



**BLACK
ACADEMICS
ON THE MOVE**

*How Black South African Academics Account for Moving
Between Institutions or Leaving the Academic Profession*

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December 2002

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<http://www.chet.org.za>

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ISBN 1-919833-45-5

Produced by comPress

www.compress.co.za

Layout by Crystal Gabriels

Cover design by Gareth Chiles



CONTENTS

Acknowledgements v

1. Introduction 1

2. Background to Institutions, Participants
and their Initial Response to the Project 4

3. Data Analysis 6

4. Analysis and Interpretation 8

5. Methodological Shortcomings 25

6. Summary of Findings 26

7. Proposed Strategies for Retaining the Number of
Black Professionals at Institutions of Higher Education 30

8. Concluding Remarks 34

References 37

Appendix A 39

Appendix B 40



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was made possible through funding from the Ford Foundation and the willingness of academics on the move to make time available to participate. Thanks are due to Kopano Ratele for research assistance during the initial phase of the project and to Trish Gibbon for editorial assistance.



INTRODUCTION

South African institutions of higher learning are undergoing major revisions in the areas of policy, leadership, staffing and student enrolment. Some aspects of these revisions may be understood as responses to recent shifts in student populations, including declining student numbers, while others are responses to policy imperatives to overcome the constructed divisions and inequities of the apartheid past. For example, historically white universities and technikons have had to address the issue of imbalances in the racial and gender demographics of their students and academic staff.

Research indicates, however, that not only is there a paucity of black academics at most institutions, but that they still, for the most part, occupy the lower ranks within academia. There has been an overall increase in the number of black students, especially at the historically white Afrikaans-medium universities, but there has not been a corresponding change in the composition of members of staff, especially academic staff. Mbabane (2001) refers to this situation as “new wines into old vessels”.

New black academic staff have usually been employed at one end or the other of the employment spectrum – at the lecturer level or at a senior management level, illustrated by the fact that the figures for black women employed at the professorial level have not advanced on pre-1994 levels. For example, the primary researcher for this project is one of only two black women employed at the professorial level at the University of Pretoria (Equity Office figure, October 2001).

In a paper entitled “Employment Equity Challenges for Higher Education”, Loyiso Mbabane (2001) points out that blacks are dominant in senior posts at the historically black universities (HBUs)

but that fewer than 20% of senior positions are occupied by blacks at the historically white institutions. A break down by gender indicates that black women academics are scarcer than men and also occupy lower ranks.¹ The number of black women academics holding doctoral degrees is also extremely small.

The historically black universities and technikons, such as Fort Hare, the University of the Western Cape and the Peninsula Technikon, employ a large number of the small pool of black academics. Recently, a number of academics who have taught at the HBUs have been moving to historically white universities, to positions in government or, in certain instances, into the corporate world. Some black academics who have moved to white universities have spent a short space of time there and have subsequently resigned or become frustrated with the experience. Interestingly, a number of black academics who have been at HBUs for a long period of time (pre-1994) are leaving these institutions and moving to historically white universities and other places of employment. The higher education sector in South Africa, however, is still predominantly white and male and the relatively few black academics in the system seem to be moving between institutions, with a large number having exited the world of higher education altogether, or currently considering moving to other spaces.

As well as being a policy imperative, there have been comments from various quarters that highlight the importance of diversifying staff at universities in terms of race and gender. In certain documents this sentiment has been captured by the discourse that recognises the importance of black intellectuals if the “African Renaissance” is to materialise. The shortage of black academics in general, and more specifically in higher-level posts, thus has an impact on a range of educational and socio-political transformation goals.

The above context has been sketched in to inform the purpose or aims of the study.

| Aims of the Study

The primary aim of the study is to explore the experiences of black academics at various higher education institutions in South Africa and to determine:


¹ See Mbabane, 2001, for more detailed information on gender, race and rank in South African universities.

- Why they are leaving (or have left) a particular institution; or,
- Why they have left the academic profession.

A secondary aim is to determine what changes should take place at institutions that might encourage faculty to remain at an academic institution and to contribute to what has been called the “African Renaissance”. The crucial role of African intellectuals in the “African Renaissance” has been raised by a number of writers and social commentators.

| Key Research Questions

- For black academics, what have been critical experiences (both negative and positive) at these universities and technikons?
- What are the reasons for leaving particular institutions?
- Why have they chosen to join another academic institution?
- Why have they chosen to leave academia?
- Do they think that gender and/or race has impacted on their experiences at the institution? (This question was to guide the researchers and was not asked directly. In fact talk regarding gender and race as variables usually surfaced in the earlier questions.)
- What do they think needs to be changed or what needs to be instituted at these institutions that could contribute to a positive work climate for currently employed (black) academics and to attract new academics?



BACKGROUND TO INSTITUTIONS, PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE PROJECT

Participants included in the study are academics who have worked at the Universities of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Port Elizabeth (UPE), Fort Hare, the Western Cape (UWC), Cape Town (UCT), and the Free State (UOFS), and at the Peninsula and Cape Technikon. The institutions include those that are classified as historically black universities and technikon, i.e. UWC and Fort Hare and the Peninsula Technikon, historically white and English-medium i.e. Wits and UCT, historically white and Afrikaans-medium, UOFS and Cape Technikon.

Participants currently at HBUs had been there for long periods of time. This reflects the fact that they had very few options before 1994 or before institutions had to address issues of diversity in appointments. Most of the participants, however, were at their second institution of higher learning, if they were not currently in the corporate world or government. Most left HBUs for HWUs and four of the participants had left one HWU for another. Only one of the participants had left an HBU for a historically white technikon and then rejoined the same HBU.

