

Chapter 1

Introduction

“The slender reed that will bend in the wind will survive, but the sheet that stands straight and won’t bend will break and will be swept away”

(Sima Suego)

1.1 Experiencing two work environments: a personal account

Being black and in a historically white institution inspired me to do this study in which the self-identities of both black and white academic staff members will be explored. Changes that are also taking place will be looked at, especially in the light of how they affect the teaching staff at the University of South Africa (Unisa). In my study I will focus on the challenges staff members have to face in order to change attitudes so as to accommodate the new dispensation.

Working at an institution such as Unisa has brought with it a lot of challenges. Sometimes one wonders, whether one was hired because one is competent to do the job or one was hired because of one’s skin colour. It is sad sometimes to hear remarks like, “You were hired because of affirmative action”.

It takes a long time for one to get used to such an environment. It becomes even more difficult if it is one’s first experience of working in a multiracial environment. As for me, even though it was initially difficult to adapt to this new environment, I believe that the fact that I had been in a multiracial environment before helped me to cope, even though the situations and contexts are different.

I personally feel that transformation is needed, and therefore some of the changes that are busy taking place are necessary. There are times at work where I feel that I am treated in a certain way because I am black. When it comes to interpersonal relationships, one sometimes gets the feeling that other colleagues want the relationship to be only official and must end there. There are a lot of opportunities opening up for black people at Unisa and this brings about uncertainties amongst their white counterparts because some of them feel that these changes are causing them to lose security in their jobs. These changes are not only affecting the employees, but also the way of doing things changes as well.

Some employees feel that they were not consulted and therefore change is seen as being enforced. Some feel that they cannot really participate in this process of change and therefore resort to resigning. Losing colleagues is another dilemma on its own as it means hiring new staff members, which leads to the subsequent establishment of new relationships. In this case because of transformation, most of the people who resign are white and they are replaced by black people.

This turn of events can cause problems when it comes to building relationships. I remember when I had to get acquainted with my new colleagues it was a bit difficult as I was not welcomed warmly by everyone. As soon as you have been told what your duties are, and have had a bit of orientation you are left all alone and you have to find your own way around things. These are some of my experiences as a black person within this predominantly white institution.

This study is also going to focus on the “catwalk” as another place of work whereby the dynamics of multi-racism in the modeling industry will be looked at. Unisa and the catwalk, both being places of work will be explored and compared with each other. This comparison will be made in order to explore various aspects of place-identity within different work settings.

In the past, fashion modeling was perceived to be something that is done only by white girls as it was believed that they have perfect bodies to model the clothes better. It is only in recent years that black girls have been considered for fashion modeling. This has not been welcomed with warm hands by everyone in the modeling industry as most of the black models still feel that they are not fully welcomed and accepted into the industry.

As a model I often experience that black girls are often treated differently from white girls. For example, if you are late as a black girl, you will get shouted at and be told that it is typical of blacks (stereotype), while on the other hand, if you are a white girl and come late, you will not get shouted at it will be assumed that it was probably the traffic or excuses will be used to justify the late coming. There is still also a lot of discrimination, whereby a show will be done and only white girls will take part in it.

For the purpose of this study, a distinction will be made between the following types of identities:

- Self-identity: a distinction between I and Me. This forms part of a person's self-concept.
- Personal identity: Who we are in the eyes of others? It includes the characteristics of the individual. It also concerns interpersonal rather than inter-group comparisons and behaviours. Included here is your self-identity which is formed through how other people perceive you (Capozza and Brown, 2000).
- Group identity: The issue of belonging or not belonging to a group. The group is presented as important in the service of the individual's identity. Groups strive to create a group identity. This identity establishes and characterizes the group within the community of groups. Groups become known by their character which is relatively enduring and outlives the individual members (Capozza and Brown, 2000).

1.2 The culture of the workplace

Culture is described as the way of living of a group of people, which includes their norms and values. It plays an important role in shaping a person's identity. When new people come in, they bring their cultural background with them because their culture is a part of who they are. (Wegner,1999). We find this at Unisa as well, whereby staff members from different cultural backgrounds have to work together on a daily basis. The fact that they come from different cultures can act as a hindrance in their working together.

Mamman (1996) says that Gudykunst (1985) found that culture similar people display high attributional confidence and share networks which in turn reduce uncertainty and anxiety. Cultural similarity generates reciprocal feelings; people who are similar culturally tend to like each other.

Culture also plays an important role in shaping the self. Triandis (1989) in Tesser (1995) developed several of the key concepts of self. First, he distinguished between public, private and collective aspects of self. The private self is how the person understands him or herself, including introspection, private decision making, and self-perception. The public self refers to how one is perceived by other people, and it includes one's reputation, impressions made on specific others and so on. Lastly the collective self refers to one's membership in social group, such as ethnic identity and family ties.

This last aspect of self is the one that usually creates problems because if someone feels that you are not part of their collective self, they can decide not to accept you in their world as they might feel that because you are different you will not fit in. At Unisa black and white people have their own ethnic identities which they feel comfortable with. These identities form part of their individual selves.

1.3 Attitudes and identities in the workplace

Von Kuhne (1996) believes that an attitude may be seen as a habit of thought. He further states that the individual recognizes this habit in himself and others through the identification of patterns of experience over time and context. Attitudes involve an association of value with other objective properties of things. An individual's behaviour is related to his attitude and the influence of the environment.

The role that transformation plays in South African organizational life cannot be over emphasized, as is the approach taken to cope with it, as well as including effectively applying the positive characteristics of transformation so as to influence the success and survival of many organizations. It is postulated that a constructive attitude towards change is a prerequisite for the development of positive attitudes towards colleagues from diverse backgrounds. The individual is in general less likely to resist change if he feels some ownership in the change.

Employees are more likely to support change if they perceive the change to be in line with their values, priorities, and interests (Von Kuhne, 1996). This is true at Unisa as well as some employees feel that the changes that are taking place are not in line with their interests. There is unwillingness among some employees to change their attitudes and therefore end up not accepting the changes that are taking place with open arms.

The functional approach towards attitude formation contends that attitudes are formed through needs, wishes and feelings and not just through cognition and reason. The individual's attitude is used as an explanation of the relationship between stimulus events and the individual's responses. The attitudes that people have towards others will determine how they are going to treat them (Von Kuhne, 1996). This is true at Unisa, as some employee's attitudes towards their colleagues are negative due to a lack of understanding of one another and competition with each other. This is also true again when it comes to models, as there is a lot of competition amongst them.

These negative attitudes lead to co-workers becoming prejudiced towards one another. Von Kuhne (1996) describes prejudice as an attitude towards the members of some specific group, that causes the person holding it to evaluate others negatively solely on the basis of their membership in that group. This can also be a problem at Unisa, whereby some employees might evaluate other employees who belong to a different cultural background negatively just because they are different from them. Prejudice goes hand in hand with stereotypes. A stereotype occurs when people judge other people on the basis of the groups that they belong to and this judgement is usually negative. Stereotypes can create problems at times. If people have made up their minds that people belonging to a certain group are inferior, it is usually very difficult to change their perception.

1.4 Methodology

This study is going to adopt an ethnographic approach, whereby stories of different people are going to be looked at. In an ethnographic approach, reality is created by the observer who gives meaning to that which he observes from symbols and meanings that he or she takes from his or her culture. Stories people tell give meaning to their personal experiences.

Auto-ethnographic /personal narrative is going to be used where I as the researcher will be part of the research. Narrative is seen as the best way to understand the human experience because it is the way humans understand their own lives. Generally, narrative inquiry focuses on the functions of stories and storytelling in creating and managing identity in a social world, the expressive form for making sense of lived experience and communicating it to others, the entanglement that permeate how interpersonal life is lived and how it is told to others, the reflexive dimension of the relationship between storytellers and their audiences, and the canonical narrative that circulate through society and culture, offering scripted ways of action (Montgomery and Baxter,1998).

There are a number of distinguishing features when doing a narrative or ethnographic research. Firstly, the author usually writes in the first person, making him/herself the object of research, thus breaching the conventional separation of researcher and subject. Secondly, the narrative text normally breaches the traditional focus on generalization across cases by focusing on generalization within a single case extended over time. Thirdly, the text is present as a story replete with a narrator, characterization and plot-line, akin to forms of writing associated with the novel or biography, and thus fractures the boundaries that traditionally separate social science from literature. Fourthly, the story, often discloses hidden details of private life and highlights emotional experience, and thus challenges the rational actor model of social performance that dominates social science. Fifthly, the ebb and flow of relationship experience is depicted in an episodic form that dramatizes the motion of connected live across the curve of time and thus resists the standard practice of portraying a relationship as a snapshot (Montgomery and Baxter, 1998).

The narrative psychological approach can be classified as broadly social constructionist, in so far as it attempts to examine the cultural structure of individual experience. Originally the narrative psychological approach was formulated as an alternative to dominate quantitative approaches, which, in their attempt to numerically categorize experience through quantification and statistical procedures, failed radically to incorporate or address these hermeneutic dimensions of experience and thus lost any sense of the “live” nature of human reality and identity. The narrative psychological approach comprises a useful tool which enables us to recapture the way in which selves and identities are grounded in ‘cultural’ forms of language and sense – making, whilst still maintaining a sense of the ‘internal’, ‘coherent’ and ‘personal’ nature of self-experience (Crossley, 2000).

Carr (1986) argues that the reality of human experience can be characterized as one which has a narrative or story-telling character. What would it be, he asks, to experience life as a ‘mere’ or ‘pure’ sequence of isolated events, one thing after another? Carr continues to say that the ‘means-end’ structure of

action that we experience in everyday life is akin to the beginning-middle-end plot structure of narrative, and thus 'the structure of action is common to art and life'.

According to Ricoeur (1991), there are two sorts of time in every story told. On the one hand, there is a discrete succession that is open and theoretically indefinite, for example a series of incidents for which we can always pose the question, "and then"? Much like a chronicle of events. The other sort of time is characterized by integration, culmination and closure, owing to which the story receives a particular configuration. In this sense, composing a story involves drawing together a series of events in order that they make sense in relation to one another.

If we can talk of a narrative structure in connection with individual passive and active experiences, then the notion of 'life-story' requires yet a further, more comprehensive grasp which brings separate 'stories' together, take them all as 'mine' and establishes connections among them. Although we may argue that there is a past-present-future temporal configuration at the level of passive and active experience, it is not difficult to see that at this more complex level something special is required in the way of a reflexive temporal grasp, to hold together the phases of longer-term phenomena and preserve their coherence. This, of course is the classic process of autobiography in which there is an attempt to envisage the coherence of a life through selection, organization and presentation of its component parts. Kierkegaard (1987) argues that it is through this process of autobiographical selection that we become ethical beings, in the telling of our life-stories, we become responsible for our lives.

1.4.1 Sampling

I will use purposive sampling to select the participants of this study. McBurney (1994) describes purposive sampling as a non-random sample that is chosen for some characteristic that it possesses. Neuman (1997) is of the opinion that purposive sampling is an acceptable kind of sampling for special situations.

He states that this kind of sampling uses the judgment of an expert in selecting cases, or it selects cases with a specific purpose in mind. This type of sampling is normally used in exploratory research or in field research. The reason for using purposive sampling for this research is to incorporate variables such as race and cultural background into the case study research.

Neuman (1997) believes that case studies are very useful because a research might gather a large amount of information on one or a few cases, go into greater depth, and get more details on the cases being examined. The case study researcher goes about data analysis differently. He gets immersed in his data. Immersion gives the researcher an intimate familiarity with people's lives and culture. He or she looks for patterns in the lives, actions, and words of people in the context of the complete case as a whole. The method of gathering data is going to be of an ethnographic nature, whereby the research participants are going to be interviewed and observed in their working environment. An ethnographic method was chosen in this case because the study is going to involve people of different cultural backgrounds.

1.4.2 Data Gathering

I will interview five Unisa academic employees and five models belonging to different modeling agencies. The interviews will be in-depth and unstructured. The interviews will also be interactive. Hertz (1997) says that interactive interviewing involves the sharing of personal and social experiences of both respondents and researchers, who tell their stories in the context of a developing relationship. Interactive interviewing reflects the way relationships develop in real life, as conversations where one person's disclosures and self-probing invites another's disclosures and self-probing, where an increasingly intimate and trusting context makes it possible to reveal more of ourselves and to probe deeper into another's feelings and thoughts, where listening to and asking questions about another's plight lead to greater understanding of one's own, and where the examination and comparison of experiences offer new insights into both lives.

Initial meetings with the respondents will take place whereby the whole research process will be explained to them and their permission will be asked. The interviews are going to be in the form of stories, whereby the respondents will tell their stories of how they perceive their identities in a changing working environment.

White (1992) is of the opinion that stories express perceptions of social process and structure, but stories also can and do conceal projects of control. Stories are numerous and can be mapped on action in any number of ways so that they contribute to sufficient decoupling to permit some fresh action.

For the purpose of this study a qualitative approach is going to be used. Neuman (1997) says a qualitative researcher takes advantage of personal insight, feelings and perspective as a human being to understand the social life under study, but is aware of his/her values or assumptions. Qualitative research is going to be used because it adds more depth and perspective to the information gathered. Neuman (1997) continues to say that qualitative researchers emphasize the importance of social context for understanding the social world. They hold that the meaning of a social action or statement depends, in an important way, on the context in which it appears.

Attention to social context means that a qualitative researcher notes what came before or what surrounds the focus of study. It also implies that the same events or behaviors can have different meanings in different cultures or historical eras. Qualitative research builds a more holistic picture; through this type of research detailed views of the respondents will be obtained. Qualitative researchers place parts of social life into a larger whole.

1. 5 Ethical Issues

The participants will be put first and they will also be given all the information they need to know concerning the research. Their confidentiality will be assured and their privacy will be respected. It will be made clear to the participants that they can withdraw at any time. They will not be forced or be

manipulated into divulging something that they do not feel comfortable with. They will also be given the opportunity to comment on what has been written about them, before it is published.

1. 6 Objectives

- To understand the nature of place-identity at work.
- To understand the impact of change on place-identity.
- To understand how social selves and cultural backgrounds relate to place-identity.
- To compare Unisa and the Catwalk as contexts of place-identity.

1. 7 Recommendations

Through listening to the stories of different individuals, I will utilize the results to suggest how improvements can be made about the way people of different cultural backgrounds and different races can get along in the workplace without there being any conflict with regards to their individual identities.

