as the researcher. Often I turned my bedroom walls into an analysis centre where I pasted themes from my data in trying to get a picture of what my data was telling me. In this, I realised that I was part of the data collection process, through

the questions I asked and how I interpreted the responses from my respondents in the analysis stage.

I also appreciate the value of using a reflective diary during the experience of studying for a PhD. I managed to capture a number of experiences during various stages of the research, eg literature review process; pilot study; attending a conference; collecting the data; analysing and interpreting the data; and, finally, the final writing stage. However, my biggest regret is not following a structure when recording my reflections in the diary. At one stage I realised I needed to analyse the reflections in my diary, as they were haphazard and in some cases illegible, as I wrote whilst travelling. In future I would follow the advice of Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001) to organise the construction of research knowledge when diarising by making sections such as 1) observational notes; 2) methodological notes; 3) theoretical notes; and 4) analytical memos. This would have been ideal for me, and would make it easier, especially when I need the relevant reflections in the diary.

In working with qualitative research, I also realised that there may be some factors not within my control that affect how data is collected. I really think my nationality is a case in point. In some interviews I conducted, there appeared to be a lure of attractiveness that seemed to encourage participants to want to tell me their stories. I appeared to be this concerned, well-travelled and articulate person. In one interview, a participant called me a "clever black" and later called me a "coconut", owing to the way I seemed to present myself. I later learnt that a "clever black" meant a black person who was very eloquent and knowledgeable. On the other hand, a "coconut" was a black person by pigmentation who

expressed and appeared to be living white values inside. These comments, though appearing to be offensive, pointed out to me how heavily focused the discourse in South Africa was on racial identity. This may have worked to my favour when conducting interviews; however, this may also have caused me to be shunned as not being part of the collective, given these unintended nuances. Related to this was my Zimbabwean nationality. Participants seemed to pick up that I was not South African, based on simple things like my accent. For some, my being Zimbabwean in my views may have affected their attitudes towards the interviews. These factors seemed to be unintended, and a part of me as a human being; I learnt from the research process that these factors come with the package and often have an influence on my respondents. However, some factors were within my control. For instance, the way I dressed: I deliberately dressed informally (non-business attire) so that I did not appear too distant to my participants, most of whom came from poor backgrounds.

I also learnt that qualitative research entails a great deal of involvement between the researcher and their participants. In my use of quantitative surveys, I had little or no contact with my sample. However, it appeared that, after listening to participants' stories, I was being drawn into a sense of empathy and compassion for them, something I would not have done using a quantitative paradigm. In some cases when analysing data I found myself feeling grateful for not having gone through the experiences of death, poverty and loss that participants expressed in their stories. The use of stories appeared to offer a therapeutic release not just for my participants but for me as a researcher. In the background, though, is the need to adhere to ethical guidelines and sound research procedures. I have to be honest and say, though, that I did not show much emotion when

participants broke down in front of me, on return to the United Kingdom and when analysing data this appeared to be a re-enactment of the interview situation. I often had to take breaks and walk around The Open University campus just to relax my mind.

As a researcher I also learnt of the importance of issues relating to data recording and analysis. I am more than aware now of the difficulties that are there with regard to textual reproduction issues and my role in this process. I decided to transcribe my interviews rather than use an external party to do this. Though I found this process tedious, it helped me to get immersed in the data I collected; this was also helpful in the analysis stage of the research. The next section seeks to answer the question of whether it was worth studying for a PhD.

7.4 WAS IT WORTH IT?

I would say that studying for the PhD was a worthwhile process, though not free from challenges. Somehow the challenges appear to make the journey towards a PhD all the more worth it. This journey provided me a picture of another side of myself, one of dogged determination in the midst of challenges. During the PhD process, I did not feel the need to give up even when I received messages from other colleagues who had shelved their studies. The interesting thing for me is that, though I was studying the career development processes of previously disadvantaged individuals, this research in a way will form part of my career development story. Like my participants, I also faced constraints in my career

development. Notably, living in a foreign country for three years and adjusting to cultural differences and requirements as set by The Open University were some of these constraints. Like my participants in my research, I also had to negotiate around these constraints. I did not want to settle for less or even drop out; I wanted to finish the entire three years of study. Like the participants in my research, I also attest to the importance of a process such as enacted negotiation in dealing with balance in my life, handling finances and managing interpersonal relationships between colleagues, friends and supervisors. I think I have emerged battle-scarred from my PhD experience, but above all I am a better person and a potential researcher in the making. Inasmuch as I tell the stories of the previously disadvantaged individuals in this thesis, I also have a story of my personal journey in becoming a better researcher. This becomes a story within the story.

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

Consent to Involvement in Post Graduate Research Project

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the research I am carrying out as part of my PhD in Management & Business. I am looking at the career development amongst a sample of South African distance learners. Your input into the research will be kept completely anonymous. There will be nothing in the research to identify the ideas or the thoughts you express. The digital audio recording I make of our meeting will be transcribed and I will email you with a summary of our discussions before deleting the recording. If at any point you would like to stop the meeting or choose not to answer a question or to ask for the recorder to be switched off, you may do so.