The sample consisted of 30 persons. One focus group was conducted consisting of six people who had previously worked at UWC. For the rest, 22 interviews were individually conducted and tape-recorded, and two interviews were conducted telephonically.

The following table provides details of the participants, as taken from the biographical questionnaire. The level indicates their current level or the level that they were at before exiting academia. One of the persons in the senior university manager category had occupied the post of registrar at an HBU and at the time of interview was a vice-rector at an HWU.

A Lecturers	B Senior Lecturers	C Assoc. professors/senior university manager	Total
23	5	2	30
Number of Masters degrees in group A (lecturers)			20
Number of Doctoral degrees in group A (lecturers)			3
Number of Doctoral degrees in group B (senior lecturers)			5
Number of Doctoral degrees in group C (associate professors)			2
Total			30

The following are some of the reasons that participants offered for pursuing an academic career: it was a conscious political decision, given the small number of black academics in the system; it was a stepping stone to other opportunities; it was one option “better” than a teaching or nursing career; they were good students, had received scholarships to study further and becoming an academic was almost a “natural” progression along this route.

For the interview setting and instruments please see Appendix A.



DATA ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis was used to interpret the data. A range of discursive themes emerged from transcriptions of the interviews, which spoke to the aims of the study. For the academic reader with an interest in methodological issues, Appendix B provides some insight into the way in which the following interpretations were reached. The reason for including this rather long and detailed appendix is that the “scientific” status of qualitative research is often challenged, which is rarely the case when statistics are presented.

It is necessary, however, to make some remarks here about the key methodological assumptions made in discourse analysis, through which a particular, but not exclusive, “sense” is made of the individual responses of the interviewees. The first point is that discourses are essentially relational; they set up meanings through the relationships they create between their different individual components and through excluding or suppressing a range of alternative meanings or interpretations.

The second assumption is that individual utterances are not entirely self-initiated or “created” but rather activate pre-existing discourses, sometimes bringing elements into new combinations that generate new meanings. In this study, the interviewees are understood to be speaking within already constructed, active discourses, the terms of which they deploy to interpret and make sense of their own experiences and actions or decisions. These discourses usually operate with a certain internal coherence and set parameters on the meanings that can be produced by foregrounding particular interpretations of phenomena and excluding others.

The discourse analyst engages in a second level of interpretation by relocating these individual utterances within the fields of meaning of

the broader social and historical discourses from which they have been generated, and where possible, identifying the silences, exclusions and lacunae that are a necessary part of constructing particular meanings.



ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In the analysis that follows, the discourses activated in individual utterances are separated into the four “social arenas” to which they make primary reference. This is an important conceptual step as discourses are not free-floating, but embodied in social institutions (schools, universities, families, markets, etc.) and their characteristic practices, values and behaviour. The primary arena most relevant to this study is obviously the higher education institutions themselves (universities and technikons), but three secondary areas that intersect with the higher education sector can be identified. These are the labour market, the private sphere (personal interests, family commitments) and the political sphere. Dividing up and analysing responses in relation to these four areas involves an inevitable level of abstraction from the rich interplay of meanings in individual utterances, but it is necessary and justified for clarity of analysis, with the proviso that these discourses must be understood to interact and overlap at many points.

The reader should also be aware that this study has a limited focus on the responses of black academics “on the move” and does not explore interpretations for these movements that might have been offered by the heads of departments or other colleagues with whom the interviewees worked, or the senior administrators of institutions that appear to have “bled” a large number of black academics. Such an expanded discursive terrain did not fall within the scope of this study but could have revealed an interesting play of different, contending meanings. However, one needs to note that a comparative study is not necessarily needed for participants viewpoints to be “accepted” and should be treated as valuable discourse “which stands on its own”.

| Higher Education Institutions

Within higher education institutions, the interviewees focused primarily on two sets of practices: the first set was identified as being racist in its effects, and the second as signifying poor leadership and management.

Institutional racism

Practices interpreted as forms of institutional racism emerged as prominent reasons for staff leaving both historically liberal (English-medium) and historically Afrikaans-medium universities. Here, a racial discourse is employed as the primary interpretive grid for understanding a lack of institutional change at a general level, and for attitudes, actions and values manifest in particular experiences. The interviewees identify racist discourses and their attendant practices operating in the institutional environment and articulate a counter-discourse of non-racism. In the resulting interplay of language, “racist” becomes the primary meaning attached to certain institutional behaviours.

The academics who were leaving or who had left historically white universities felt that there was a lack of commitment to transformation and that white staff were still “in control”. They saw the few key black appointees (in senior management) as unable to deal with the racism at the level of departmental experience:

Yes, at University X they have appointed some key black people at the rectorate level. But this has not contributed to any changes, or very little change in the departments. The racism is so sophisticated, it is almost difficult to say it is happening ... this has led some of us who are black to think we are being paranoid or seeing racism when it is not so.

Another interviewee commented that:

... others and I were fighting a losing battle. My first choice is to be an intellectual who hopefully contributes to change in my teaching and research ... but it seems that this is not to happen in my generation. Apartheid is still alive and well in these white institutions.

Racism under the guise of liberalism

University X made me realise that there is nothing like a transformation agenda ... a liberal [agenda] is not to transform but to create the idea of transformation.

Many participants seemed to have bad experiences at the liberal English-medium universities:

X University is not a place that I want to be ... [there is] still a lot of racism At Technikon Y, there are very clear transformation policies that they have bought into ... X University has very subtle racism in the Department of Mechanical Engineering

Liberalism is seen as disguising what one participant termed covert racism. In this interpretation, the institution is viewed as hiding behind its historical reputation for principled opposition to apartheid to avoid examining current practices that could be seen as racist. The kind of practices identified by interviewees included:

- Being discriminated against through being seen as “inferior”, not being “heard”, being anonymous or even invisible.