Chapter 2

Place-Identity

2. 1 Introduction

Most people relate their identities to the places where they live or work. In doing so, they develop a place-identity. This place-identity is formed around the people that one relates to and the physical place itself. In Psychology the concept of place-identity has not been given enough attention. When looking at environmental psychology, one realizes that it does not discuss issues relating to place and identity and how a person forms an identity around the place within which one lives or works. This chapter aims to look at issues such as place, identity, urban-related identity, identity and the self, functions of identity, place-identity and self-concept to name but a few.

2. 2 Place and identity

Proshansky (1976)'s notion of place-identity is valuable in that he started looking at environmental psychology differently; he felt that the physical environment also plays a role in the formation of a person's identity. The self-identity that a person forms of himself is thus greatly affected by his environment.

Social identity has been widely discussed in many social psychology theories. Tesser (1995) mentions that social identity includes a number of meanings that a person attaches to one's self in order to be able to identify the self with a specific social group. On the other hand social identity also refers to a definition that individuals create for themselves and the relationships that they share with other people (Baron and Byrne, 2003). There is still very little

reference to the role of place in identity. Place has been related to identity in two ways, namely, place identifications and place being seen as a social category. Twigger-Ross and Uzzel (1996) believe that the same rules used for social identity can also be used for place-identity. When looking at these two concepts, however, we realize that there is a difference.

Social identity focuses on the identity that an individual forms in relation to other people and the society. Place-identity focuses on the identity one experiences within the context of a specific place. Such a place could be a place of work, worship, play and residence.

The term “place” as mentioned by Lalli (1992), can easily be used to refer to a number of environments within a person’s life. The most important aspects to focus on are those places that are of significance to a person’s life, for example, a person’s home or his workplace. These environments have significance on an individual, on a social and on an emotional level. In a workplace, for example, a person does not realize the attachment that he/she has towards that particular place, until the threat arises and the person feels the need to defend this place that is his/hers.

Carter, Donald and Squires (1993) distinguish between spaces and places. A space is something that has no meaning to it, whereas place is a space that has been named, given meaning and is occupied by people. People form identities towards certain places that have a particular meaning to them. The workplace is therefore a space that has been given meaning and therefore it forms a part of the people who work in it

Fullilove (1996, p. 1517) distinguishes between the following two descriptions of place:

“Firstly, place connotes the geographic center, site, situation, or location for events. In this regard, human survival depends on having a location that is ‘good enough’ to support life. It is a biological imperative that viable settings provide people with ready, equitable access to food, water, and safe shelter, offer

appropriate facilities for the disposal of wastes; and limit human exposure to toxic chemicals or other harmful substances. Furthermore, 'good enough' locations are composed in a manner that is meaningful to residents and that promotes unity with the natural world. Settings need to assist people in the existential search for meaning. Secondly, place can be understood as standing for the human interactions occurring in a given location, that is, as the psychosocial milieu".

The geographer Anssi Paasi, as cited in Fullilove (1996), explains that a place provides that platform within which life stories can be formed. Everything that happens within a person's life, happens within a certain place, therefore, a place forms a part of who you are. It has been widely observed that each place has unique meaning for each individual. The personal "sense of place" is shaped by the person's past, as well as by the person's attitudes, beliefs, and actions in the present. The people who are allowed within this 'place' are those that share the same beliefs and attitudes.

Place can be understood as that factor that allow human interaction within a specific location. It is through place that people can perform their everyday duties. Places such as home, school and the workplace gives one the feeling of belonging. The interactions that people have with one another take place within the physical environment that they exist in. People shape their existences around the places that they function in.

In the workplace for instance, implementation of change could be perceived as a threat by people within the organization. People are usually afraid of the unknown as they do not know what to expect. They prefer to stick to the familiar. Human beings in general want to have a sense of belonging. It is very important for them to feel that they are important and that they matter. Most people do not welcome change with open hands, they perceive it as a threat.

Fullilove (1996) describes three psychological processes, namely, familiarity, attachment and identity. He says that each person lives within an environment and this environment makes it possible for him to function in the outside world with other people. People tend to feel at ease if they are confronted by the things that are familiar to them. It is important for people to feel secure and safe within the environment that they exist in. If there is some form of a threat to this environment, it will also affect the self as well. This environment is also what is referred to as 'place'. People also get attached to those things that they are familiar with. People attach emotions to things and to people that they relate to on an everyday basis. They get satisfaction and protection from that which is familiar and that which they are attached to and they form an identity around this relationship.

Identity has been defined differently by various authors. Hogg and Abrams (1988) argue that we form our identities around the social groups that we belong to. These social groups help us in forming our social identities. We tend to form relationships and relate better to people who are similar to us. These people form part of our in-group. We compare ourselves with those who are different from us, those whom we refer to as the out-group. People generally believe that their in-group is better than out-groups. People who are not seen as part of this in-group are usually perceived as a threat, and therefore they are not accepted.

Identity consists of all the events that take place within an individual's life. It consists of all the experiences that people go through. Wegner (1999, p. 145) says "as we encounter our effects on the world and develop our relations with others, these layers build upon each other to produce our identity as a very complex interweaving of participating experiences and reficative projections". He continues to say that our identity consists of us being able to shape the meanings that define our communities. The things that we participate in, the people that we relate to and the environment that we live in, help in forming the identities we have. Because we belong to communities, we have identities as being part of those communities. This being the case however, we still look at the world differently from other people in our communities.

People usually define themselves by the things that are familiar to them and also the things that are unfamiliar (Wegner, 1999).

2. 3 Place-identity and the self

Place identity was derived from self-theory and its meaning could be related to the relationship that a person has with his physical environment. Place-identity also forms part of a person's self-identity on a cognitive level. It consists of cognitions that are related to our past, our present and all the circumstances that form part of our day to day existence. All the things that happen within an individual's life happen within a certain environment that he functions or exist in. This can take place on both an unconscious and a conscious level (Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff, 1983).

Many influences can affect a person's place-identity (Proshansky et. al. 1983). Things such as the economy, politics, and social issues form part of a person's everyday existence, and therefore a person forms an identity around these things. If there are changes or alterations in these issues, it affects the person as well, be it directly or indirectly. Major changes in the physical environment such as technological development also affect a person's identity that he derives from his environment, because such changes make a person feel like he/she is not in total control of what happens around him/her.

2. 4 Urban related identity and the self

Before industrialization people used to live in rural areas, they felt safe and secure in their living environment. They experienced much comfort and they could associate and get along very well with each other on a personal level. The big cities were seen as impersonal and removed from nature. The towns evolved during the post-war era. People started moving to cities and built new identities towards their new physical settings (Lalli, 1992).

Urban-related identity can be defined as forming part of an individual's self-identity. Self-identity forms part of a person's self-concept. It is the way in

which the individual forms an identity of one self. Lalli (1992, p. 293) defines urban-identity as “an aspect of the more comprehensive self-identity of a person”. Urban-related identity, unlike place identity, is more specific and local as it looks at the towns or cities and the way in which people form identities towards the towns in which they live.

Many sociologists believe that people feel safe when they are around their families, their friends or their colleagues at work. The towns in which they live also form part of who they are. The names of the towns wherein they live serves only as symbols for contacts between them. When people define themselves according to the town within which they live, they do so to differentiate between themselves and other people who live in other towns (Lalli, 1992).

Each and every place has its own identity. The environments that we live in are assigned identities according to the way we perceive them. When a person feels that he or she belongs to a place, he/she forms an identity which is connected to that particular place and that place contributes to the person’s self-esteem. The person will also feel unique and special, and have a sense of belonging. For people to feel this way, they must see their place or more specific, their town as different (Lalli, 1992).

The town that the person lives in forms part of all the experiences that a person has. The town provides a person with the context whereby all the experiences that a person has, forms part of their personal biography. All these also form part of a person’s self-identity which will then include all the social aspects of a person (Lalli, 1992).

One of the central functions of urban-related identity is to differentiate between the residents of a town from other outside individuals. This differentiation gives a person a sense of belonging to that specific town and also gives them the perception that they are different. They are a part of a community that they can relate to and identify with. This gives the people in the community a sense of ‘we’ and it also gives them the feeling of security

and comfortability. People identify with the name of their town and they take note of those things that are in their environment that are unique (Lalli, 1992).

Graumann as cited in Lalli (1992) says that the unity of a person is not naturally given but attained psychologically by identification. This identification is then maintained as a person's identity in an ongoing and sometimes conflicting process of socialization. This shows that identification is acquired and maintained through identity. This is then what is meant by place-identity. When looking at the workplace, for example, one realizes that employees identify with the place that they are working at and therefore become very protective of this "place" of work.

2. 5 Development of Place-identity

The development of place-identity starts in childhood when the child is being enculturated into his culture or group. At this stage the child is not aware of what is happening around him, their identity is not formed yet at this stage. The thought processes that form part of place-identity involve many things, for example, memories, feelings and the way in which people view the physical environment that they exist in. All these things the child is not aware of until he grows and become old enough to understand what is happening around him.

As part of these thoughts processes, we also have social issues that form part of people's physical environment and these consist of norms, rules and regulations, and behaviour that are part of the places people live in. These settings determine what people have to do and when they should do it. For example, children go to school during the day. It would be quite unusual for children to go to school in the afternoon or at night. The social expectation is that schooling take place during the day (Proshansky et. al. 1983).

The physical setting consists of all the things that form part of the identity of a place, things such as the culture of the people belonging to a certain place. The culture can be broken down to things such as race, ethnicity, age, sex

and social class. This basically means that people of different ethnic groups, race or social class will relate differently to places that they belong to. Each group will form an identity towards their place, an identity that has a special or unique meaning to them (Proshansky et. al. 1983).

Korpela (1989) defines place-identity as consisting of the individual's conscious or unconscious regulation of their experiences towards their physical environment as maintenance for their sense of self. People get attached psychologically to places that they live in or work at and this is the center of how place-identity is defined.

Place-identity, which is also seen as an emotional attachment to a place consist of many experiences that develop over time towards a place. If you have been working in a company for the past ten years, you get used to the way things work, you get used to the building and you also get used to the people that you work with. All these form part of who you are, that is, your identity (Korpela,1989) .

Vaske and Kobrin, (2001) say that place-identity forms part of a person's self-esteem, it makes a person feel good to know that they belong. Place- identity is said to be influencing a specific Environmentally Responsible Behaviour (ERB) at a particular setting directly. The relationship that exists between place-identity and self imply that specific behaviours with certain resources may carry over to other ERB within the community.

Vaske and Kobrin (2001) examined the influence of resource-specific place dependence and place identity on general ERB. They came up with three hypotheses, namely, place identity with a specific setting mediates the relationship between place dependence and general ERBs. Secondly, as place dependence increases, place identity will increase. Thirdly, as place identity increases, general ERB will increase. The method that was used for the research was an on-site survey which was conducted on the youth of between 14-17 years of age, who participated in a natural –resource-based

work programs. Respondents indicated their level of agreement with the following items: (a) I think often about coming here, (b) I am very attached to this place, (c) I identify strongly with this park, and (d) I feel like this place is a part of me. All four variables were coded on 5-point Likert-type scales ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

When coming to the analysis, Vaske and Kobrin (2001) examined the internal consistency of the Place Dependence, Place identity, and Environmentally Responsible Behaviour scales using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients. SPSS for Windows was used for these analyses. A confirmatory factor analysis tested whether the place dependence, place identity, and ERB constructs provided a good fit to the data. The results were that the confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated that the data provided an acceptable fit to the place dependence, place identity, and ERB constructs. They concluded that place dependence preceded place identity that, in turn, mediated the place dependence/ERB relationship.

Sarbin (1983) investigated how people relate to their environment by using a humanistic approach. This kind of approach is important as it shows how people formulate a sense of belonging to a place and on how they turn this into a self-narrative. He found that people arrange their homes and their offices to create an impression and by arranging their homes and offices in a certain way, they communicate and give answers to unasked questions about themselves. Therefore, people formulate their personal stories or narratives within the places that they exist in.

People experience and record all the things that happen within their physical environment. However, on top of these things there are needs and desires to be satisfied and the environment differ from time to time in its capacity of satisfying these needs and desires. The physical world consists also of that which is seen as good or bad. The good or bad is determined by the norms

and values set up by the people within their physical settings. All these things combine to form the place – identity of a person (Proshansky, et. al. 1983).

Place-identity is a changing structure and it will be modified over the course of the individual's lifecycle. The change is brought about due to the change in the environment itself and also due to the person existing within various environments, for example, a person finishing school and moving to a new place like the workplace. Through personal attachment to geographically locatable places, a person acquires a sense of belonging and purpose which gives meaning to his/her life. A person becomes attached to a place and any change that arises may cause a threat to that person's identity (Proshansky, et.al. 1983).

Relph (1976) in Proshansky et. al. (1983) states that places can be defined as the centers of our existence. He continues to say that there is for almost everyone existing in the world an association with the place where you were born, where you grew up, where you live now, where you go to school or where you work. People tend to feel secure when they can identify with something and also having the knowledge that they are accepted.

Self and identity have been the focus of much research that have been conducted. Baumeister (1986) says that the concept of 'self' cannot be understood on its own. He says that for one to understand the self there are other things that should be taken into consideration as well. He continues to explain that the self includes the body and that it also includes the social identity. The social identity consists of all the things that can be attached to the body, for example, a person's name or the name of the group that they belong to. The self also has other functions of its own. Firstly the self functions as an interpersonal tool meaning that a person does not exist in a vacuum but rather he interacts with other people and he forms part of a group which is where the social identity is formed. Another function of the self is to help individuals to make choices. If the self is functioning well, it is useful in helping people to make big small decisions that affect their lives.

Through living together, experiencing similar things and communication with one another, people form their place-identity. This identity helps them to make sense of all that is around them. They talk to one another and share their ideas and experiences with one another (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000).

Language is another important factor in place-identity. It is through language that people identify with others who speak the language as they do. They form their self-identities through experiences of their everyday lives. People's languages give them a sense of who they are. They identify territories and defend these territories by treating those who do not speak the same language as them as outsiders. People tend to form a collective identity according to the language that they speak. The in-group will be all those who speak the same language as you and the out-group will be people who speak a different language (Proshansky et. al. 1983).

The collective identities are formed between what is referred to as 'our space' and 'their space'. The individual place-identities are not formed only through people's identification with the physical settings but also through the dis-identification with the physical settings of others who belong to the out-group.

Dixon and Durrheim (2000) conducted research focusing on post-apartheid South Africa. They say that it is widely recognized that apartheid was a system of exclusion in which communities became separated from one another and found themselves identified with particular places. It might be said that apartheid was a system which made sure that people kept to the places which were allocated to them. Things like language also played a role during this era as people were divided according to their ethnic groups, e.g. The Zulus are found in Kwazulu Natal and the South Sothos are found in the Free State.

