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APPENDIX A

Interview setting

The interviews were conducted individually, aside from the focus group which was interviewed at the CHET offices. All interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed verbatim, except for the two telephonic ones. Here the researchers kept notes of the telephone conversation.

Biographical Data Questionnaire

Participants were requested to complete a short biographical questionnaire after the interview.

Instruments

Interview guideline

An interview guideline was drawn up with a list of key questions. This guideline was based on the researcher's knowledge of the area, relevant literature, and two pilot interviews.

APPENDIX B

Transcription and Analysis

Discourse analysis was used to interpret the transcriptions of the group and individual interviews. The primary methodological framework draws heavily on Thompson's depth hermeneutics (1990). A few points of clarification are necessary.

According to this qualitative framework, actions, utterances and texts are meaningful constructions, which need to be interpreted. Thompson stresses that in social inquiry, when these symbolic forms are interpreted, it should be remembered that the "object" of the investigation is itself a pre-interpreted domain. Analysts are thus offering a second level of interpretation – they are re-interpreting a pre-interpreted domain. Another point he asserts is that human beings are integrally connected to historical conditions – they are thus always part of a broader social context. In any analysis of symbolic forms, this social historical context needs to be the first level of analysis (Thompson, 1990).

Thompson defines depth hermeneutics as "a broad methodological framework, which comprises three principal phases or procedures" (p.280). The three phases of the approach are the social-historical, formal or discursive analysis and interpretation/re-interpretation. He does not view these phases as separate stages of sequential method but "as analytically distinct dimensions of a complex interpretative process". (p.280–81)

Many discourse analysts have noted that there is no blueprint or manual to serve as a guide to discourse analysts. The most appropriate method is usually one designed to meet the needs of a

particular study. For the present study, the procedure devised followed Thompson's recommendations (1990) although the methods developed by Potter and Ethereal (1987; 1995), Thompson (1984), Strelbel (1993) and Potgieter (1997) all proved helpful.

| Stage One: Socio-Historical Analysis

This stage of depth hermeneutics is concerned with analysing the ways in which social institutions and contexts condition the "production, circulation and reception of symbolic forms ... to examine the rules and conventions, the social relations and institutions, and the distribution of power, resources and opportunities by virtue of which these contexts form differentiated and socially structured fields" (Thompson, 1990, p.282).

With regard to the present study, this stage concerns sketching the historical conditions and social institutions that influence the discourse of black academics who are on the move.

| Stage Two: Analysis of Transcripts

Thompson asserts that a second level of analysis should be an examination of the symbolic forms which includes an analysis of the social actors' understanding of the terrain. What needs to be noted is that "symbolic forms are contextualised products and something more, for they are products which, by virtue of their structural features, are able to claim to say something about something" (Thompson, 1990, p.284). This level of analysis cannot be seen in isolation from the socio-historical analysis. In fact, this level reflects the social actors' interpretations of the socio-historical context. Thompson states that there are various ways to conduct this analysis.

The present study does not aim to conduct a detailed language analysis, but looks at broad discourses around experiences that a sample of black persons has had in the pursuit of careers as academics.

After the tapes of the individual interviews and the focus group interview were transcribed, the transcriptions were read very thoroughly and then re-read several times. During these readings, the researcher searched for recurring themes, for sets of statements that seemed to represent events, and for patterns of consistency and

variance. This involved searching for the recurring themes, listing them on different sheets of paper, identifying words and phrases or sentences that seemed to paint a particular picture, listing these and then going through everything the researcher had “uncovered” in order to make sense of the data. The researcher also searched for repeating and contradictory phrases. Often the same words, phrases or sentences cropped up and could be placed in a number of categories or themes. This is in keeping with discourse analysis and different to content analysis, where words and phrases may only occupy one coding category.

The obvious question at this stage is how does one “do” this coding and identification of themes? According to Levett (1989), an analysis can take place only as a result of extensive prior reading and theoretically informed ideas. Strebelt (1993) notes that her coding of data into categories was informed by both reading and practical work in the field as well as multiple readings of the data. Billig (1988) also notes that discourse analysts should have built up an understanding of the topic before starting to analyse and understand a text. For the present research all the above was relevant. The researcher felt that an understanding of the topic and the context was most helpful. As Strebelt (1993) points out, it is quite possible to produce a broad range of themes which have been excluded from the present study or alternatively to have highlighted positions differently.

The text was checked again and quotes that represented voices from a broad range of settings were selected. Mama (1995) makes the following point, which is relevant to the present study: “I make no claims about the use I made of the material at my disposal being the best or only use that could be made. On the contrary, I regard the material as having a potentially infinite number of possible interpretations and uses to which it could be put.” (p.86)

| Stage Three: Interpretation/Re-interpretation

However rigorous and systematic the methods of formal or discursive analysis may be, they do not abolish the need for a creative construction of meaning – that is, for an interpretative explication of what is represented or said (Thompson, 1990, p.289). Put simply, Thompson is arguing that the analysis needs to go beyond the sifting out of recurring and contradictory themes. He argues that symbolic forms say something about something and this needs to be

highlighted or grasped by an interpretation. This interpretation within a depth-hermeneutical framework is simultaneously a re-interpretation. The reason for this is the fact that the discourse that is being interpreted has already been interpreted by the social actors within the historical context.

At this stage, according to Thompson, a meaning might be projected that is different from that constructed by the social actors. This raises the issue of conflicting or contending meanings. Thompson (1990, p.290) recognises that this is inherent to the process when she remarks that “the possibility of conflict of interpretation is intrinsic to the very process of interpretation”.

What should be remembered here is that there is never only a single interpretation of individual utterances or discourses. For this reason there is no reason to prove absolute truths or to verify (in the statistical sense) that a particular version “is” the truth.

Writers such as Thompson (1984) argue that although there is no “one truth”, the analyst should attempt to illustrate that his or her interpretation is the most probable one. However, the text is always open to other interpretations.

For the present study, the method of validation is the one mostly commonly and similarly employed by a range of discourse analysts. This entails a broad and representative set of quotes along with the interpretations of the texts that have been analysed. Duncan (1993) notes that this has the advantage that it allows others to evaluate these interpretations and, where necessary, to provide alternatives.