“I worked there as a researcher ... they were not sure who I was. [There were] issues like, why was I using the photocopy machine? [The] assumption [was made] that anybody who is black is a third class citizen and cannot be a good academic. Then they turn around and say we have equity. Yes, in the Department of African Studies ... but not in Mechanical Engineering [I] will not accept a post at that university ... because of racism.”

“Whenever we raised a problem it was ignored or it was said that policies will take care of it” or, “... it is being addressed by so and so commission of enquiry or something like that I would then be in the lift with the person who I had addressed the issue with and they would not even recognise me or maybe also have forgotten about my grievance.”

- Being overlooked for appointment.

“[There was] ... not one black staff member Last year [they] appointed two junior members [white] I applied

there for positions and was not interviewed ... [even] with a Masters and a PhD."

- Being a "token" appointee.

Another reason advanced for leaving historically white institutions was that interviewees found that they were the only black members of staff in their respective departments. One respondent said, "This made us feel like tokens and that they were responding to the government's equity plan and doing us a favour." To the interviewees, there seemed to be an unspoken view that transformation and equity goals were achieved now that "the department had one black member of staff".

While participants occupying positions higher up the scale – at professorial or senior management levels – did not share this view, it was clear that black academics at lower levels also saw these senior appointees as examples of tokenism that created the "idea of transformation" and blocked real change at other levels.

Linda Greene (1997) comments on this in the context of African-American faculty in the US:

One of the most important factors in our professional lives is tokenism. Tokenism masks racism and sexism by admitting a small number of previously excluded individuals to institutions. At the same time, a system of tokenism maintains barriers of entry to others. (p.89)

Greene goes on to say that the appointment of a limited number of black women professors is used to demonstrate universities' commitment to equality while illustrating the overall inferiority of black women as a group. Individuals appointed to positions become the exception to the rule. This was echoed by some of the participants:

One day one of the senior members of staff visited my office and passed what she thought was a compliment, and said: you conduct yourself like a real scholar and not an African one.

Racism in evaluation and expectations

A number of black academics at historically white institutions felt that they had to meet unrealistic levels of performance, failing which

they would become the scapegoats for anything that went wrong. In order to succeed, black appointees had to be “super human beings” who never made mistakes, who excelled academically, were good teachers, counsellors to black students and made all the necessary adaptations to fit into the institutional and cultural milieu. One interviewee recalled that after being disciplined because of students’ complaints, the issue of “diversity appointments” was discussed at a staff meeting. The discussion at the meeting centred on black appointments from a diversity fund and the concerns raised were that:

Those appointed should not only be excellent academically, they must be good teachers, and want not only to teach but to write as well, and they must also be able to fit into the cultural milieu, especially of our students – we cannot alienate our [white] students.

Interviewees felt that the other side to this coin was an expectation that black staff (unlike their white colleagues) would make huge mistakes, and if they did, the response was a kind of “I told you so” attitude.

Further to this, interviewees thought that they, as black members of staff, were made to carry a disproportionate amount of blame for any problems that occurred. When things went wrong, it was their fault, not the fault of the students nor attributable to any other circumstances. This often led to academics questioning or doubting themselves:

I had to stop myself thinking maybe I am the problem. Yes, maybe the dean of a faculty is ok or even the head of department ... but some colleagues who I had to work with on a daily basis were very problematic, and when students had problems with my course, I was blamed and never given a hearing.

Others echoed this sentiment:

If students complained about a mark or a reading which they could not find in the library, I was called to the head of department's office and given a dressing down – that students are our clients and as an inexperienced lecturer I needed to be aware of this.

Another lecturer said:

When students complained that my marks were not available one week after an assignment was handed in, the course co-ordinator and the head of department said that I was working with white students and joked that they did not work on African time ... I was so taken aback I could not say anything but these are the kinds of incidents that led me to pack my bags, resign and now leave my family to take a government post in another province.

Racism in the form of black “essentialism”

Respondents identified another discourse operating in the institutional environment that may be called “black essentialism”. Here, the racial category “black” is brought into a mutually defining relationship with “experience” that creates the sense that this arena of knowledge or experience is not only exclusive of “whites”, but inclusive of all “blacks”. In this discourse, black experience is homogenised and is therefore seemingly accessible to, and “shared” by, all blacks no matter what other differences they may exhibit – for example, of age, social class, locality or political and religious affiliation. Interviewees saw it played out in a number of ways, particularly in the curriculum, when they were given all the courses to teach that had anything to do with “blacks”, or were given the role of counselling black students.

A woman who was teaching at an historically English-medium university said:

It would often happen with post-grad students: they would come in and say they were looking to do something in African literature, if they want to do course work rather than just an MA ... and he (the head of dept) would direct the person to me ... even if I was not teaching a course in that, as though if it was anything African, if they said African or Indian or black or anything ... he would send them to me.

Mamdani (1999) identifies this as racialised knowledge: “When I came to the University of Cape Town in 1996, I was startled to find that there was a clear institutional distinction between kinds of

knowledge. If a student wanted to study the white experience, he or she went to one of the disciplinary departments like political studies or history or sociology. If that student wanted to study the native experience, they came to the centre for African Studies. *The Centre for African Studies was actually a Centre for Bantu Studies* [our emphasis].” (p.132)

At the Afrikaans-medium universities, black essentialism played itself out in a different way through black academics being given a counselling role. Here, black academics were assumed to understand all aspects of the experience and “problems” of black students:

As a lecturer who is black I am supposed to deal with all the issues which students have because they are black. Black students who I do not even teach are sent to me by white lecturers, as I would understand their problems, whether they be financial, housing, or transport. What I found very often is that these students are dealing with academic difficulties but because they are black, the problems are labelled differently. I am then there to play the mother figure to black students. I know that this happens to my black male colleagues as well. We thus end up spending hours of what could be research or admin time trying to sort out ‘black problems’. This counselling role, which is given to us, is not taken into account for promotion or when work-loads are assigned. Frustration is thus the name of the game. And it led to burn-out.