In South Africa there has always been that belief that Black South Africans belong somewhere else. This was regarded as being the case during the apartheid era. The Black South African were not allowed to stay in suburbs even though they were the ones who built them as it was believed that only

white people had the right to stay there. They were put in rural areas and locations which were reserved for them. The Blacks had no political say and everything was decided for them (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000).

Dixon and Durrheim (2000) continue to say that now that apartheid has passed and we are living in a democratic country, the division of people is gradually breaking down. This change is causing people to re-look certain things and start re-checking their place-identity. This is causing a lot of frustration among people as they have to accommodate these changes.

People tend to take the things that are around them for granted until there is a threat of losing these things. The same applies with the place, people are never aware of how attached they are to the places in which they live or work until there is a threat towards this place.

Krupat (1983) insists that the concept of place-identity makes very clear the role that a person's relationship to the environment plays, not only in determining certain types of behaviour, but also in becoming part of who that person is, that is, a part of the person's self-concept. This approach is very crucial as it highlights a factor that is usually missed, a factor of the relationship between self-definition and location.

2. 6 Functions of place-identity

Place-identity influences what we see, think, and feel in our everyday encounters within the physical world; it also provides the past of the place, which can be used to judge the present physical setting (Proshansky, et. al. 1983).

People need to feel stable in the environments that they live in. They want to have that sense of stability based on the knowledge that things will not change. The fact that certain things happened in the past and they are still happening in the present gives people the comfort and the belief that these things will remain the same in the future (Proshansky, et. al. 1983).

Since the individual's place-identity includes part of the physical world, the constant awareness of this world plays a very important part of the person's self-identity. However, major changes in the environment that affect a person may thus threaten the self-identity of the individual (Proshansky, et. al. 1983). This threat can be brought about by the fact that the individual might have to deal with things that are new to him/her. The change might also include having to be in contact with people from the out-group that the individual does not identify with. This can in turn be very stressful to the individual.

An individual is always in contact with other people within a society that he/she exists in. Through his/her interaction with them, he/she starts identifying with their ways of life. Furthermore, he/she forms an identity towards the place that he/she exists in. This place is given a name and meaning by groups of people living in it. Groups can thus be seen as the objects that define a place. They are the ones who give a place an identity.

The identification that a person has with the group that he/she belongs to, makes the group to be a part of the person's self-identity (Smith and Henry, 1996). This self that the person forms around the group that he/she belongs to, affects his or her behaviour. If a person is a member of a group, he or she is likely to act according to the group's beliefs, norms, and values (Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

Even though identifying with a group may lead to individuals acting in group-typical ways, this does not mean that individuals who identify with a group will always act according to the social identity based in that group membership. This influence of identification is based on social identity being cognitively activated. This means that even if an individual identifies with a group, that does not mean that the individual is always aware of this membership, he or she becomes aware of this membership when it affects their attitude and behaviour.

When we come in contact with new experiences, we enter into unfamiliar territory. The way we are and how we think of ourselves is determined by a collective identity that is sometimes called the social self. Looking at identity in social terms does not mean that we ignore individuality; instead we view the definition of individuality as something that is part of the practices of specific communities. Therefore, it is wrong to try and analyze identity in terms of it being part of the person or the community as both of them are incorporated in it. The emphasis should be on the process of their mutual constitution (Wegner, 1999).

Most people tend to feel that they are going to lose their self-identities when they get into unfamiliar new environments. This can be seen in many organizations whereby you will find that people feel that by opening up to the changes they will be losing a sense of who they are and what they have worked for (Wegner, 1999).

Place-identity gives physical settings a sense of meaning because people attach meaning to places within which they live. This identity determines what must happen within settings, how the setting should be like and how people living within that particular setting should behave. All these enable a person not only to recognize a setting but to understand its intended purposes and activities in relation to its design and other substantive properties.

The meanings that people give to spaces and places are not the same around the world. There are many different meanings that people associate to things and that they give to their respective physical settings. The meanings go further than only knowing how to behave in a specific setting, they also include the individual's incorporation of the past to the present (Proshansky, et. al. 1983).

There are inevitable changes that will take place in an individual's environment and he or she must check whether he or she has the capacity or skills to cope with the change. A person can feel that their physical setting has been invaded if there are people from the out-group in their setting. This

can bring about the fear for loss of place-identity as these “outsiders” might want to bring changes to the physical setting.

Proshansky et. al. (1983) say that place identity represents the environment’s cognitions that deal with defining, maintaining, and protecting the self-identity of a person. The development of place-identity is not only a one way street that affects the value changes of our society but it affects individuals within the society as well.

2.6.1 Place-identity and the self-concept

The concept of place-identity clearly explains the main role that a person’s relationship with the physical setting plays not only in terms of a context for action or in facilitating certain forms of behaviour, but in becoming part of the person of being incorporated into one’s concept of self.

The self is formed through the social experiences that the individual goes through. These experiences make it possible for individuals to differentiate between themselves, other people, and the physical environment that they live in. All these help in the development of the self-concept. Lalli, (1992, p. 287) says that “self-concept can be understood as the subjective representation of self.” The primarily cognitive oriented self-concept theories imply that objects and places have meanings which are shared by individuals with whom one interacts and these form a part of the individual’s self-concept.

Rogers (1959) as cited in Meyer, Moore, and Viljoen (1989, p. 378-379) defined self-concept as “the organized consistent conceptual gestalt composed of perception of the characteristic of the ‘I’ or ‘me’ and the perceptions of the relationships of the ‘I’ or ‘me’ to others and to various aspects of life, together with the values attached to these perceptions.” Self-concept is available in awareness but not necessarily in awareness at all times. It is always changing; it is a process but at any given time it is a specific entity.

The self-concept thus refers to the “picture” which the person has of himself and the importance he attaches to himself, how he sees himself, what his characteristics are how he judges himself in the areas of appearance, ability, talents, motives, goals and social interactions and relationships (Meyer, et. al. 1989).

Self-concept can also be seen as all the information that is put together by the person about himself or herself. The self-concept is further shaped by things such as social interaction and communication. Although a lot of information that deals with self-knowledge is gained from other people, that information is highly affected and biased by the time the individual is ready to incorporate it into his or her self-concept (Tesser, 1995).

People deal with experiences in difference ways. First, ignoring them simply because at that moment they are irrelevant to the person’s needs. At another time, however, the same experience might well be allowed into consciousness. Secondly, experiences may be symbolized when they correspond with the individual’s needs. Experiences are allowed into consciousness when they correspond with a person’s self-concept. Thirdly, experiences which are denied or distorted are those which are denied access to consciousness because they are contrary to the self-concept. In some cases denial or distortion is fairly conscious (Meyer, et. al. 1989).

A person will develop a social identity by belonging to a social group with which he shares similar interests. A person’s self-concept is continually formed by all the experiences that he goes through. These experiences play a major role in the self-actualization of a person. Throughout life a person strives to reach this stage where he can say he is now a fully functioning self-actualized person. At this stage he knows who he is and where he belongs.

If we combine the concept of territoriality to place-identity we find a slightly different reason for the motives for and the circumstances under which territorial defense will take place and we realize that we cannot rely entirely on the biological explanations of territorial behaviour. If we relate place-identity

to self-concept, we come to realize that an individual has a choice and control in the things that happen within his/her environment. These choices are important for the relationships that lead to one's self-esteem (Krupat, 1983).

Place-identity is constructed in such a way that a person can locate himself or herself in the environmental setting that he/she exists in. Places can be used as markers for the establishment of individual's social identity. People identify themselves with the places that they live in, for example, home- the place "home" reflects how the social identity was formed (Sarbin, 1983). The next section looks at the relationship between place-identity and social identity in detail.

2.6.2 Place-identity and social identity

A person's self-concept plays a very important role in the formation of his self and social identities. Initially a person has got to have self-knowledge, which is how he perceives himself, this will then lead to self-identity. Social identity is therefore formed by how a person is perceived by other people and whether he is accepted or not.

Change plays a role in a person's social identity. Tajfel in Abrams and Hogg (1990) defines social identity as the individual's knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him/her of the group membership. Social identity theory explains that an individual's social identity is also explained through social comparison, and the comparison generally occurs between the in-group and the out-group, that is, people compare themselves with those who are similar to them and also to those that are different from them. People's desire to be evaluated positively provides a reason for the differentiation between social groups. Differentiation is likely to be greater on dimensions of general social value, or of particular importance to the in-group. Generally individuals will always perceive their in-group as being better than the out-group and this will enhance their social identity (Breakwell, 1992).

The social identity approach outlines how membership in a social group affects the self-concept. Central to this approach is the proposition that through social identification, the perception of oneness with, the belonging to a group, defines individuals in terms of their group membership and ascribe characteristics that are typical of the group to the self. The concept of social identity forms part of a person's self-concept which derives from the knowledge that he/she belongs to a group (Turner, Hogg, Oakers. Reicher and Wethrell, 1987).

In the social identity approach, the different behaviours of individuals within groups are looked at by self-awareness researchers and this type of research relates to personal identity. The important aspects looked at here are those that distinguishes the individual from other group members thereby establishing their uniqueness. People tend to conform to the group's norms and values in order to be accepted by the group. However, if the person's personal identity is well established, then it becomes easier for him/her to resist group pressure (Breakwell, 1992).

Place identification expresses the membership of a group of people who are defined by location. If this is seen as being true, it would mean that place identification is a type of social identification. This would then mean that the concept of place is incorporated into social identity and subsequently ignored. The second way in which place has been related to identity is through the term place-identity. This is now whereby people form identities around the places within which they exist (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996).

There is a lot of evidence that show that people use place identification in order to distinguish themselves from other people. In this case place functions in a similar way to a social category and therefore place identifications can be thought of as comparable to social identifications. It is important to note that the two concepts can be comparable but they are independent from one another (Twigger Ross and Uzzell, 1996).

Proshansky (in Korpela, 1989) states that both in terms of means and ends, the person's behaviour in relation to the appropriation of space is essentially directed at others in the sense of establishing that this space is his. It is through this establishment of one's own space that the concepts of territoriality and privacy come into being. However, this owning of space is a process that is used by the person towards the environmental setting itself and not other individuals. Here a person wants to own this space and change it around to suit his/her needs and also to give it that personalized feeling. For example, a person's office at work, when a person is new in an organization he is given an office, and he/she soon starts rearranging and decorating it the way that he/she likes. This gives a person that feeling of owning that space and therefore it becomes his/her territory. The appropriation in this instance is self-oriented and not socially oriented.

2. 7 Place-identity and cultural diversity

Culture can be defined as the process whereby a group of people share the same norms and values. It is a process that is passed on from one generation to another. Cultural values serve as criteria for evaluating people's behavioural outcomes. It can be seen as the rule that determines what is acceptable and what is not acceptable within a society.

Cultures are very diverse in a sense that there are many different cultural groups in the world, and all these groups have their own individual cultures. When people from different cultural groups come in contact with one another, there might be problems as each group comes with its own norms and values. It is therefore very important that people understand each other's cultures.

People belong to different cultural groups, and they form their social identities around these groups. Everyone who belongs to the same group will be a part of the in-group and everybody else will be a part of the out-group. It is believed that everyone who belongs to the in-group share the same values and therefore it will be easier for them to get along with one another. Such people are usually found staying at the same place or living in the same

environmental setting. They form their own place-identity and anyone who does not belong there is not accepted within this group.

In the old South Africa jobs were reserved only for white people and therefore the workplaces consisted only of white people. However, after 1994 people of other races were allowed in the workplaces. This created frustration for the white employees as they were not use to working with people from a culture that is different from theirs. Many of them felt that their place-identities had been invaded. Cultural diversity was something that they were not used to.

The cultural values differ from one group to another and in the workplace this can create problems as there might be misunderstandings between employees. Within organizations, values serve to evaluate the potential contribution of managerial practices and motivational techniques to employees' senses of well-being and self-worth (Erez and Earley, 1993).

Motivational techniques are likely to be rejected when they are incongruent with the culture values, and fail to facilitate behaviour that enhances self-satisfaction. Managerial techniques that are not consistent with the culture are negatively evaluated by the self and are likely to result in negative motivation. This shows the importance of the understanding and management of cultural diversity within an organization (Erez and Earley, 1993).

2. 8 Stereotypes

Leyens, Yzerbyt and Schadron (1994) define stereotypes as shared beliefs about person attributes, usually personality traits but often also behaviours of a group of people. Stereotype is related to in and out-group formation. People prefer their in-groups because they consist of people who are like them. Why do in-groups get more favorable judgements than out-groups? The reason may be that people like being associated with positive categories. In other words, differentiation helps to establish a positive self-evaluation.

Thus dividing the world into categories simplifies meaning to the world. Categorization fulfills the important function of defining who people are.

People who are from different cultural groups tend to be very stereotypical towards one another. The one cultural group might feel that the fact that the other group is different from them, means that they are inferior and therefore they do not want to be in contact with them- they are the out-group. This can, for example, be seen in the places of work where the old employees might feel threatened if the organization decides that they want to bring about changes by hiring people of different cultural backgrounds.

Some people grow up with the belief that their cultural groups are better than any other groups, therefore anyone who is different is inferior. Stereotypes start developing when people are still growing up. People who are from the out-group are seen to be homogeneous in the way they behave and the way they think than are in-group members. People try to see and appreciate the diversity of in-groups, but when it comes to the out-groups they tend to generalize and say things like “they are all alike”. One implication of the assumption of out-group homogeneity is that people tend to perceive a member of an out-group as just another anonymous group member rather than perceiving him/her as an individual. In the workplace for example, when people come in contact with someone who is considered to be from the out-group, he/she is usually judged without being given a chance first (Tesser, 1995).

Stereotypes can occur in different ways, for example, they can be emotionally positive, negative, or neutral. Stereotypes are not necessarily based on people’s first hand experiences with members of stereotyped groups, some of them are through generalizations, that is, what you were told by other people concerning the stereotyped group. Stereotypes go hand in hand with prejudice. Prejudice is a special category of stereotypes, characterized by a negative emotional tone and a hostile and aggressive nature. While stereotypes are mechanisms of cognitively organizing and simplifying the

complexity of the social environment, prejudices are of discrimination in the form of racism, and the like (Babad, Birnbaum and Benne, 1938).

Stereotypes can create problems at times. If people have made up their minds that people belonging to a certain group are inferior, it is usually very difficult to change their perception. If you do not belong to the “in-group” it will not be easy for you to be accepted. When it comes to place-identity, because of the stereotypes that people have about one another they would not want to welcome each other into their places as they might believe that letting the ‘outsiders’ in might affect their identity in a negative way.