You are also very welcome to read a draft version of the final research dissertation and offer additional ideas into the work. My intention is to disseminate the findings from the research in the form of academic and / or practice-based papers. Should you wish to be identified (in order to promote your best practice) you will need to advise me so in writing, otherwise your contribution will continue to be kept anonymous. If you would

like to discuss this interview or my research with anyone else, my lead supervisor is Dr Kirstie Ball. She can be contacted at K.S.Ball@open.ac.uk or 01908 655669.

Your time and support is very much appreciated. Thank you.

With best regards,

Willie Tafadzwa Chinyamurindi

I agree to take part in the research outlined above: YES   NO

I agree for interview to be audio-recorded   YES   NO

Signed   Date

Email address :……………………………………………(to view transcribed copy of interview)

APPENDIX B: DEBRIEFING FORM

Title of Project: Using narratives and story – telling in career development: A South African Distance Learning Perspective.

Principal Researcher: Willie Tafadzwa Chinyamurindi

Contact Details: Email – w.t.chinyamurindi@open.ac.uk; South African number: 0726014900; United Kingdom number: +447861497762

Synopsis:

This study aimed to explore how the personal narratives and stories of career development processes amongst South African distance learners vary and to what extent are elements of previous disadvantage the source of that difference. Research within the career psychology field has been equivocal with regards to understanding careers and career development. Work done in this regard can be summarised along three strands: 1) research using models and theories set within an American & European context; 2) research leaning towards mostly a positivist stance manifest in quantitative methods and experimental design and finally, 3) research using various sample groups to understand careers and career development. Despite this focus, much still needs to be done to understand careers in contexts outside the ones stated. In the South African higher education sector no work has explored career development taking into consideration previous disadvantage amongst

distance learners; whose careers can be thought to be in progress and having greater variation in terms of demographics and activity. This study aimed at exploring and understanding career development using this sample. Attention was given to indigenous psychology[1] and seeks to understand psychology while taking into consideration the local condition of the people.

References:

If you are interested in this area of research, the following introductory sources:

- Stead, G.B. and Watson, M.B. (2006). Career Psychology In The South African Context. (2nd ed.). Van Schaik Publishers: Pretoria

If you have any complaints, concerns, or questions about this research, please feel free to contact, Dr Kirstie Ball, Head of Research at Open University Business School. Her phone number is +441908655669 and her email is k.s.ball@open.ac.uk. Finally, thank you again for helping us with this research.

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION FROM UNISA'S REGIONAL HUB

From: Nkgoang, Motale [Nkgoamj@unisa.ac.za]
To: W.T.Chinyamurindi

Dear Mr. Chinyamurindi

My apologies for only coming back to you now.

As a Regional Manager, I do not have a problem to conduct your research with our PE students. I would therefore request further information as to which subject specifically would you want students from and what level of studies should they be. How soon do you want to start with your project since we are still busy with registration?

Kindly advice as soon as possible so that I can inform staff in PE to assist you with information that you require.

Kind regards

Mr. Motale Nkgoang
Regional Manager: Eastern Cape

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APPENDIX D: ETHICS APPROVAL FROM UNISA

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5 May 2011

Mr W T Chinyamurindi
The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
United Kingdom
MK7 6AA

Dear Mr Chinyamurindi

REQUEST FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE: Using a Narrative and Story-Telling Inquiry in Understanding Career Development: Experiences of Distance Learners in South Africa

Your revised application for ethical clearance in respect of the above study has been received on 26 April 2011 and was considered by the Unisa Research Ethics Review Committee.

The Committee notes with approval the revised contents of your application for ethical clearance and is pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been granted for this study as set out in your application, until 31 December 2012.

We trust that sampling and processing of the relevant data will be undertaken in a manner that is respectful of the rights and integrity of Unisa's students, as stipulated in the Unisa Research Ethics Policy, which can be found at the following website:

http://www.unisa.ac.za/contents/research/docs/ResearchEthicsPolicy_apprvCounc_21Sept07
.pdf

Congratulations on an interesting and very relevant study. We would like to wish you well in this research undertaking.

Kind regards

PROF TS MALULEKE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH

APPENDIX E: ETHICAL APPROVAL FROM THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Dear Willie Tafadzwa Chinyamurindi,

This memorandum is to confirm that the research protocol for the project entitled '*Conceptualising the notion of a "Career" and the Career Development amongst South African Distance Learners'*, as submitted to the review panel on 21st January 2011, **is approved** by the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee **subject to** addressing the comments listed in the attachment and copied below;

1. In the section on methodology that relates to interviews and life-histories could you please clarify whether audio recordings will/will not be made? What security measures will be employed to manage either the original or transcribed information?

2. Will any of the interview sites take place privately, e.g. in participants' homes and if so, what measures are in place for researcher protection?

3. Will the participants be of consent age? The *proforma* section on consent needs to be filled in and resubmitted.

4. Participants should be made aware they can withdraw after participation. Up to which point would this be possible and what will happen to their data if they withdraw?