Academics saw themselves as being stereotyped by others, or their interests pigeon-holed in particular ways because they were black. Counter to this, they articulated a discourse of individual difference and heterogeneity – the desire to gain experience in other areas that were of interest to them and that would give them the opportunity to “develop”.

Poor management or leadership

Many interviewees identified problems at the level of institutional leadership as the basis for their decisions to leave institutions. These issues were raised by participants from both historically white and

black institutions and took radically different forms but may be interpreted as activating two primary kinds of discourse. The first overlaps significantly with the identification of institutional racism (see above) and with a political discourse focused on transformation. The second relates to conflicting views about the core functions, professionalism and responsiveness of institutions in the contemporary context.

Contestation about transformation

Participants indicated that many historically black universities seemed to be unaware that they too needed to transform:

They think that they are not racist, or sexist and that we are working under perfect democratic conditions except that we have a resource problem.

Women from HBUs in particular felt that they were the victims of sexism, and one person commented that:

The place has become a joke ... it is the only university where white men get appointed and they do not have an affirmative action policy. No, in their minds they are beyond that.

Another in the focus group said, "Any Tom, Dick or Harry is being made a professor ... that is, the Toms, Dicks and Harrys that are part of a particular clique."

Rather than work under these conditions, many interviewees had chosen to move to historically Afrikaans-medium institutions and one particular HBU, as a consequence, was perceived as having lost some of its best staff. There was a sense that at the Afrikaans institutions staff "knew they had supported apartheid and were racist and made some effort to change behaviour".

For others, it was contestation around the meaning and content given to transformation that led to disillusionment with management. The following sentiment expressed by a senior member of staff of an HBU, who has since moved to an historically Afrikaans-medium university, illustrates how frustration with leadership and voicing this publicly contributed (very directly) to him leaving:

But after Rector X left and a new rector was appointed, I became uneasy because I thought that the university

was losing focus in terms of what it aspired to and what mission and vision it had. It had become sort of visionless, in a sense. You could not really identify a substantive new vision. And my sense was that in 1994–1995 it was well poised to be launched.

The participant also indicated how, what he called stakeholder politics, without strong leadership, led to disillusionment and frustration with management:

And my sense at that point was also that stakeholder politics became quite involved in campus politics I in fact wrote a document before Rector X left, on my sense of democratisation.

One problem which stood out for him was that “the best candidates were not being appointed to positions I had seen good candidates not even making the short list ... and to me this became increasingly worrying.”

He continues: “then the new rector was appointed I have said that I experienced a lack of substance in terms of whatever the university was aspiring to. And gradually I think management discretion and authority became dissipated to a large extent.”

Lack of professionalism

What seems to have driven many individuals out of black universities and technikons was the sense that staff grievances were not dealt with professionally. One person said, “It was like being in a family, but a dysfunctional one.” The consequence was that issues became highly personalised. This was a dominant theme in the focus group and the following excerpts illuminate the problem:

In my particular case I got into a number of problems with heads of departments, academics, and administration and so on ... this built up over a period of time ... so by the time I left I had just had it, and I had a number of offers on the table. (A man who left an HBU at the level of associate professor.)

So after enormous fights with the likes of Prof Y and others ... he said it, he actually said it to me, ‘Why do you not just resign? You know, ultimately you will be doing yourself a favour and everybody else here’ ... I

thought it was my prerogative to resign ... but it was getting so ugly ... that it was difficult for me just to be there. (A black woman who left an HBU after completing a PhD at Harvard and not getting promotion.)

While black academics leaving HBUs felt that relationships were over-personalised, which meant that conflicts and grievances were not handled professionally, black academics leaving HWUs thought the system was over-bureaucratized and so impersonal that their identities were lost.

For one participant, professionalism was the basis for being sought out by another institution despite perceived differences of approach:

As fate would have it I was approached by the head of dept at Y. At that time the head of dept and I had a very professional relationship and I thought it quite strange that he approached me ... from previous meetings I got the feeling that he saw me as quite radical in the profession.

Responding to the new environment

A number of participants who were leaving historically Afrikaans-medium universities activated a traditional discourse of scholarly academic pursuits as the core function of a university as a counter to the incursion of entrepreneurial, managerial discourses that construct the university as a business.

The university was not scholarly but run like a big capitalist organisation ... I left because they kept talking about our clients, how productive we are, how we have to be teachers and fundraisers and how we are all academic entrepreneurs. I then decided to look around for other work ... if I wanted to be a capitalist I could go and work for a big company ... like Anglo.

It seems as if the historically Afrikaans-medium universities had risen to the entrepreneurial challenge and the black staff was not happy. Yet black staff at an HBU were leaving because of the lack of this entrepreneurial culture and lack of vision on the part of senior management. They felt that the university was “not moving with the times”. The institution lacked the leadership that could respond adequately to the new demands of the current environment.

I left because the university did not have a group of visionary leaders who could manage In my opinion they were a group of administrators and bad ones at that and definitely not managers to steer the university into the new millennium.

Another commented:

The university did not understand the importance of outside fundraising. I had raised millions for the university but somehow this did not count and I or the unit was not given recognition and ultimately I lost interest in continuing. For them you were only given a pat on the back when you managed to get a NRF grant Yes, this is important, but in this day and age a varied funding community is important. I thus left for the private sector.