Stereotypes are not only the natural result of the categorization process, the individual need to organize and simplify the environment, but they also fulfil a social function: to explain social events and to justify the in-group’s actions. From the social identity perspective, the crucial feature of the stereotypes is that they are shared. They are not just generalizations which are coincidentally or by chance made by a number of people. This sharedness is due to a social process of social influence which causes conformity to group norms (Hogg and Abrams, 1988).

Locksley, Borgida, Brekke and Hepburn (1980) explain that social stereotypes may be viewed as popular beliefs about distributions of characteristics within social groups. Therefore, social stereotypes have the status of prior probabilities for social judgements about particular members of stereotyped social groups. To the extent that this view of social stereotypes is valid, one would expect stereotypic beliefs to function like any distributional belief in the context of prediction or judgement tasks. Perhaps the most striking implication of this line of reasoning is that social stereotypes may not exert as pervasive or as powerful an effect of social judgements as has been traditionally assumed. Social stereotypes may affect judgements of individuals about whom little else is known besides their social category. But as soon as individuating, subjectively diagnostic characteristics of a person are known, stereotypes may have minimal, if any impact on judgements of that person. This shows that stereotypes are usually made before people

even know anything about the individual and this can in turn lead to misjudgement of people.

Some social stereotypes come into being because they serve the function of providing certain information about social groups that can lead to labeling that social group. In this case, stereotypes allow the individual to understand, predict, control, and master their social worlds. The finding that some stereotypes develop on the basis of their informational value does not mean that all or even most stereotypes are accurate. The goal of accurately summarizing the characteristics of social groups and differentiating among them is only one of the many motivations that stereotypes serve (Stangor, 1995).

One of the most important functions of stereotypes is that they provide positive feedback about the self and the in-group. Stereotypes help create both individual and social self-esteem. Stereotypes that are developed to fulfill such needs will likely be not only distorted, but systematically biased in the sense that the perceived content of stereotypes about the in-group will be more positive than the content of stereotypes ascribed to out-groups. Stereotypes may also function to justify existing attitudes or social situations. At the collective level, groups of individuals may develop collective beliefs that serve to justify or support the superiority of their own group over other groups. As with self-enhancement motives, such justification functions lead individuals to focus on dimensions that favorably differentiate them from others (Stangor, 1995).

Stereotypes can be considered to have been misapplied when they are used as a basis of judgement while ignoring or under-using other potentially available information that is more diagnostic about the person being judged. The most common type of misapplication occurs when people rely on their stereotypes to judge others in lieu of using behavioural information. Stereotypes can also be misused, when an individual uses social categories rather than individuating information as a basis for a response, but rather when one specific category or set of categories is used repeatedly as a basis

of judgement rather than other more diagnostic categories. Such misapplication of stereotypes occurs, for instance, in prejudiced perceivers, who categorize on the basis of race rather than on the basis of other appropriate categories (Stangor, 1995).

It can be said that people use stereotypes to distinguish themselves from others that they believe to be inferior to them. At work, people may be prejudiced against someone from a different race solely because of their race. If this happens a person is not given a chance to show what he/she can do, he/she is judged before doing anything. This is due to the stereotypes that people generally have.

2. 9 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the concept of place-identity and on how it relates to other associated concepts. There are a number of definitions of the concept place-identity as understood by different researchers, and all these definitions are related to one another.

The following chapters will focus at place-identity at the workplace. The two places that will be concentrated on are, Unisa and the Catwalk. Here the life stories of the employees will be explored; more specifically the identities that they form around their places of work will be looked at.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to understand stories of identity within the workplace. For the purpose of this study the workplaces that I will try to understand are Unisa and the Catwalk. I chose these “places” because I am trying to find my own identity in these environments. Case study approach combined with an auto-ethnographic stance will be used for conducting this study. This study is thus conducted within the broad boundaries of qualitative research.

3.2 Qualitative research

Strauss and Juliet (1990) define qualitative research as any kind of research whose findings are not arrived at by means of quantification. Maso (1989) says that for qualitative researchers, the aim usually is not to generalize, but rather to provide an accurate description and, if possible, explanations of what they have empirically found out about the phenomena. This enables the researchers to offer insight into possible problems, characteristics and relationships that might be discovered during further investigation of the social phenomena.

Maso (1994) mentions that qualitative researchers are interested in the world as explained, experienced, and constituted by the subjects as long as that world forms part of research that they want to conduct. This means that researchers who conduct their research qualitatively try to explain, to experience, and to constitute the world of the subjects as the subjects define, experience, and constitute it. At the end of the day it is all about the subjects and how they view the world around them.

Qualitative research captures the meaning of things once the researcher gets absorbed in the data (Neuman, 1997). The information often presents itself in the form of themes and motives gleaned from various sources such as documents transcripts and the observations that the researcher makes. The analysis is then made from all the themes that came up and the generalizations that were made from the evidence. The researcher tries to organize his/her data to show a clear and consistent picture.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) understand the objective of qualitative researchers as that of seeking answers to questions about the way social experience is created and interpreted by participants. This implies that social reality is constructed through the relationship between the researcher and the subject matter, and the situational obstacles that shape the value-laden inquiry.

A qualitative researcher often applies a more natural and interpretive approach to the subject matter, conducts the study in its natural setting, attempts to interpret phenomena in terms of meanings the participants of the study have and collects and uses a variety of studied empirical materials to describe routine, problematic moments and meanings in the participants' lives. All this is done so that the researcher can get a better understanding of his or her subject matter (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Strauss and Corbin (1990) state that the skills that are required for doing qualitative research are to remove oneself from the situation and to critically analyze it, to notice and avoid bias, to get valid and reliable data, and to think in a more abstract way. To do this, a qualitative researcher needs to have theoretical and social sensitivity, and the ability to distance himself/herself while at the same time drawing upon past experience and theoretical knowledge to interpret what is seen, have the ability to accurately observe and also to have good skills of interacting with other people.

3.3 Selection of the subjects

Research subjects were selected through the use of purposive sampling. Neuman (1997) states that this type of sampling is usually used for special cases. This type of sampling is normally used during an ethnographic type of research. Here the researcher decides who will be relevant for the type of research or information that he/she needs. The advantage of using purposive sampling is that a researcher decides who will be more relevant and informative for his/her research.

For the purpose of my study, five Unisa academic employees and five models were approached and interviewed. The Unisa participants included three white and two black individuals whereas the models included three black and two white individuals. For the sake of confidentiality I used pseudonym names for the participants.

3.4 Data collection

For the purpose of this study, I collected data through interviews. An audio tape-recorder was used to tape the interviews. The process of interviewing begins as soon as the tape recorder is set up and the interviewer and interviewee start greeting each other. It has been believed for years that qualitative research has to be audio-taped or video-taped. This can however, affect the respondents in different ways, some might feel uneasy about being taped while others might not be affected by it. The participants in my study gave me permission to use the audio-tape.

The Interviews were in-depth, unstructured and interactive. The interviews took place in the participants' workplaces and some at their homes, as this made it easier for them to open up as they felt free and relaxed. I also kept field notes as I took part in fashion shows and photo-shoots and jotted down my experiences and that of other models as I went along. I started writing a personal diary in order to record all the feelings and observations that I

experienced on workplace identity. This diary also helped in recording some of the participants' experiences.

3.4.1 The research interview

Although Kvale (1996) regards the research interview as a way of obtaining scientific knowledge about the social world, he depicts it as just another way of having a conversation in everyday life whereby the participants formulate conceptions of their lived world in a dialogue. It is a structured conversation and it involves human beings interacting interdependently and producing knowledge while they interact, with the aim of obtaining statements that are meaningful based on how the events are interpreted. The interaction between a researcher and a participant goes beyond spontaneous exchange of views. It involves a process of careful listening and continuous clarification in order to obtain constructive and scientific knowledge.

The interview is sensitive and close to the participant's lived world, and this, according to Kvale (1996), reflects its value. It also provides the understanding of the participants' world from their point of view, unfolds the meaning of their experiences and uncovers their lived world prior to scientific explanation. Through this; knowledge about participants and their conditions may develop effectively without manipulating their behaviour. The strength of the interview thus lies in the fact that it helps to capture the multitude of participants' views on an issue and provide a multifaceted picture of the human world.

3.4.1.1 The unstructured interview

The interviews that were conducted with the participants were unstructured. This was done so that I could obtain detailed information on participants' stories about their workplace identities. An unstructured interview is an appropriate and powerful way of collecting and analyzing empirical material.

It provides a useful balance to the strengths and weaknesses of research. It serves as a window into people's lives (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994)

An unstructured interview elicits more information as compared to other types of interviewing as it involves a combination of verbal and non-verbal information. Its objective is to understand the subject matter without coming in with a prepared structure for the conversation, which might not be what the participants' experiences of reality are all about (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). This implies that an unstructured interview is used as a means to understand the complex behaviours of participants without bringing in previous categorizations or generalizations that may affect the study.

Neuman (1997) says that when the interview is unstructured and open ended it makes it easier for a person to express himself/herself in the forms in which he/she normally speaks, thinks, and organizes reality. A researcher retains participants' jokes and narrative stories in their natural form and does not repackage them into a standardized format. The focus is on the participants' perspective and experiences. In order to stay close to the participants' experience, the researcher asks questions in terms of concrete examples that fit into their life situations.

3.4.1.2 Qualitative and in-depth interviews

The interviews that were conducted were in-depth and of a qualitative nature. Qualitative interviewing is based on a conversation between the researcher and the participant (Kvale, 1996). The emphasis is on the researcher asking questions and listening to what the participant is saying. The participants are viewed as people who create meaning through the interviews. Most of the time qualitative interviewing serves to interpret what the participant is saying and not just focusing at the facts. In this type of interview, participants and researchers communicate with each other from different viewpoints. It is important for the researcher to make sure that he/she understands the

meaning of the process during the interview, and for this to happen, there has to be no distractions during the interviewing process (Kvale, 1996).

Qualitative interviewing builds on the conversational skills that you as the researcher already have. Qualitative interviews differ from everyday conversation in that they are a research tool, a way of learning about the way people feel about things, their thoughts and their experiences. This type of interviewing can be between total strangers or people who are acquainted. The researcher encourages the participants to reflect on their lives' experiences. Qualitative interviewers listen to people as they describe how they understand the worlds in which they live and work. This type of interviewing was very useful and relevant to my research as my aim was to capture people's lived experiences in their places of work. My aim was for them to tell their stories from their own point of view.

Qualitative interviewing looks at individual experiences and also the shared experiences and meaning that people have in their working situations, their respective communities, their churches and many other places. A researcher has to try and make sure that he/she understands words and meaning according to the way his/her participants understand them. Through this understanding, a researcher can learn or hear the things that might be taken for granted. Different participants might explain the same thing differently, this does not mean that one is correct and the other is not, it simply means that they understand it differently.

It is very important for a researcher to be open when conducting qualitative interviewing. This type of interviewing is very involved, usually expecting the participants to be open and give information or share their personal experiences. It was not very difficult for me as the researcher to share my experiences with my participants as most of them were my colleagues and people I associate with regularly.

Qualitative interviewing is usually linked to ethnography. When conducting qualitative research, the researcher usually goes to the field to gather his/her

data. Participants are usually interviewed in their own natural settings. Ethnography fits in very well here, as it focuses on people's lived experiences.

3.4.1.3 In-depth interviewing and ethnographic research

Ethnographic research emphasizes direct personal involvement within the community or society that you are conducting your research on. An ethnographer associates with his/her participants over a certain period of time, and this he/she does in different contexts such as their homes or their place of work (Agar, 1996).

Ethnographic research focuses on aspects such as where the participants live, what their beliefs and norms are, and how these beliefs determine their actions. Ethnographic researchers are very open minded and broad minded when it comes to what they want to investigate as they do not work to test hypotheses. In ethnographic research, the researcher prepares questions that will start the conversation when he/she gets into the field and he will then be guided by the responses of the participants (Wolcott, 1988).

Ethnographers usually go into the research sites with the purpose of learning and discovering new information. These type of researchers use participant observation as one of the ways in which they collect their data. When a researcher enters a research site he/she starts by observing and describing what he/she sees before becoming a participant.

Ethnography tends to be very in-depth. In-depth interviews tend to take a long time to conduct. They usually involve one-on-one, face to face interaction between the researcher and the participant and the purpose is to form a relationship of mutual disclosure. Here the interviewer is part of the research unlike in other types of interviews. In-depth interviews are similar to conversations between people who know each other but the difference is that in in-depth interviews the interviewer seeks to use the information obtained in the interaction for other purposes. The researcher uses this type of interviewing to get deep information and certain knowledge. The information

that is gathered through this type of interviewing consist of very personal issues, such as the individual's self, their past experiences, their values and their decisions.

An in-depth interviewer begins slowly, with small talk, whereby the interviewer explains the purpose of the research and usually begins with easy pre-planned questions that start up the process. This is so that the interviewer and the interviewee can establish rapport with one another. In my research the formation of rapport was not very difficult as the people I was interviewing were my colleagues and therefore it was easy for the conversation to flow.

In-depth interviewing is not the same as other types of interviewing as it involves deeper involvement of the researcher's self. For a participant to trust you as a researcher and open up, you also have to give in return and be open. Reciprocity is only possible if the researcher is a former or present member of the group of people that are being studied. In in-depth interviewing the researcher must start by doing some introspection and self-reflection and look at himself/herself in interaction with others.

In this study interviews took the form of stories, whereby the participants told their personal stories about their place-identity. Atkinson (2002) says that individuals' lives and the roles that they play in their societies are usually better understood through the telling of stories. People become fully aware of their own lives through putting them together in the form of stories. The stories help us to put meaning to things. The telling of our stories enable us to be heard, recognized and acknowledged by others. Another important aspect of telling a story is that the process of really hearing, understanding and accepting another individual's story does not involve judging.

Open-ended questions were used so as to capture how the person understands his or her own identity within the place that they work. Exact accuracy in the story was less critical than the story itself.

In conducting the interview, I looked at the following aspects:

- The participant's personal background,
- The participant's position at their place of work,
- The participant's perception of their place of work,
- The participant's attitudes and feelings towards change at their place of work,
- The participant's view of themselves (self-identity),
- The participant's personal and place-identity.

3.4.1.4 Auto-ethnography

I also used and an auto-ethnographic approach in this research whereby I included my own story. This permits me to narrate my own experiences.

Ellis (1993, p.727) writes

“Narrative is the best way to understand the human experience, because it is the way humans understand their own lives. If we wish to understand the deepest and most universal of human experiences, if we wish our work to be faithful to the lived experiences of people, if we wish for a union between poetics and science, if we wish to reach a variety of readers or if we wish to use our privileges and skills to empower the people we study, then we need to foreground, not suppress the narrative within the human sciences.”