5. The participants are not told who will see their data and in what form (e.g. verbatim quotations, reproduced drawings?). Where will data/results be published?

6. Participants need to be debriefed directly after the interview but how will this be done? This could include checking they are happy with their participation, the way the interview went, the data they provided etc. Asking participants to provide an email address is insufficient.

7. There are several omissions from the *proforma* that need to be addressed: a) the consent section needs to be filled in, b) which legal and ethical guidelines are to be used, if any (or say 'none'), c) under data protection you need to state that data is sufficiently protected and give details of how you will be doing this, d) under 'other project-related risks' this sentence appears: "*Boredom, mental fatigue, embarrassment or frustration can happen during the course of the interview. These will be identified and stated in the consent form and discussion.*" Could you remove this please?

Please address each point in turn and a) attach any documents that are required to be altered or b) any additional documents requested. We will make every effort to respond quickly to your reply. At the conclusion of your project, by the date that you stated in your application, the Committee would like to receive a summary report on the progress of this project, any ethical issues that have arisen and how they have been dealt with.

Duncan Banks
Chair OU HREC

APPENDIX F: VUYO'S STORY PUBLISHED IN THE HERALD NEWSPAPER

APPENDIX G: PARTICIPANTS TO THE STUDY

Participant	Gender	Age	Year of Study	Language & Culture Group	Course of Study
Benhilda	Female	30	1st	Shona (black)	Psychology
Bongani	Male	49	3rd	Xhosa (black)	Information Technology
Bulie	Female	52	4th (Post grad)	Xhosa (black)	Human Resources
Fezeka	Female	19	1st	Xhosa (black)	Human Resources
Godfrey	Female	27	2nd	Xhosa (black)	Accounting
Jabu	Female	20	1st	Xhosa (black)	Marketing
Jay	Female	34	3rd	Xhosa (black)	Accounting
Julie	Female	38	2nd	Afrikaans (coloured)	Office Management & IT
Kuda	Male	27	5th (Post grad)	Shona (black)	Accounting
Kwezi	Female	22	2nd	Xhosa (black)	Public Health
Lisa	Female	26	4th	Xhosa (black)	Public Administration
Nandipha	Female	35	4th	Xhosa (black)	Office Management & IT
Nozi	Female	36	6th (Post grad)	Xhosa (black)	Certificate Education
Nwabisa	Female	25	5th (Post grad)	Xhosa (black)	Accounting
Odwa	Male	26	4th (Post grad)	Xhosa (black)	Education
Ruth	Female	25	4th (Post grad)	Swahili (black)	Banking
Rayline	Female	30	1st	Afrikaans (coloured)	Accounting
Saneliswe	Female	23	1st	Xhosa (black)	Micro - biology
Shakira	Female	29	4th (Post grad)	Afrikaans (coloured)	Accounting
Sisanda	Female	29	4th (Post grad)	Xhosa (black)	Engineering
Sivuyile	Male	26	2nd	Xhosa (black)	Law
Steven	Male	38	1st	Afrikaans (coloured)	Psychology
Tendai	Male	27	2nd	Shona (black)	Social work
Thembeka	Female	21	1st	Xhosa (black)	Chemistry
Taka	Male	20	2nd	Zulu (black)	Chemical Engineering
Xanti	Male	27	3rd	Xhosa (black)	Mechanical Engineering
Zanele	Female	38	2nd	Xhosa (black)	Policing
Sbu	Male	23	2nd	Xhosa (black)	Marketing
Anele	Male	22	1st	Xhosa (black)	Human Resources Management
Lizo	Male	23	3rd	Xhosa (black)	Information Technology
Mxolisi	Male	30	2nd	Xhosa (black)	Education
Unathi	Male	26	1st	Xhosa (black)	Theology
Dimpo	Female	22	1st	Xhosa (black)	Marketing
Constance	Female	32	3rd	Xhosa (black)	Accounting
Shakes	Male	30	2nd	Xhosa (black)	Economics
Andre	Male	25	2nd	Afrikaans (coloured)	Psychology
Buntu	Male	22	1st	Xhosa (black)	Accounting
Lunathi	Male	22	1st	Xhosa (black)	Accounting
Thando	Male	25	2nd	Xhosa (black)	Accounting
Mzimkhulu	Male	21	1st	Xhosa (black)	Law

Key

Participants Included in the Research

Participants Excluded in the Research

Figure 3: Participants Included and Excluded in the Research

APPENDIX H: DURATION OF THE STUDY

June 2011:
First week of June: Arrive in Port Elizabeth.
First week of June: Orientation with UNISA staff
Second week of June: Data collection
Third week of June: Data collection
Fourth week of June: Data collection

July 2011:
1st week of July: Johannesburg for conference
2nd week of July: Data collection
3rd week of July: Data collection
4th week of July: Data collection

August 2011:
1st week of August: Johannesburg conference
2nd week of August: Continue with data collection
3rd week of August: Continue with data collection
4th week of August: Continue with data collection

Figure 4: Time-Frame for Data Collection

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