A response from someone leaving a technikon introduced an interesting new dimension to this debate by arguing that the institution was unable to respond adequately to new demands because of its limited academic foundation:

The nature of academics of that institution is one where they emanated from a background of teachers at schools or technical colleges and inherently they are not qualified for the level which the new system demanded. I was seen as a threat, and even now the new demands are seen as a threat by these academics The type of people who are employed there ... are people who have backgrounds as artisans, then get national diplomas and become lecturers ... I had the ridiculous situation where all my post-graduate students were more qualified than the staff in the dept. There's a saying there that the good leave, the bad ones stay behind. There are people who are not passionate about academia. Then you become the problem because they are not clear what you want to do. I would not want to be seen as a member of an institution that has no future In 1999 in the faculty of engineering, there was only one person in management (me) with a PhD My resignation was a big blow to the dean who depended a lot on my input, depended a lot on me to drive research.

The following was not a response offered as a counter to the discourse of entrepreneurialism, but in support of it. The respondent was arguing, in line with Burton Clark (1998), that a strong academic heartland was precisely the precondition for an entrepreneurial approach, an approach that was seen as threatening by weak academics:

The whole notion of research and development and eventually contracting your research out and commercialising some of your research was an arena not recognised. I was questioned by subordinates about running a business As late as 99 ... I never got adequate support from management and questioned their ability to manage a business of this nature.

For this next respondent, academic weakness was compounded by inadequate management and leadership to respond adequately to the demands of the new environment:

I am not sure whether the institution has the management and ability to develop policy and implement strategy. People are moved up the ladder not as specialists. Even if you look at how the rector moved up People in these critical positions have evolved and have been at the right place at the right time They have never brought in specialists that can turn the place around. I doubt whether they have the people at the institution to turn the place around and that brings me back to my decision. I do not see this place making an impression in the academic arena in future years and I would not want to be seen as retiring from an institution like this.

Burton Clark (1998) identifies a strengthened core of leaders who have the “ability to steer the institution”, a diversified funding base, which generates capital from varied sources, and a strong academic heartland as three of four “key pathways” that contributed to five European entrepreneurial universities being successful.

| The Political Sphere

Some respondents gave reasons for moving between institutions that related to their commitment to a larger national agenda of political transformation. In this view, the conservative history of some

institutions was not a disincentive, but a positive challenge. People said that if historically Afrikaans- and English-medium institutions were to change, “they needed to be infiltrated by people with a transformation agenda and history”.

Historically I had been dead against University X as a student, and as a lecturer. Contact had been minimal. So I had to make peace with myself in terms of how I viewed it and how I viewed my own position, my political position especially. But then I started saying to myself, well, this is university is a national institution. And it needs to change and, well, it probably won't change unless people who are differently minded come in and work towards and contribute to transformation.

Another person who had also joined an historically Afrikaans-medium institution from an HBU, almost exactly echoed the participant quoted above:

Because as much as we would all like to come and point fingers . . . University X is a national asset and if we want change, then we have to be willing to sacrifice and become the catalyst for that, and I guess with those kinds of thoughts and also the political role I was given the opportunity and I was ready for a blank slate So I made the decision . . . [to join the new institution].

These respondents viewed their movement and resignation as being good for the “new” institution and this in a sense seemed to help them deal with the rejection and lack of support they were receiving from their previous places of work. Many who had left HBUs were frustrated by levels of nepotism, sexism and political complacency, and joined historically white institutions, justifying their departure by saying that if these bastions of apartheid were going to change, they needed people who were serious about change to join the academic staff. Political perceptions thus operated negatively to induce people to leave institutions that they thought had stagnated or were too complacent to acknowledge that there was any need for transformation; and operated positively to attract people to institutions that needed to change and seemed to be open to change.

| The Private Sphere

An issue frequently raised as a reason for moving between institutions was family commitments. This is one that has not often been cited in literature. Interestingly, it was not women who were following their partners in their careers but both men and women moving to areas where they grew up to take care of elderly relatives or to be with children who had grown up with relatives while they (the parents) were given the opportunities to study:

I did not have a problem with my institution ... but I moved to Y, another liberal institution, as it is closer to Welkom where I grew up and where my aged parents and my school-going child live. Yes, it was a difficult decision but here I succumb to the cultural thing and put family above career. However, my getting this post means that I can look after my family and work my way up the career ladder.

Another also moved for family reasons but was not so positive about the career ladder:

I decided to resign and then took a contract post at this university. I thought it best to look after my father in the township. Yes, I thought about my career but I was not going anywhere at that university and it is the same here, but at least one goal is accomplished and it gives me personal satisfaction ... I am here to care for my father in his last years.

Other personal reasons offered for moving to other institutions or out of the academic world altogether included better career options, such as promotion or a clear career trajectory, and higher remuneration. These are explored in more detail in the following section.

| The Labour Market and Funding

The functioning of the labour market, particularly the academic labour market, emerged as a significant theme in individual responses. Respondents linked high academic qualifications and credibility to choice and mobility within the academic labour market and beyond, whereas low qualifications were thought to trap people

in their positions, whether they were happy or not. The active recruitment of black staff by some institutions was also a powerful inducement to leave their current institutions and move to where they thought they would be more highly valued. Low academic salaries was also cited as a reason for leaving in conjunction with high levels of competition for research funding.

Marketability and mobility

Certain academics felt that they should move on, not because they were necessarily unhappy but because they “needed to test their marketability”. This held true for those who had moved to other institutions as well as those who had moved to government and the private sector. Some respondents moved out of academia because of the absence of a clear career path:

I thought when I had a doctorate I would know where I was heading, I would have a career path. Now I have no career path and I am not even sure why I headed this way in the first place

At an historically black technikon, however, there was very little movement. One respondent suggested that this was not because people were especially happy in their work situation, but that without doctorates or, in some cases, without Masters degrees, they did not have any options.