Ellis (1997) says that when we are born we are born into a world of stories, stories that keep on unveiling throughout our lives. As we live everyday of our lives, we live these stories and the stories only end when we die. Individuals are the master of their stories and only they alone can understand their own stories. People have different experiences throughout their lives, experiences

that they might want to share with others. The experiences that people have are influenced by many factors in their lives, for example, culture. Culture plays a vital role in shaping the behaviour and actions of a person's life. Therefore, you might find that people from different cultures experience things differently.

By putting their experiences in the form of stories, people attach meaning to their life experiences. This then enables them to tell their stories in a way that makes them feel comfortable. One of the reasons I decided to use auto-ethnography was because it enabled me to tell my story as well, not only that, but also connecting it to others' stories that are similar to mine. Stories that people tell are not only about themselves but include other people as well.

Through the narratives, people get to tell the stories of what happened in the past. The stories keep on existing as they are told in the present and therefore they can also affect the future. Narratives are all about things that people have heard, seen or read about and made interpretations out of (Ellis, 1997).

3.4.1.4 The interview Schedule

One of the advantages of open questions is that they allow respondents to say what is on their minds without being influenced by suggestions from the researcher, thereby expressing themselves in their own words. Respondents are able to reveal their level of information and the strength of their feelings towards a certain issue (Foddy, 1993). Open questions allow respondents to answer the way they want.

In an interview schedule, questions are usually pre-determined. The interviews can be conducted face-to-face or they can be conducted telephonically. For the purpose of my research, the interviews were conducted face-to-face and the whole interviewing process was recorded with the use of a tape-recorder. Interviews are useful for all kinds of people. They permit flexibility and they also accommodate probing and observation.

During the interactions between me and the participants, notes were also taken. Field notes are seen as the core of data from ethnographic research. Field notes are important as they help in keeping the records of the ethnographer's observations, conversations, interpretations and suggestions of future gathering of information (Agar, 1996).

3.6 Data analysis

The transcriptions were made from the audio-tape to a written text. After this was done, the transcriptions were then analyzed. Through this process, relevant themes were identified and a list of these themes was compiled on the basis of the topic of the study and the nature of the interview material. These themes were grouped into meaningful categories based on commonalities between them.

I interpreted the information gained by looking at the interviews which were conducted and the information gained from these interviews. I did this so that I could check whether the research goals had been met or not. The goal of a narrative investigation, which is what this study was about, is to interpret the life experiences of the participants.

Neuman (1997) says that a qualitative researcher analyzes data by organizing it into categories on the basis of themes, concepts, or similar features. He or she develops new concepts, formulates conceptual definitions, and examines the relationships among concepts. When coding the data, a researcher organizes the raw data into conceptual categories and creates themes or concepts which she or he then uses to analyze data. Qualitative coding is an integral part of data analysis. Coding data is the hard work of reducing mountains of raw data into manageable units.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Before each interview I informed the participant about the reason for the interview. I made sure before starting the interviews that the participants understood exactly what the interview was about. I also informed them that they could withdraw from the study at any stage. Before the final study and its conclusions were reported, the participants were given the final report to have a look at and say whether what is being said about them is true or not.

Sagarin (1973) as cited in Neuman (1997) says that ethics begin and end with the researcher. He continues to say that a researcher's personal moral code is the strongest defense against unethical behavior. Before, during, and after conducting a study, a researcher has opportunities to, and should, reflect on his/her research actions and consult with his or her conscience. Conducting ethical research depends on the integrity of the individual researcher and his or her values. If values are to be taken seriously, they cannot be expressed and laid aside but must instead be used to guide the actions of the researcher. They determine who will be investigated and in what manner, for what purpose and in whose service.

Ethical issues were taken into consideration when the study was conducted. Participants were assured that their identities will be kept confidential. They were told that pseudonyms or numbers would be used if they so preferred. The study participants were put first and they were given all the information that they needed to know concerning the study. They were informed that they can withdraw at any time if they feel uneasy about the research. They were also informed that they will be given the opportunity to comment on what has been written about them before it is published.

Because the study is qualitative and personal interviews were conducted, abiding by ethical codes is important. The research is conducted through in-depth interviewing, and I am aware that this type of interviewing elicits a lot of

personal information about the participants and also sometimes about me as the researcher. The information can include the participants' personal feelings and also their perception of others. When conducting the research, all these issues are taken into consideration and ethical codes are adhered to.

Another important point was that of the audio-tape. The participants are informed that the tapes will be destroyed as soon as the information had been retrieved from them so as to protect their privacy. Privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality are very crucial when conducting research, especially if the research looks into people's personal lives.

Neuman (1997) say that researchers protect privacy by not disclosing a subject's identity after information is gathered. This takes two forms, both of which require separating an individual's identity from his or her responses. Anonymity means that subjects remain anonymous or nameless. The subject's identity is protected, and the individual is unknown. If anonymity is not possible, researchers should protect confidentiality. Anonymity protects the identity of specific individuals from being known. Confidentiality means that information may have names attached to it, but the researcher holds it in confidence or keeps it secret from the public. In my study pseudonym names are used and therefore the real names of my participants will remain anonymous.

There are other ethical issues that need to be taken into consideration when conducting research. Neuman (1997) discusses some of these issues. He says that social research can harm a research subject in several ways: physical harm, psychological harm, legal harm, and harm to a person's career or income. A straightforward ethical principle is that researchers should not cause any harm. An ethical researcher anticipates risks before beginning research. The risk of physical harm is rare in social research, but social researchers may place people in stressful, embarrassing, anxiety-producing, or unpleasant situations. A sensitive researcher is also aware of possible harm to a subject's self-esteem (Neuman, 1997).

When conducting the research, the above ethical issues were taken into consideration. The participants experienced no legal, physical or psychological harm. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to them so as to put away any uncertainties that they may have.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the process of how the research was conducted. One of the important factors that was discussed was ethical considerations when conducting research; this is a very important issue to take note of as the research dealt with human beings and not objects. The following chapters will present my story as well as the stories of the other participants, telling how we dealt with the quest of coming to grips with our place-identity. However, before presenting these stories, I will briefly discuss modeling in South Africa as this forms the background for the stories of the models.

Chapter 4

Modeling in South Africa

'Models are the physical embodiment of a life we can only guess at, an existence lived on the sides of buses and on magazine covers'

(Kate Wilson)

4.1 Introduction

Entwistle (2004) mentions that modeling has always been seen as a career for women. It is only in the past recent years that male models have started increasing. Modeling is seen as portraying men and women as objects of display, they just have to be on time, wear the clothes that are chosen for them and perform on the catwalk.

Male models are expected to do jobs that require some physical activity for them to be considered as 'real' men and therefore modeling does not count as a real job. In her research, Entwistle (2004) discovered that there has been a change in the way in which fashion is being perceived by the younger male generation. She says that men are now interested in fashion and in looking good. Men's interest in fashion started in the 1970s whereby the media started focusing on the male body, things like toning, dressing well and grooming were looked into. In the past men's bodies were not objects to be looked at and admired but with time this belief started changing.

Female modeling is something that has been there for years as it has always been acceptable for a woman to be admired and desired. However because of the changes in societies, men have started taking an interest in how their bodies look. Younger men are the ones who are investing more into their

images and this could be the reason why most of them are taking up modeling as a career.

Entwistle (2004) continues to explain that models belong to agencies that send them to casting and help them to get booked for fashion shows and photo-shoots. The person who does all the booking at the agency is called a booker. These are very influential people within modeling agencies and help models to shape their careers. They tell models what the right look for them is and also how to look after themselves so as to ensure bookings.

Agencies usually have individual prerequisites that they have for their intake of new models. Most agencies start accepting models from 13 years of age until 50 years. Most models work a lot when they are between the ages of 15 and 25 years. According to Entwistle (2004) fashion modeling requires a certain type of body both from the female and the male models. She says they usually look for models that are genetically built in a certain way and not those who acquire their perfect bodies by going to the gym.

The minimum height for female fashion models is between 173cm and 175cm, while the required height for male models is 180cm. Fashion models have to be very slim. Most of the fashion models are described as unusual as they have exaggerated features such as large lips, high cheek bones and they have to be photogenic. Fashion models are usually not regarded as beautiful or handsome by conventional standards. Most models visit the gym at least three times a week to make sure that they stay fit (Entwistle, 2004).

Another important factor that most models regard as being important is their hair. Most models have their hair done regularly, and most of the time their hair is done free of charge by hair stylists in return for modeling. It is very important that the model notifies the agency if he/she decides to change his/her hairstyle because the booker will have to notify the prospective client about the model's look. Because hair grows very fast, most models change their hair styles very frequently in trying to promote themselves. Models have

books that are called portfolios that stay at the agency and are shown to clients. Entwistle (2004, p. 64-65) describe a model's book as:

“his main tool for self-promotion and it will contain his best jobs and strongest images. When a model starts out he will only have a few polaroids to take to clients along with some tests with photographers. These give a model a chance to practice in front of the camera. As a model gains valuable work experience, his book will be made up of prestigious jobs, good editorial and commercial work”.

A model's body is very important to the agency, the model and the clients and therefore it has to be very well taken care of. It is very important that models show confidence in what they do and they must be professional at all times. Bad behaviour and reputations are not tolerated in this industry. The bookers are there to tell models to loose weight if they see that a specific model has picked up weight. With male models personality is very important; they must be able to portray a certain character whereas female models have to have the right look. *‘In modeling the body is the foremost object of the model's career and his/her identity as a model’* (Entwistle, 2004).

Modeling is not as simple a career as some people make it out to be. However, models do have to acquire and maintain the right image to enter and stay in the modeling industry as they have to compete for bookings to appear for photo-shoots and fashion shows. There is also a shadow side to modeling as models also have to endure stigmatization, discrimination and the pressures of preparing for photo-shoots and fashion shows. These issues will be discussed in detail below.

I will also describe both a photo-shoot and a fashion show including all the preparations and processes that are entailed in both, lastly I will give a brief outline of the different types of fashion shows.

4.2. Challenges

4.2.1 Modeling as a glamorous career

Modeling, as symbolized by the catwalk is seen by some as a glamorous career. However, to believe that this industry is only about fame and glamour is a misconception. In reality modeling is about fashion shows, magazine shoots and promoting and advertising various commercial products. These modeling assignments lead to models being in the public eye most of the time. People get to see the final cut of the job done by models and as a result tend to believe that modeling is an easy job where models get paid just to look beautiful. These misconceptions are caused by a lack of knowledge of what happens behind the scenes.

For example:

A photo-shoot session usually involves a model who has to report at 06:00am for make-up and hair. This usually takes about three hours, after which the model has to get into his/her garments. A shoot can have one garment or it can have as many as six garments. The shoot can take an hour or it can last the whole day. Sometimes a shoot could even last a week. This happens if different locations are used for the shoot. Fashion shoots normally take place a season before the clothes are worn, this means swimsuit shoots can be done in the middle of winter! Just imagine the poor model who has to pretend not to feel cold in the flimsy garments.

The above description illustrates the amount of time, sacrifice and hard work that goes behind a photo-shoot. I sincerely hope that it counters the myth that modeling is an easy career where money is made without working hard. Finding work is also problematic. Before the fashion shows and photo-shoots, it is essential to be booked as there is not always a guarantee that you will be booked. There are a lot of things that models have to do in order to make sure that the clients book them. For example, as a model one has to always

watch what he or she eats. Gaining weight is not an option; a model should always look good on that magazine cover or on the catwalk. Models are generally thinner than the average person.

This strictness about weight can be problematic at times as models are somehow forced to stay slim. Most models follow a very strict diet to make sure that they do not gain weight. Some models smoke cigarettes as they believe that cigarettes help in reducing weight, some take pills that suppress their hunger and this can be dangerous as these pills are addictive. The above is an indication of the lengths that models are willing to go to in making sure that they get booked for shows and photo-shoots.

Modeling is not only about the glitz and glamour, but about networking as well. Modeling as a career opens up doors for other areas in the entertainment industry. Most models become actors or musicians and some become very successful in these careers. Some models open up their own businesses. International supermodels like Cindy Crawford, Iman and Naomi Campbell have their own businesses which are very successful. Most of these models look for these alternatives because they know that they will not be models forever, as modeling is a very short lived career. In modeling the younger you are the more are your chances of being booked. In South Africa most of the models model part-time, whilst working or studying. There are only a few models that are doing modeling as a full-time career. This is because the modeling industry has not been that big in South Africa, especially for black models.

4.2.2 Black models in South African Fashion

Before 1994 there was a stereotype that black girls do not have the perfect figures to model the designers' clothes, and therefore most of them were not accepted in most modeling agencies. However, in the new South Africa there is a growing awareness of black beauty. Therefore, more and more black models are coming to the fore.

The industry has previously been dominated by white models and the growing number of black models is not welcomed warmly by most white models. They feel that black models are outsiders who are invading in their territory and therefore they feel the need to protect this territory of theirs. The fact that in the past the modeling industry was dominated by white girls is not surprising when one takes into consideration the imbalances that were there due to apartheid. Black people were denied the opportunity of utilizing their talents and their skills. Lalli (1992) mentions that people do not realize the attachment that they have towards a particular place until the threat arises and they feel the need to defend this place that is theirs. White models feel the need to defend their place, that is, the catwalk from the black models as they fear that the black models want to take over.

Hogg and Abrams (1988) differentiate between the in-group and the out-group. They refer to the in-group as those people who are similar to us, the people with whom we tend to form relationships. The out-group on the other hand refers to those people who are different from us. White models regard themselves as the in-group and the black models as the out-group who want to take over their place. The black models are seen as a threat and therefore they are not accepted in the industry.

Black people in South Africa were westernized by the white people. Most of them stopped practicing their traditions and wearing their traditional clothes. They were made to believe that their cultures are backward and they have to change their way of living. This western way of living was almost enforced upon them by means of apartheid. Since South Africa's democracy in 1994 there has been a shift in the way people identify themselves, for example, people are now wearing their traditional clothes with pride, they cut their hair very short and most of them do not use chemicals to straighten their hair anymore. This change has also affected the way in which fashion is perceived. Designers sometimes prefer girls who look more African.

Wanting very dark models comes with its own problems, especially when it comes to make-up. It is very difficult to get the right make-up for dark skinned

girls. There are new ranges of make-up that are being introduced so that all skin types can be accommodated. For example, one of the world's first black supermodels, Iman, has opened a cosmetics company which manufactures make-up for darker skinned people.

The changes that are taking place in the modeling industry are not only about what type of look the designers are going for, but also the type of clothes that are being worn. As I mentioned earlier, in South Africa the African or ethnic look is in, when looking at the overseas fashion scene, models are wearing less and less. Most of the shows are about lingerie or swimwear. Designs like these have not been welcomed with open arms by old-school designers such as Giorgio Armani. Quoted in the Sunday times (Nov, 2003) Armani said that these days models are made to walk naked on stage while only showing off handbags. He has decided to lead a charge to ban bare breasts and bottoms from the catwalks of the world.

4.2.3 Changing fashion in South Africa

South African fashion has gone through a tremendous change since the country's democracy. There are a lot of designers who are emerging and the type of fashion that they are bringing with them is that of combining the traditional/ethnic fashion with the western fashion. Most of these designers prefer to use black models for the traditional/ethnic designs. This is when a demand for black models arises.

There are more and more design houses being opened in South Africa. The fashion industry is growing every year and excellent designers are being discovered through fashion awards and competitions that are held on regular basis. These awards are used to discover new talent in the country. Some of these fashion awards are Smirnoff fashion awards, Vukani fashion awards and the Fairlady/L'oreal South African fashion awards. These annual fashion awards are open to students from various tertiary institutions, retailers and other aspiring designers in general.

Seven years ago South African fashion week was introduced in Johannesburg. Since then it has become an annual event. The emphasis of South African fashion week is to discover new designers. Most of the designers who have been featured in this fashion week have brought back the traditional/ethnic fashion. Some of these designers have been so successful that they have opened their own fashion houses/shops.

4.2.4 Stigmatization of black models

South Africa is generally known as a country which does not have tall and slim black girls. As this would be a description of my own appearance, I generally come across people who do not believe that I am a South African. Other black models confirm my experience. The general assumption is that South African girls have big curves, breasts and buttocks and therefore they cannot possibly be models. This stereotype leads to the rejection of Black models.

In the past there were very few black models due to the belief that their bodies or figures were not good enough for the catwalk. Babad, Birnbaum and Benne (1938) believe that stereotypes are not necessarily based on people's first hand experience but are usually through generalizations. Stereotypes lead to people being judged without being given the chance first to show what they can do. Modeling was done by white people because of the belief that they have perfect bodies and when black models started coming to the fore they were judged before being given the chance. White models are threatened by these 'outsiders'. There are other stereotypes related to black models, things like, black models cannot walk in high heel shoes or black models do not keep time.

When it comes to punctuality black people are generally associated with believing in the 'African time' which basically means that black people never keep time. This belief leads to a generalization that all black people do not keep time and therefore black models will always be late for castings, fashion shows and photo-shoots. This stereotype is not true as not all black models

never keep time, there are times when white models too are late for castings or fashion shows.

4.3 Fashion shows

Fashion shows are conducted to show off clothes. They give designers the platform to show-cast their designs. At fashion shows buyers and the general public get to see what is in fashion and what the new trends are. It is therefore very important that the right girls and boys are selected to model the clothes. Before every show an audition is held where models from different agencies are invited and the organizers of the show will then decide which models they would like to use for the fashion show.

At times designers also decide which models they want to use as they feel that they want a certain type of person to wear their garment. There are instances where a designer will say, 'I want a black girl to wear this garment or I want a white girl in this one'. They do so because they believe that that particular garment will look better on that skin tone.

There are a number of design houses who have really made a mark in fashion both locally and internationally with their afro-chic look and they are Stoned Cherrie, Sun-goddess, Black Coffee and Poetry museum. When it comes to fashion it is believed that internationally the four capitals of fashion are London, Paris, New York and Milan (Marie Claire, Nov 2003). These cities hold the biggest fashion shows every year show-casting spring/summer and autumn/winter ranges. It is most models' dreams to grace the catwalk of one of these cities. South African fashion is also growing rapidly and maybe in a few years to come Johannesburg will be one of the fashion capitals of the world.

4.3. 1 Types of fashion shows

One important type of a fashion show is the *bridal exposition* where models show off wedding gowns and suits. This type of a fashion show usually takes

three days and it is done over the weekend, that is, from Friday to Sunday. This is not only a fashion show but a wedding exposition as well whereby people who are soon to get married come and look at the different things that are available. Things like cakes, photographers, tables and so forth.

The *lingerie/underwear/swimsuit show* is hardly ever done as a standalone show. It is usually incorporated into the bridal exposition especially the lingerie. Designers usually design underwear or swimwear to show their creativity.

The *general fashion show* is organized by different designers to show cast their latest designs. A show like this can also be organized by the clothing shops or retailers where the range for the coming season is shown to the general public.

The above are examples of fashion shows that are normally held in South Africa. Often shows incorporate all these options where one may find wedding gowns, evening wear and swimwear in one show.

4.3. 2 A typical day at the fashion show

Fashion shows start with the models going for a casting where the appropriate models are selected for the show. Here is a personal example of a fashion show casting that I performed in:

The casting was held at a shopping centre and it was for FTV fashion show. There were about 500 models that came for the casting of which only twelve models were to be selected. We were told that there is a specific look that they are looking for and they wanted people with a lot of attitude. I felt extremely stressed whilst waiting for my turn to perform. It felt very much the same when I had to “perform” for my appointment at Unisa. While I was sitting there waiting for my turn I desperately thought, “*Oh my goodness there are so many models here and these people are only looking*

for twelve models. Will I ever make it?" My turn came and I did what I had to do and left. Later that evening I got a call informing me that I was selected and that I will be doing the show'. At that moment I experienced a surge of feeling, a sense of belonging, of having an identity on the catwalk. Yes it felt the same when Unisa appointed me and gave me an office to walk my walk.

The competition is usually very tight at these castings. There are models that go to castings after castings and never make it. Chances of models being exploited are very high in this industry as some of them will do almost anything to get exposure. There are these people who promise fame and success whilst they are actually ripping young models off.

As soon as the models have been informed that they have been selected for a show their measurements are taken so that correct garment sizes can be chosen for them. When the garments are ready, models have to go for fittings where the designers will check whether the clothes fit properly and to see if there are any adjustments that need to be made. When all this is done the models are told to report on the fashion show day at a said time.

The organizers of various fashion shows do the fashion shows differently. How they treat the models differ as well. Some organizers treat models as equals and with respect, whilst others discriminate against models. On the day of the fashion show the models have to be at the venue of the fashion show very early in the morning. They are usually there from nine o'clock in the morning to start to prepare for rehearsals. The rehearsal will then take the whole day with short breaks in between. Sometimes there are final fittings being done as well. The show will usually start at seven or eight o'clock in the evening.

A run over of all the garments will be done with the choreography being done for all the scenes. When rehearsing some models feel the need to tell other models how to walk, giving the impression that they know better. Another interesting thing at these rehearsals is the little groupies that models form.

These groupies are an indication of in and the out-groups formation. Language is used as a barrier that shows who is accepted and who is not. White girls will sit at one corner and the black girls will sit at another corner. There are groupies even among the black girls where one will find girls from South Africa grouping together and girls from other foreign countries sitting together. Strangely enough the male models usually all sit together regardless of their race.

Two to three hours before the show it starts to get hectic when the make-up artists and hair stylists arrive. Now every model has to be backstage so that their hair and make-up can be done. After this they have to stay put to get ready for the show. As the time for the show approaches, everyone backstage becomes frantic.

Some designers prefer to be backstage to make sure that their garments are put on properly; some even dress the models themselves. There is a lot of activity going on backstage throughout the whole show as models have to change very quickly from one garment to another. It is very important that the garment is put on properly before the model goes on stage as there are potential buyers who come to watch the show.

The way in which the models carry the garments on the catwalk is also very important as all garments have themes that they portray. This is another reason why castings are held prior to the fashion show so that the organizers can select models that can deliver the message through the garments that they are showing off.

4.4 Castings: Selection of models for modeling assignments

A casting refers to a process whereby models from different agencies are contacted by organizers or directors of fashion shows or television advertisements to come and be looked at for the purpose of being booked for a fashion show or play a role in a television advertisement. These organizers are usually very specific about the type of look that they want. They send a

brief with all the information of the type of people that they want to the agencies and these agencies then send the models whom they feel meet the criteria. Castings are very time consuming and expensive as well as they involve a lot of traveling.

A model can be sent to as many as five castings per day. There are usually many models at each of these castings and therefore it can take about an hour for a person's turn to come. There are instances where a model can go to one casting after the other and not get booked for a single show or advert. Many models become depressed believing that there is something wrong with them and through this they lose their self-esteem.

There are a lot of insecurities that can be caused by not being booked. These insecurities can affect a person's self-concept and sense of identity negatively, whereby he or she may start believing that he or she is not good or beautiful enough. Some of them view not being selected as a sign of negative feedback. A person needs perseverance and patience to make it in the modeling industry. Another important thing is the belief in one's self. Some models feel that they cannot identify with the requirements that are needed and they give up.

Being booked for a show on the other hand boosts a model's self-esteem as it makes him or her feel that *"Wow, I was better than most others who were not selected"*. This automatically affects a person's self-image in a positive way. These positive feedbacks help in the development of the models' sense of identity. Rogers (1959) as cited in Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (1989) states that self-concepts are always changing. When a model is being booked for shows, his or her self-concept becomes positive and as soon as the clients stop booking her the self-concept may shift and become negative as this model may start feeling that he or she is not good enough anymore. Tesser (1995) concurs by saying that self-concepts can also be seen as all the information that is put together by the person about himself or herself.

4.5 Conclusion

Modeling is a fast growing industry in South Africa with the possibility that our country is achieving international recognition for its talent in fashion design. Black models are also making their mark on the catwalk. The stigmatization of black models is starting to fade away as more and more of them are making it big both locally and internationally. The fashion shows and fashion awards that are being held annually are also a symbol of progress in South Africa's fashion industry. In the next chapter I will focus on the personal experiences of models and explore their sense of place identity.

Chapter 5

Place-Identity on the Catwalk

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I described how the South African catwalk was historically dominated by white models. I also indicated that this is no longer so as an increased number of black models walk the walk. In this chapter I will portray the experiences of both black and white models and illustrate how the changes that are taking place in the modeling industry are affecting the way in which these models experience the catwalk in terms of their place-identity. The first of these accounts will be an auto-ethnographic presentation. Thereafter I will present the stories of other models.

5.2 Puleng's Story

I started modeling professionally about five years ago after I was seen by an agency agent at a beauty pageant that I had entered. Shortly after that I joined the agency and went for modeling classes for three months. I started getting modeling assignments while busy with the classes and was booked for fashion shows and promotions on a regular basis.

During fashion shows I used to be the only black girl and sometimes we were two and the rest were white girls. My hair was long and relaxed (chemically treated); however my agent did not like it. The fact that I was usually in the minority made me feel like I had to prove myself all the time. Initially I constantly felt like I did not belong in this place but I was determined to make the catwalk my own personal place that I can identify with. Wagner (1999) mentions that most people tend to feel that they are going to lose their self-identities when they get into unfamiliar new environments. When I first started modeling I felt that I might lose my identity as I thought I had to be a person I

was not. With time I realized that I had a choice and I decided that I would adapt to this new environment but still retain my personal identity.

For every show I had to wear wigs and in that way I looked acceptable to my agent. This was very artificial for me and I felt like I had to be someone else or portray a certain identity to be accepted. Rogers (1959), as cited in Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (1989) discusses the difference between conditional and unconditional acceptance. He says that when a person is accepted conditionally it means that he or she has met a certain criteria or behaved in a certain way in order to be accepted. Unconditional acceptance on the other hand refers to being accepted for who and what you are. I felt that my acceptance in the modeling agency was very conditional as I was not white. I constantly felt the need to prove myself.

The changes taking place in the modeling industry resulted in a change in the type of look that designers are searching for. There is a shift from a preference of lighter skinned models to darker skinned models. I am also free to have very short hair. In fact my agent is very happy about my new look, something that she would have frowned on three years ago. She even suggested that I cut it even shorter if I would like to! This shift has opened the door for black models as they also have a place in the modeling industry. Proshansky (1976) says the self-identity that a person forms of himself or herself is greatly affected by his or her environment. The changes that are taking place in the modeling environment are affecting the white models' self-identities negatively as the environment that they have been identifying with is changing and this is affecting the way in which they view themselves. They are now faced with the sad reality of not being favourites anymore.

In the beginning I did not take modeling seriously as I was also studying for my university degree. For me initially, it was a hobby until I started getting booked for big shows and photo-shoots, then I realized that one can take up modeling as a career and concentrate on it. This is when I began identifying myself as a model. This is also supported by Proshansky (1976) when he says that the physical environment plays an important role in the formation of

a person's identity. As a model I started forming an identity towards the place that I am working in, which is the catwalk. My experiences of walking on the catwalk are that of feeling like this is where I am supposed to be. I am saying this because when I walk on that catwalk I get a sense of peace and fulfillment that I cannot really put into words. I get moved by the music and the positive response that I get from the audience. When I am on that catwalk I am the center of attention.

In this industry it is possible for a person to get a big contract and make a living out of that. Making it big in the modeling industry can be an overnight thing if a model lands a big contract, otherwise one has to really work hard and be dedicated to make ends means.

Since I started modeling I have had many interesting experiences. I have been to many castings, done a lot of fashion shows, photo-shoots and promotions. Not having your own transport can be a problem in this industry as there is a lot of traveling involved. I used to commute to get to fashion shows and because public transport is not always reliable, I was sometimes late. This created problems between me and the organizers of the shows. Things like "*you black people never keep time*" were said and this I see as a generalization as not all black people do not keep time. This is a form of stereotyping which Leyens, Yzerbyt and Schadron (1994) define as shared beliefs about person attributes, usually personality traits but often also behaviours of a group of people. Because I am a black person I was categorized and a generalization was made that like other black people I am not punctual. This is just one of the many experiences that I have encountered in my career as a model.

5.3 Mary's Story:

When I first approached Mary and told her about my study, she was a bit hesitant to participate as she was worried about confidentiality. I assured her that she would remain anonymous and only what she approved of would be recorded. She began to relax and we started talking. The interview took

place at my home. Mary stays in Pretoria with her mother and studies computer programming, which she enjoys very much. Initially she studied music but did not enjoy the course and she then shifted to computers. She started modeling in 1998 after being told by a number of people that she had the body for it. She thought, "*Why not, one day I will not have this great body and I might just regret not giving it a try*". She then joined an agency. This helped her a lot as she learned how to be confident and how to take care of herself (looking after her body weight, taking care of her skin and eating the right food). She also learned how to dress up, what type of clothes she should wear, and also how to apply make-up.