We will not get mass movement between black technikons. I can take you back and point you to people who were there when I first joined the institution in 1985. They have marginally bettered their qualifications [There is] now pressure to upgrade their degrees. People with engineering degrees are now doing postgraduate degrees in education or business – what, in engineering, we see as ‘soft options’. The rector wants all to have Masters’ degrees by 2004.

Active recruitment

Being head-hunted by institutions within the context of clear indications of institutional change, provided a strong inducement to move:

And the fact that I have been approached might be reflective of a sense in this institution that they in fact do want to change and that they do want to supplement with whatever skills and experience I have ... [and] a few months before I was approached the university also approved a new strategic framework.

This was particularly true for respondents who felt that their careers had stalled at one institution, but that another offered positive opportunities for advancement:

I actually came to the department to withdraw [my application] but a very crucial thing happened in the way the head of department responded When I shared my circumstances he said look you can't make a decision now And we want you for the position, why don't you take up to January the following year to decide? And that gestured a lot of things to me – that the department really wanted me and that they were willing to make a lot of concessions for me About that time I told [my institution] about the offer and got no response and I told them I needed a reply by Feb. 28. On the morning of the 28 I got a call from the acting vice-rector, and he says to me, look we have not met but we need to talk ... and we went into negotiations about offers and counter offers. I said I wished this had come at an earlier stage as it could have been very reaffirming for me because I gave a lot of energy to X ... and this would have kept me [at the institution] ... The fact that I had applied on three occasions for an associate professorship [but was not promoted], made me wonder if this was just a response [to the offer]

This kind of experience was exclusive to the male respondents. None of the women interviewed, including those with doctorates, had been asked to apply for positions.

Salaries and research funding

A range of participants spoke about the low remuneration in academic careers and the fact that universities were moving to

“clamp down” on private or outside work. Many suggested that although they felt academia to be a calling, they also had to “live”.

I am leaving, going to the corporate world where at least I will have money in my bank account.

An interesting perception from some interviewees was that white academics came from wealthy families and were therefore not solely dependent on their salaries to “live”. It was also said that a professor earns less than a director or even a deputy director in government. Certain of the interviewees had in fact taken positions as directors in government.

Another concern was with the fierce competition for research grants. Academics with numerous publications could raise research grants and this made academic life easier. But many respondents were working on doctorates, had very little time to publish and also did not have research money. This led them to leaving both HBUs and HWUs. Some who had left HBUs found that they now had greater funding problems than before, because, at an HWU they had to compete with experienced researchers who knew the system. This was an oft-cited reason for leaving HWUs.



METHODOLOGICAL SHORTCOMINGS

With hindsight it has become clear that the way in which this study was set up has imposed limitations on its findings and any possible conclusions that can be drawn from them. Thompson (1990) stresses that it should be remembered that the “object” of an investigation is itself a pre-interpreted domain. In this instance, the setting up of a target group composed only of black academics had the immediate effect of foregrounding race as an interpretative category, not only for the researchers, but also for the respondents.

Interviews with academics “on the move” across all racial categories could have provided the basis for identifying whether or not there were differences between the reasons given for leaving or moving by people of different races. However, research does not need to be comparative to be valid and hearing the voices of black academics is important and necessary. In future the study could be replicated with white academics who are moving between institutions as the focus of investigation.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Academics who took part in this study were leaving academic institutions for a range of reasons. How they account for moving has for the purposes of this report been categorised into two sets of practices: the one set is essentially racist and the second set signifies poor leadership and management. However, at points there is much overlap between the two sets of practices.

| Institutional Racism

This was a reason for academics leaving both historically English-medium and Afrikaans-medium universities. The participants labelled the lack of institutional change and certain attitudes, actions and ideologies, racist. The behaviour of certain white colleagues was viewed as anti-transformation and essentially being “in opposition” to building a non-racist environment. Although black persons had been appointed to senior posts there was the assumption that “hard decisions” were still vested with white persons. A theme also emerged (though not dominant) that certain key black appointments were merely a colour change and their ideology in no way threatened core anti-transformation agendas.

| Racism Couched as Liberalism

Liberalism was seen as disguising “covert” racism. Here participants felt that the historically liberal institutions should address issues that black employees were facing and not “hide” behind the liberal history of the institutions, which included opposing apartheid. Certain participants argued that individuals at these institutions had

challenged apartheid and not the institutions themselves. This is probably true if one looks at the history of a person like Frances Ames, who challenged opinion of the medical doctors in the Biko case, but who got very little support from colleagues (see *Sunday Times*, 24 November 2002). The institution made it clear that she was challenging authority in her personal capacity. Many of the participants at lecturer levels felt they were seen as “token” appointees. Persons at professorial and senior management level did not share this point of view.

| Racism in Evaluation and Expectations

Participants at historically white universities had to meet unrealistic goals and levels of performance. They had to be good teachers, counsellors to black students as well as fit in with the institutional context. Simply put, they had to be “super human beings”. If they did not meet these goals their mistakes were blown out of proportion, often with serious consequences.

| Racism/Black Essentialism

Here black experience was homogenised. This usually played itself out by, for example, black persons being given courses that in any way addressed issues relating to blackness. This was irrespective of the person’s specialisation. They were expected to “understand” all black students’ “issues” and were assigned the role of counsellor to black students. Interestingly black persons, irrespective of whether they were classified as African, coloured or Indian, had this experience.

| Poor Management or Leadership

Many of those interviewed talked about problems at the level of institutional leadership as a reason for leaving. These issues were raised by participants who were attached to both historically black and white institutions. The way in which it was raised, however, took radically different forms. The first is linked to institutional racism and with a political discourse focused on transformation. The second is linked to conflicting views about the core functions, professionalism and responsiveness of institutions in the contemporary context.