Mary soon realized that the modeling industry is nothing like what she had expected. There were too many rules and they were very picky in terms of selecting the models that they wanted to use. She feels that she was not given a chance to show what she can do. She got remarks like, you are too chubby, you do not have the right look or you are not tall enough. She is not getting booked for shows as often as she had hoped she would be.

Mary believes that the industry is too limited. There are a lot of restrictions, for example, you have to keep your weight in control meaning that you must always watch what you eat and there is a lot of pressure to always look good. A person ends up being somebody that they are not according to Mary. You end up changing your identity so that you can be accepted and get jobs. She ended up feeling that maybe she does not have a place in this industry. Carter, Donald, and Squires (1993) say people form identities towards certain places that have a particular meaning to them. The catwalk as a workplace forms part of the people who work in it, i.e. the models. Mary could not form a personal identity as a model because she felt that modeling does not form part of who she is.

Sometimes as a model you do certain jobs that you do not really feel comfortable with because of the money or because you want to be liked. This is where again conditional acceptance comes in. Mary felt that for her to be liked she had to do certain modeling jobs that she did not necessarily like.

Mary says that there were times when she did not give herself a break, she would just do things and end up being a follower. She is presently not with an agency, but says that her previous agency was ok. She felt that her previous agent was very unfair as she preferred using white girls only for fashion shows most of the time.

Black girls at the agency did not get enough exposure and therefore they missed a lot of opportunities. This made Mary feel like this industry is mainly for whites as they were the only ones who were constantly booked for shows. She felt like an outsider at this agency and experienced conditional acceptance whereby she would be treated nicely only when booked for a specific modeling assignment. She also experienced constant threats for no apparent reason whereby she would be told that she will be fired or she will never be booked. When she or another black model was late, they were shouted at, whereas if a white girl was late she would not be shouted at. This made her feel discriminated against because of her race.

Mary felt that white models were treated differently from black models. This could have been because the agent was a white person and therefore she could identify better with the white models. Abrams and Hogg (1986) argue that we form our identities around the social groups that we belong to. These social groups help us in forming our social identities. We tend to form relationships and relate better to people who are similar to us. This could then be the reason why the agent relates better with the white models, they are similar to her in terms of being of the same race and therefore she easily identifies with them.

Sometimes Mary felt like a maid because there was a lot of 'Apartheid' still present in the industry. Mary did not only experience stereotypes but prejudices as well. Babad, Birnbaum, and Benne (1938) say prejudice is characterized by a negative emotional tone and a hostile and aggressive nature. Prejudices are mechanisms of discrimination in the form of racism. Mary felt like she is being treated like a maid in the apartheid era because of her race. She was treated with hostile negativity by her agent. Sometimes

during a fashion show her agent explained things in Afrikaans which is a language that Mary is not familiar with and she would immediately feel excluded. Language is an important factor in place-identity. Proshansky et. al. (1983) explains that it is through language that people identify with others who are similar to them. People's languages give them a sense of who they are and they tend to form a collective identity according to the language that they speak.

When it comes to her relationship with other models Mary experienced different attitudes from different models. Some were snobbish, they look down on other models and they tend to be very nasty. She feels that modeling is a very competitive industry and there is a lot of jealousy among the models. However, some models are fine and easy to get along with. Mary thinks that sometimes she does not get the jobs because she is black and sometimes it is just a matter of a client looking for a specific look regardless of the race.

Presently there is a lot of competition amongst the black girls. This is due to an influx of black models from other African countries. Mary feels that these girls are taking over her territory because less South African girls are being booked. Most of these foreign girls are darker and taller and most clients want girls who are very dark as they for some reason believe that they are more African.

During fashion shows models tend to form little groupies. You will find a group of white girls in one corner, a group of black South African girls in another and a group of black foreign girls in another corner. This is a way of marking their little territories. They also show off territories by speaking their own different languages. Proshansky et. al. (1983) says people identify territories and defend these territories by treating those who do not speak the same language as them as outsiders. All those who speak the same language as you will constitute the in-group and those who speak a different language will be seen as the out-group. This problem is rarely found amongst

the male models as they accommodate each other by speaking a common language that they can all understand.

Mary has been modeling for a while now and she is not sure if she wants to continue as the industry has not been very fruitful for her. She says she enjoyed doing fashion shows and promotions but does not see herself as a model in the future. The one thing that she is happy about is that she gave modeling a chance and she does not have any regrets.

Even though she is not modeling at present there is one thing that she misses and that is 'strutting' her stuff on the catwalk. She says for her walking on that stage made her feel wonderful and she used to dance to the music while walking on the catwalk. She says she used to feel like *"Wow look at all the attention that I am getting, this is where I am supposed to be"* She felt that the catwalk was the place that she could identify with and she felt very happy when walking on the catwalk.

5.4 Tumi's Story:

Tumi started modeling four years ago. It all began when she went to an audition with a friend. Somebody approached her and said she should give modeling a try. I have done a lot of fashion shows with Tumi and through all these she shared her experiences with me. She is a colleague because we work together in the modeling industry but she is also a friend. She says she feels that it is very difficult to be a model as there is a lot of competition especially if you do not have an agency to market you. There are times when days go by without being called for any jobs and this is very frustrating, especially if modeling is your only job. In modeling there are busy times and quiet times. During the quiet times Tumi goes to the mall as she finds this very relaxing. She walks around the mall checking new fashions, shoes and handbags.

She is presently with an agency and her relationship with her agent is very good. She perceives her agency as being very strict but at the same time

caring about their models. They tell you how to take care of yourself, for example if you have gained a bit of weight they will tell you to lose it, and if you are too skinny they will also tell you. She has not been with this agency for a long time but she trusts them as they have been in existence for a long time, they take care of their models and they also market them very well. They focus on fashion shows and this is what Tumi personally prefers. She says she feels at home at this agency. She has formed an identity based on her association with this agency. Lalli (1992) declares that when a person belongs to a place, he or she forms an identity which is connected to that particular place and that place contributes to his or her positive self-esteem. Tumi feels that even though she has not been with her agency for a long time, she can still identify herself with it.

There are a lot of girls who join the agency and she doesn't mind as long as these girls are South African. She feels very uneasy when foreign girls join the agency because this means tough competition. She believes that our agencies do not believe in their own girls and therefore they focus more on foreign girls. It is said that these girls are more African, and Tumi feels that this is not fair. These girls are moving into our own personal territory and this is not right. Tumi perceives the catwalk as her place of work and she perceives the implementation of change through agencies hiring foreign girls as a threat. She is afraid that she might not get booked for shows as often as she is used to. Graumann (1983) as cited in Lalli (1992) says when we look at the workplace we realize that employees identify with the place that they are working at and therefore become very protective of this place of work. Tumi feels that there is a need to protect her workplace from being taken over by the foreign models.

Tumi gets along well with other models, but she prefers to keep it professional as she sees them as colleagues and nothing more. Outside of modeling she does not associate with them, but she does have one model friend whom she gets along very well with. They tell each other about shows and castings.

Tumi explains her relationship with other models by saying that:

“Some models are full of themselves; they think they are better than others. Some have been there before me and they take care of me teaching me a lot of things about the industry and giving me advices as well”

Tumi feels that sometimes she does not get certain jobs because she is black. Even though the industry is now opening up for black girls, most of the black girls that are being used are either Americans or are from other African countries like Nigeria or Zimbabwe. Dixon and Durrheim (2000) say people tend to take the things that are around them for granted until there is a threat of loosing them. They say when it comes to place, people are never aware of how attached they are to the places in which they work until there is a threat towards this place. Tumi feels that the foreign models are taking their jobs and that they are invading their place. She feels that it is not fair that is why she is studying because she realizes that she cannot do modeling forever, a time will come when she has to get a stable job. Another problem that she experiences with modeling is that it does not have security, there are no benefits at all, even though the government takes tax from what the models make.

Although there are cat-fights between models; Tumi has not personally been involved in them. models fight over petty things like hairbrushes or lipsticks. To Tumi modeling is a part of who she is, for her it is not a hobby but a career and therefore she does not have time to argue with other models over unnecessary things. People expect much from models, for example, people expect you to dress up all the time and look good and this puts a lot of pressure on the models as one does not feel like dressing up all the time, especially when you are just chilling at home. A model has to put on make-up for public appearances. Looking after one's skin and weight is very important in this industry. Eating healthy is the way to go and this is not only applicable to models but to every person who wants to stay healthy.

Tumi has done a lot of fashion shows and photo-shoots but her personal favourite is fashion shows. She enjoys walking on the catwalk, for her that is what modeling is all about. When she walks on the catwalk she feels great, she especially likes the fact that people are looking at her. When she is on that stage, it is all about her, that is who she is; that defines her identity as a model. The focus is on her and she is being recognized by other people. Another important factor is the music because it can make your scene (your walk on the catwalk) appealing or it can make it dull.

Modeling opens up doors of opportunities for other areas in the entertainment industry. Through modeling one gets to meet different people all the time and through this you have to market yourself. As a model you also need to manage your money and learn how to save. Most of the models have opened up their own businesses through the help of people that they meet on a daily basis. Some models have established their own clothing lines, perfume labels and some have opened their own modeling agencies. Through networking one gets to know about the opportunities that are available out there. Another important factor in modeling is punctuality. Keeping time is crucial as it determines whether the client will book you again or not. Money can also be deducted from your fee if you are late for a show or a shoot.

Tumi has also done some modeling overseas and she found this very nice and different. Things are not done the same way as they are done in South Africa. It tended to be difficult at times because she had to adapt to a foreign country. Wagner (1999) explains this by saying that when people come in contact with new experiences, they enter into unfamiliar territory. He continues to say that most people tend to feel that they are going to lose their self-identities when they get into unfamiliar new environments. When doing modeling overseas Tumi realized how different the modeling industry was there as compared to the modeling industry in South Africa. When she told me about her experiences, she explained that models there keep time and they take their modeling careers very seriously. She found that some of the top models are full of themselves and are very difficult to work with because they know that they are in demand.

As a model you are always sent to castings/auditions. There are usually other models at these castings and if you do not get selected or called back it worries you. Initially Tumi could not take the rejection and she used to ask herself '*What is wrong with me?*' Eventually she realized that the clients are usually searching for a specific look and therefore it is nothing personal if one is not selected.

She feels that there are now enough black girls in the modeling industry. The doors have been opened to them and opportunities are there for them to grab. The ratios are still not equal in all areas though, but that is something that is going to take a while to change as it also depends on the client base. Given the opportunity, black girls can still get more exposure, especially overseas contracts. Among the black girls the darker girls are getting more work. In the past it used to be lighter complexioned girls who used to work a lot but now dark is in. '*What is the African look?*' She says she does not understand how being African is defined.

Modeling broadens your outlook because of the different experiences and the different people that you come across everyday. As a model you have to be very responsible. Tumi intends to stay in the modeling industry as long as she can. Presently she is working very hard to try and get an overseas long term contract.

5.5 Adri's story:

Adri started modeling four years ago when she was fourteen years old. For her it first started with ballet. She was initially a ballerina and she felt she wanted to do something else, and she decided to do modeling. She initially did it to boost her self-esteem and then she realized that there is easy money to be made with this job. She then started to take it seriously and to enjoy it. Through modeling she has met a lot of people and made many friends along the way as well.

Although Adri does not get many modeling assignments at present, she does get booked for the occasional shows. She is willing to do them as they come along. With Adri it is a matter of doing what you have to do. She enjoys doing fashion shows, when she gets on stage she enjoys herself. To her modeling is not just a job, it is about having fun as well. She is not with an agency at the moment but she used to be with one. When she was with an agency things were good at the beginning and then her relationship with her agent became sour after she realized that she was being ripped off. She joined this specific agency when she started modeling because it was convenient for her, close to where she stays and because she did not know any other agencies at that time. She noticed that at the agency they had their favourite girls and they were the ones who got booked for any assignments that came up. She had a problem with new girls who joined the agency as it meant she was not going to get any jobs because the agent will concentrate on the new girls for a while. Adri says she felt like these new models were stepping into her territory and taking over her place. This is supported by Krupat (1983) when he says that if we combine the concept of territoriality to place-identity we find slightly different reasons for the motives for and the circumstances under which territorial defense will take place and we realize that we cannot rely entirely on the biological explanations of territorial behaviour. Adri had identified herself with the agency that she belonged to and when she felt that it was invaded she wanted to protect her place. She felt sidelined when new models came in but she kept on doing her best whenever she got the chance to do any job. She realized that it was actually a wheel whereby this month you are the favourite and next month you are not.

Adri experiences other models as being very competitive and therefore she does not mingle with them. She says she experiences them as having attitudes of "*I am better than you*" and that is why she distantiates herself from them. However, she does not automatically do this she checks the environment first. There are other times where you will find at a fashion show models looking down on each other and sizing each other up. She just tells herself that she is there to work and never lets petty things like that get to her.

Adri believes that models get jobs because they are what the clients want and not because of their race. This is the new South Africa and therefore black girls are getting opportunities that they never had before. *"I'm not racist; the agents know what they want"*. It does not bother her when a black girl is booked for a show instead of her. She believes that getting assignments has got nothing to do with race instead it is about having the right look. On the issue of the new South Africa, Erez and Earley (1993) mention that during the apartheid era jobs were reserved for white people and therefore workplaces consisted only of white people. However, after the country's democracy things started changing and people of other races were allowed in the workplaces. Adri is not bothered by the changes that are taking place, instead she is willing to accommodate them.

Modeling is part of who Adri is as she identifies herself with it. *"This is what I do, this is me"*. The catwalk is her territory, it is a place that she personally identifies with and therefore she is willing to protect it by not letting anyone get her down. She believes that not everyone can be a model, *"You have to have it, the walk, the face and the body. Most importantly you have to look after yourself"*. Lalli (1992) says that the concept of place-identity clearly explains the main role that a person's relationship with the physical setting plays not only in terms of a context for action or in facilitating certain forms of behaviour, but in becoming part of the person of being incorporated into one's concept of self. Adri believes that being a model is a part of who she is. She believes that if you have what it takes you can go far. If you want to be seen you should go out there so that you can be noticed. She continues to say that modeling gives you the platform to enter other areas that you might have never thought of before.

As a model you need to go for a lot of castings/auditions and Adri feels that this is a waste of time and money but it is something that you have to do as a model to be able to get jobs. At the end of the day it is what the client wants. Punctuality is very important in this industry as you cannot keep a client waiting. Being late minimizes the chances of being booked again and it gives you a bad reputation as a model. A model has to be on time for castings and

for photo-shoots. Adri enjoys being a model and she intends doing modeling for as long as she can.