Participants from the historically black universities seemed to suggest that black universities were unaware that they needed to transform. Much like English universities, they relied on their “struggle credentials”.

Women at the HBUs in particular felt that they were the victims of sexism. The women at the historically white universities felt that racism was intrinsically linked to sexism, but racism seemed to be the overriding variable. Certain of these women at HBUs had opted for Afrikaans-speaking universities as opposed to the liberal English universities. Certain of the participants had in fact moved from a HBU to a liberal university and then to a historically Afrikaans university. Lack of professionalism also led to participants exiting HBUs.

| Responding to the New Environment

Participants were leaving historically Afrikaans-medium universities, as they were more comfortable with the traditional notion of an academic. They were not comfortable with the academic as fundraiser and entrepreneur. Interestingly certain black academics were leaving historically black universities as they felt that these universities had not risen to the challenge of operating within a changing global economy. It emerged that the academics at one technikon who were left behind did not in fact have many options, given their limited qualifications. However, certain academics had left historically black universities and taken key positions at historically white technikons.

| The Political and Private Sphere

Certain participants moved as they were motivated by the national changes taking place within South Africa. In this regard, certain people had joined historically white universities because they saw them as national assets and also believed they could assist with transformation agendas at these institutions.


Regarding the private sphere, there was much movement between institutions as a result of family commitments in the case of both men and women. Other personal reasons for movement between institutions as well as totally out of academia included the need to

test their marketability, increased salaries and being head-hunted for positions.

| Issues not Addressed by Respondents

To say that the higher education landscape is in constant transformation in South Africa is probably an understatement. At the time of these interviews the spectre of certain institutions being merged or closed down, and the radical transformation of higher education, had gained much media attention. The individual institutions had also begun discussions and other initiatives around the issues. However, these imminent changes did not feature in the views of respondents as reasons for moving between institutions. Another factor of major consequence in the tertiary sector that did not seem to impact on the decisions of the participants is the impact of new technology in the production and dissemination of knowledge.

A possible interpretation is that the participants felt that they could deal with these changes, and they therefore did not constitute a major reason for moving. The changing landscape of higher education did surface in discussions but it was “something they had to deal with”. On the other hand they may assume that their skills are needed and would thus not be negatively affected by these changes.



PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR RETAINING THE NUMBER OF BLACK PROFESSIONALS AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

| Short to Medium-Term Ongoing Strategies

Given that the study focused on why academics are moving, we are not proposing strategies for recruitment. Certain of the following strategies have been suggested by the participants themselves, certain of the strategies are in place at certain universities, some have been used in other contexts, for example in the African-American context of higher education. The recommendations also follow the suggestions made by Harleston and Ngara (2000).

As has been indicated, there are several efforts underway within higher education institutions to increase and retain the number of black professionals. These strategies will require the active support and involvement of four major sectors within South Africa. These are **National Government, higher education institutions, the private corporate sector and the donor sector**. These sectors will need to work cooperatively and in alliances to provide resources, opportunities and support to retain black professionals in higher education positions. The Government should take steps to affirm publicly and enthusiastically the singular importance of higher education and higher education institutions and academic staff in the growth, development and further transformation of South Africa. There is a strong perception among academic and professional staff at various higher education institutions that the Government does not appear to show confidence in or support for higher education. The participants of this study mentioned this, particularly in relation to salaries. Academics spoke to the fact that their salaries did not in anyway compare to civil servants. There were concrete suggestions that academics' salaries be placed on the same scale as the salaries

of directors and other higher level civil servants. National Treasury in its annual budget needs to provide funds to implement the requirements of the Equity Act and to fund national level initiatives to create an enabling environment for the pool of academic staff from the designated groups. It was felt that money could be given to individual institutions and not only to organisations such as the National Research Foundation (NRF).

Harleston and Ngara (2000) refer to models of best practice in an attempt to retain black faculty. When asked how the situation could be addressed, some of the participants of this study voiced some of the suggestions made by Harleston and Ngara as well as others.

1. Constantly and consistently championing the policies of employment equity and diversity. These policies need to be supported publicly by senior management such as vice-chancellors. A vice-chancellor responsible for equity issues should be appointed.
2. Providing funds for the development of programmes designed to support the development of an enabling and inclusive non-racial and non-sexist culture on campuses. The success of all programmes would need to be monitored and evaluated. These funds could possibly be accessed from the Skills Development Fund.
3. Setting up mentoring and support programmes for black academics. Certain universities have embarked on this initiative. The universities should also work closely with the National Research Foundation (NRF) which has initiated various development and support programmes.
4. Providing training in diversity management to all university managers, in other words, heads of departments, Deans, and so forth.
5. Providing all staff, black and white, with access to diversity training, which could include value clarification workshops, gender sensitivity training, and so forth.
6. Providing monetary and other incentives to encourage black academic staff to remain at the institution, such as funding to attend conferences and time to complete doctorates.

Harleston and Ngara (2000) found that no institution was engaged in all of the above activities. However, many of these activities were

found at each institution. This finding is supported by the current research.

| Long-Term Strategies

Longer term strategies, which Harleston and Ngara (2000) identify as developmental strategies, intervention strategies and opportunistic strategies, are also proposed.

Developmental strategies in terms of retention of academics include providing role models, and other incentives, such as ongoing training in educational administration courses.

Intervention strategies focus on programmes that are designed to work with individual academics to encourage and support their pursuit of an academic career. The following recommendations outline activities in support of this strategy:

1. Provide funding for the completion of doctorates and money to start small research projects. These types of scholarships are available and are administered by the National Research Foundation. Individual and groups of black academics should be assisted in accessing these funding opportunities.
2. Establish a national programme of administrative internships that would permit black academic staff to receive fellowships to work with, and under the mentoring and supervision of, senior administrators to gain and strengthen administrative skills in a supportive environment. A very useful model to consult is the American Council on Education's Administrative Fellowship Program. (Harleston & Ngara 2000).
3. Establish formal partnerships with a range of sectors. The nature of these partnerships could be worked out in a way that benefits all the stakeholders.

| Opportunistic Strategies

Such strategies, as suggested by Harleston and Ngara (2000) involve modifying current procedures, developing novel alternative procedures and establishing new alliances or cooperative relationships that permit institutions to tap into existing talent. The

following recommendations outline activities in support of this strategy:

Establish a formal Staff Development and Retention Programme with the following components:

1. Mentoring of new academic staff by pairing them and senior academic staff, who are paid to work with new academic staff.
2. Providing frequent feedback to new academic staff about their progress in teaching, scholarship and service.
3. Providing funds to new academic staff for research and attending at professional meetings.
4. Adjusting teaching loads so that new academic staff have the time and opportunity to develop and initiate their own research agenda.
5. Monitoring progress of new academic staff. This would include monitoring how they are “fitting in”.

Viewed together, these activities reflect diverse efforts aimed at changing the culture of the institutions, providing mentoring and other kinds of support for black academics, and creating new employment opportunities. These activities are essential and important first steps and deserve to be supported. But they need to be complemented by the development of long-term programmatic strategies that will also expand the pool of underrepresented academics and administrators, deepen and broaden access by black academics and have a pay-off at the national level (Harleston & Ngara, 2000).

Finally, building and supporting leadership who are committed to transformation needs to be a priority of the various institutions of higher learning.

It is also important that these strategies encourage black and white academics to work closely together. A culture of inclusively and understanding needs to be built. The strategies should not be implemented in a way that causes white academics to feel excluded. Luhabe refers to this as building *emotional capital*, which effectively means building trusting relationships between black and white academics on both a personal and institutional level.



CONCLUDING REMARKS

At this point a brief summary of the findings will be presented. This will then be followed by suggestions for possible intervention strategies. Although some clear directions for the future will be provided, the conclusions cannot be “final”. The following statement by Mama reflects the writer of this report’s sentiments as regards this final section.

How does one end the beginning of something ...? At the very heart of the approach advocated here is a feeling of perpetual change and movement This in itself makes the idea of closure somewhat inappropriate. This is not a neat story ending with all capillaries cauterised and stitched with surgical precision, but one which makes a small opening through which, it is hoped, many new ideas and arguments may flow (Mama, 1995, p.159).

Wendy Luhabe (2002) in her recent publication on the experiences of black executives in the workplace says that the publication is a process of reflection, which is an essential precursor to action. By (black executives) discussing their experiences of the corporate world the culture of silence is challenged and hopefully leads to action.

The above points made by Luhabe are relevant to this report. By capturing the voices of this group of black academics it could be argued that the culture of silence has been challenged. Culture of silence is used in the sense that what has emerged from the report has for many been an “open secret”. The majority of black academics are aware of most of the issues but it has not previously been captured in a formal document. Their voices have now “officially been given a hearing”.

When certain black academics were recently asked to comment on a draft of the final report, the following (not unexpected) comments were made:

This is the kind of thing happening in all sectors, for example sport (recently highlighted by the Chester Williams biography) and in the corporate world (Luhabe, 2002), so what could be done to address/redress the situation?

A discussion ensued as to the differences and similarities faced by black persons in sports and the world of academia. The following points were made:

The sporting world is far more of a public space than academia is. There is a national drive for sporting codes to be representative in terms of colour. The public are aware of the debates and also aware of how things have changed or not changed. If you are a good sportsperson and you are picked for a national side (e.g. rugby) there is very little chance that you could be prevented from exhibiting your talents on the field, no matter what the racial issues are. The public and other watchdog bodies (including the sports ministry) would raise questions if one who has shown talent disappears from the public eye. However, academia is an isolating, individualistic endeavour, which happens outside of the eye of the general public. The general public are not aware of the issues and no matter how “good” you are as an intellectual, it is very easy to be marginalised. At this point in time there is no watchdog body and, in addition, there is the assumption outside of academia that all is well.

The above digression was necessary to indicate, albeit on a very simplistic level that creating an enabling environment for black academics is a huge challenge and is not going to happen overnight. Secondly, interventions, which suggest a 12-step type programme or reports such as this one, are not immediate solutions to the problem.

Luhabe, using the discourse of the corporate world, suggests building emotional capital, which effectively means that levels of trust be built between black and white persons and that both personal and institutional relationships be built.

The above are necessary and would assist in addressing the problem. Many of the interventions have been implemented at various universities some with more success than others.

The above interventions are, however, happening outside of an organised structure for academics. A Forum similar to the Black Management Forum, which operates in the corporate world, should be initiated by black academics. It could be a body that welcomes academics of all colours to address issues and is relevant to them as academics. It should be a broad front that could address current issues. In the 1980s and early 1990, certain bodies, like UDUSA, had an important function. An organisation similar to this may be necessary at this point in time. However, this needs to be an initiative that comes from academics themselves. The findings of this paper should be presented and responded to at a national conference and a programme of action worked out.

The above suggestions would all fall into the macro-level of intervention. However, at the micro-level, black academics could take the initiative, as suggested by Luhabe, which is to “act as responsible subjects and opposed to objects that are acted upon”. The last sentence is not intended to “blame the victim” but to encourage black academics to devise a strategy to act collectively in an attempt to change the current situation.



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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. Strebels (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 Strebels (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.