She believes that black girls symbolize Africa:

“Africa is symbolized by black girls and therefore I do not fear that black girls are taking over, instead they are being given the chance to prove themselves and to show what they are made of. Black is beautiful. Another important thing however is that at the end of the day it is about what the client wants that determines who gets booked for shows”

5.6 Quinton’s Story:

Quinton started modeling three years ago. He was initially approached by a photographer who took photos of him and displayed them while working as a barman. An agency got hold of the photos and asked to sign him up. He agreed to do so.

Although the modeling industry has its ups and downs, Quinton enjoys being a model, depending who you work with. He enjoys photographic shoots, but his favourite are fashion shows. He considers himself lucky in a sense that he gets a lot of assignments and sometimes he has to pick and choose as some of them occur simultaneously. A typical day in his life as a model starts when he wakes up round about eight o’clock and goes to the gym. This is a very important routine to him as he has to look after his body. As a model you have got to have the right body as this helps you to get jobs. This point is supported by Entwistle (2004) when she says that in modeling the body is the foremost object of the model’s career and his identity as a model. It is very important for a model to look after his/her body. Quinton makes sure that his body is well taken care of by going to the gym. After the gym he goes to classes as he is still a student. Quinton says that it is very important to watch what you eat. As a model you always have to try and eat healthy.

He used to be with an agency but is freelancing at the moment. The one agency that he was with he found to be very impersonal. He did not feel at home and therefore could not identify with them. They never cared about how he was doing, they would just call him to tell him about a certain job or a casting that he had to go to and that was it. Krupat (1983) insists that the concept of place-identity clarifies the role that a person's relationship to the environment plays, not only in determining certain types of behaviour, but also in becoming part of who that person is, that is, a part of the person's self-concept. Quinton says he could not identify himself with the agency that he belonged to because they never bothered to check how he was doing; to them he was just another employee. Krupat continues to say that there is a relationship between self-definition and location and in Quinton's case this relationship was absent. He decided to leave the agency and went on to join another agency. He found the new agency to be very interesting and it gave him more exposure and more jobs. Another thing that he liked about this agency is that they took care of their own. With this agency the models are not only marketed locally but internationally as well. He identified himself with this agency and felt that he belonged there. He later left the agency when he became aware that they exploited their models in terms of the high commission that they took from the models' payments.

Quinton never felt that new models joining the agency were stepping into his territory as he believes that in this industry it is about what you can deliver. It is about the look and not about how many models there are in an agency. He gets along well with other models even though there are times when he experiences negative attitudes from other models. Most of the time models argue about nothing or petty things like walking too soon during a fashion show.

Quinton does not see race as an issue in the modeling industry. There are times when he experiences racism, this happens when a black model is selected above him. Sometimes when working with black models, he feels left out because he belongs to a different cultural/racial group. People belong to different cultural groups and they form their social identities around these

groups. If you do not belong to the in-group it will not be easy for you to get along with the people from the in-group. Quinton sometimes feels like an outcast when working with black models. Most of the time in instances like this language is the barrier. When other models speak a language that he cannot understand, he feels left out. According to Proshansky et. al. (1983) language is a very important factor in place-identity, they say it is through language that people identify with others who speak the same language as they do. Quinton could not identify with the black models as they spoke a language that he could not understand.

When it comes to identifying himself as a model, Quinton does not believe that being a model defines who he is. He says as a model you should have a professional identity, "*A model doesn't make you - you make the model*". He says as a model you must always be in control of what happens to you. He believes that having the right attitude can take one a long way in the modeling industry. Models that get jobs are the ones whom the clients feel are easy to get along with. As a model you have to uphold a certain image, to look after yourself and not be obnoxious.

Modeling also opens up doors of opportunities for other areas in the entertainment industry as models are always in the public eye. If a model has the ability to speak in public then he or she can become someone that people listen to. He says it always helps to have confidence as it will enable you to express yourself freely.

Another important point that he brought up was that of time. He believes that it is always good to be on time, but in the modeling industry people do not respect time especially those who have been in the industry for long. Prioritizing your things is very important as it will help you to determine what the things that are important to you are.

When it comes to castings he gets despondent very quickly. Castings are time consuming as most of the time you have to wait for too long to be called in and most of the time it is not worth it as you are never called back. Being

turned down for a lot of castings can really damage a person's self-esteem as you may start thinking that maybe there is something wrong with you. Quinton however does not let being turned down destroy him as he feels that the market is always going and therefore there is no reason to put yourself down.

He believes that in general models work very well together even though there are times when you will get some models who think they are all better than the rest. Another thing that he stressed was that models are not 'stupid'. Most of the models have tertiary qualifications, some have their own businesses and some are still studying. He is a student and a model at the same time and definitely no stupid. Quinton thus portrays a sensitivity for what he believes to be a stereotype of models.

5.6 Jerry's Story

Jerry is originally from Zimbabwe where he started modeling in 1992. He went for a casting with a friend whose brother owned a production company. It was the first time he went for a casting and to his surprise he got booked. He then decided to get into modeling in order to get experience in television advertisements and modeling in general. He has been enjoying his life as a model as it provides him with quick easy money.

When he started working as a professional model Jerry got booked often and he was very happy with that. He won a modeling competition in 1994 and obtained a contract to model in South Africa. As his agency in Zimbabwe had links with an agency in Cape Town, he started working when he arrived in South Africa. He did not like Cape Town as he could not identify with it, therefore he decided to move to Johannesburg. Carter, Donald and Squires (1993) say people form identities towards places that have a meaning to them. Cape Town meant nothing to Jerry and that led to him moving to another place. He could identify with Johannesburg and decided to settle there.

He joined a modeling agency in Johannesburg which he is still with at the moment which means that he has been with this agency for ten years. He has been lucky to get many modeling assignments. Since he has been in South Africa, he has worked for a Zimbabwean company and various other South African companies. It is clear that Jerry has a very good relationship with his agency. He feels at home there, has a sense of belonging and is being accepted.

Even though Jerry feels accepted at the agency there are times when he feels neglected. This usually happens when a new model joins the agency. Then the focus shifts from him to the new face of the agency and this new person gets marketed a lot. Proshansky et.al. (1983) mention that there are inevitable changes that will take place in an individual's environment and he or she must check whether he or she has the capacity or skills to cope with the change. A person can feel that their physical setting has been invaded if people from the outside come into their setting.

A typical day in Jerry's life is that he goes to castings, photo-shoots and the gym. Going to the gym is very important for a model as models need to look good in order to get booked. Entwistle (2004) supports this by saying that with male models having the right body and look is very important, as models get booked because they have the right look, the one that the clients want. Therefore going to the gym increases the chances of being booked as it means a model will be in good shape.

Jerry used to go to many castings but after a while he became irritated with this time consuming exercise and decided that it is really not worth it as most of the time someone else gets booked instead of him. He prefers being called to come and do the shoot and not just being looked at by the client. It does not really bother him that another model gets booked instead of him as he believes that it is about what the client wants. If what the client wants does not suit his profile, he is fine with it.

Jerry has not experienced any catfights or misunderstandings between him and other male models. He has not come across models with. Maybe it is because he minds his own business and leave other people alone. He personally gets along very well with other models, both black and white. He mentioned that him being a black foreign model has not been a problem in terms of relating to local models. They accepted him and he feels that there are enough modeling assignments for everyone.

Modeling is just a job for Jerry. It is not something that he can say he personally identifies with. He models because it brings food on the table. Jerry is not emotionally attached to the modeling industry and that could be the reason why he does not personally identify with it. Korpela (1983) says place-identity which is also seen as an emotional attachment to a place consists of many experiences that develop over time towards a place. Jerry has been modeling for ten years and yet he says he does not identity himself with the catwalk because he did not allow himself to become emotionally attached to it. If you are a model you are always in the public eye and people look at you as an icon and therefore you must always look after yourself. Jerry says he does not enjoy the attention that he receives as he is a relatively shy person. He does not feel any excitement when he walks on the catwalk.

As a model you are an entertainer and Jerry believes that modeling can open up doors in other entertainment industries. Another important aspect of being a model is punctuality. It is very important for a model to be punctual if he or she wants to be booked again by the same client even though most of these clients do not keep time themselves. When asking him about overseas modeling, Jerry told me that he has not done any modeling overseas; however he has done shoots for overseas companies.

The number of black models in South Africa is steadily increasing and Jerry feels that there are enough models in the industry at the moment. The modeling industry used to be dominated by white models and now is the time that black models are given the opportunity to show their talents. Dixon and

Durrheim (2000) says in South Africa there used to be a belief that black South Africans belong elsewhere. However, since the advent of democracy people started to re-check their place-identity. Having to accommodate black models has been very frustrating for some of the white models. Jerry says modeling in South Africa still has a long way to go and he does not believe that models can make a decent living by doing modeling full time as the industry is still not big enough.

According to Jerry in the 1990s foreign models were booked more than local models; however towards the beginning of the new millennium change started taking place whereby South African models started getting exposure. Most of the international jobs are still given to the foreign models.

As a foreign model Jerry has been fortunate in that he has been one of his agency's favourite models. His relationship with South African models has been good in that he has not experienced bad treatment because he is a foreigner. He believes that South African black models have a lot to give, if given the opportunity. The modeling industry is still a new territory for black models and they still need to find their place in this industry. They have to find themselves as models and identify themselves as such.

Jerry is still modeling even though he is not concentrating on modeling only as he has his own business. After ten years in the modeling industry he considers himself a very advanced and exclusive model. He does not run around and go to castings anymore, instead he gets booked directly.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the stories of models and their experiences of the modeling industry. There are a lot of similarities in the way in which these models experience their work. Most of them feel that the catwalk is a part of who they are, a place that they can identify with.

All the models ended up becoming models by chance. Not one of the models mentioned that becoming a model was something that they had always wanted to do. That being the case however; they all enjoy their careers as models. After giving modeling a try they felt that it is a place that they can identify with, they can identify themselves within this place.

There is also a general belief among these models that modeling opens up doors in other areas of the entertainment industry as models are always in the public eye and therefore they meet a lot of different people and network. Female models all agreed that catfights are found among the models, especially at fashion shows. This problem does not seem to be common among male models as they generally get along very well with each other regardless of their races or background. All models interviewed felt that black models have been sidelined for a long time and the changes that are taking place in the industry are a means of correcting the wrongs of the past. What came up here was the fact that black models are starting to find their place-identity in the modeling industry.

It is clear that the catwalk form the core of the models' place-identity. They have a sense of belonging to the catwalk and they all feel that they can be themselves. They also enjoy the attention that they get when they walk on that catwalk.

The following chapter will focus on the stories of some of the academics working at Unisa.

Chapter 6

Place-identity at Unisa

6.1 Introduction

In the past Unisa was predominantly white, from its staff members to its management. Looking at it now, more and more black people are being employed, although most of the black people at Unisa are administrative and technical staff. In the academic section of the university still the majority of staff members are white. Changes taking place at Unisa are driven through the processes of affirmative action and employment equity. I get the sense that some of the white staff members feel very unsure about the changes that are happening around Unisa.

The implementation of change within a workplace could be perceived as a threat by people within the organization (Fullilove 1996). White academic employees at Unisa might think that the fact that the increasing number of black employees joining them could mean that their job security is threatened. People are usually afraid of the unknown as they do not know what to expect.

In this chapter I will explore the experiences of six academics working at Unisa. Once again the first of these accounts will be an auto-ethnographic presentation of my own story.

6.2 Puleng's Story

As I entered Pretoria for the first time eight year ago, I was struck by this beautiful building with a huge invitation on one of its walls, saying, *'Unisa Welcomes You'*. I thought this is one of the most beautiful buildings I have ever seen. I could not imagine that one day I would be waking up every morning having to go to work at this beautiful place. At that stage of my life I

was a student at the University of Pretoria and being an academic in the future was not even in my mind at the time.

I was in my second year of studies when I started working as a tutor. Little did I know at that time that it was the beginning of my life as an academic. I started out helping fellow black students who had a problem with Afrikaans as some of our classes were in Afrikaans. I enjoyed giving tutorial classes so much that I gladly accepted a post of becoming a part-time temporary lecturer.

At the time when I was offered this post I had already started identifying myself with the academia and I was feeling at home. It was a slow process of finding my identity as an academic. It was not something that I ever dreamt of doing; it just happened to be something that I had an aptitude for. What helped me to adjust quickly was the fact that my colleagues were very helpful and accommodating and that made me feel like I belong. I completed my studies whilst working. I continued working as a junior lecturer until I decided that I would like to have a change of scenery and experience new working environments. That is when I applied for a post at Unisa.

When I started working at Unisa in the year 2000 many thoughts went through my mind, *“Am I going to like it here? Will I be accepted by my new colleagues?”* The one thing that I remember vividly though is the excitement that I had of having to work at this beautiful place.

On my first day I was given an orientation of all the buildings and was told what happens in each one of them. I noticed the vegetation which was very beautiful and very well taken care of. I started feeling at home and feeling proud of being a part of such a beautiful and massive place. I started to walk the catwalk of Unisa.

As time went by I started to feel like a part of Unisa, having a sense of ownership. I also started identifying with the people and not just the place and I made friends with some of my colleagues. It was easier to make friends

with the black rather than the white colleagues. We would go for tea together and visit each other in our offices. Abrams and Hogg (1986) mention that we form our identities around the social groups that we belong to. During this process we also tend to form relationships and relate better to people who are similar to us. On my joining Unisa I related better to the black colleagues as they were similar to me.

I slowly settled in at Unisa and became involved in various activities at the university. At present I identify myself with Unisa and I have that sense of belonging. For example, I am a member and the public relations officer of the university choir where I got to know many people at the university, including the members of the university management. I am also the marketing representative for my department and this entails presenting my department at exhibitions in and outside of the university. This relates to Wagner's (1999) point of view that our identities consist of all the events that take place within our lives and also the experiences that we go through. He also mentions that our identities consist of us being able to shape the meanings that define our communities. The things that we participate in, the people that we relate to and the environment that we live in, help in forming the identities we have. Looking at the Unisa community, all the activities that I am involved in at Unisa forms a part of my identity.

When I walk into my office I have a sense of ownership, safety, and also a feeling that I am walking into my personal territory. I expect other colleagues to respect my territory. I have personalized this territory of mine by decorating it with things that I like. Fullilove (1996) explains this by saying it is important for people to feel secure and safe within the environment that they exist in. He continues to say that this environment is also what is referred to as 'place'. People get attached to things and to people that they relate to on an everyday basis. At Unisa my office is my own personal space and I feel much attached to it. If I think of my future, I see Unisa as my catwalk where I will be strutting my stuff not in the form of clothes that I present, but through my publications.

6.3 John's Story

John joined Unisa in 1979. At that time Unisa was not as big as it is at the moment; almost half of the buildings were not there. He described Unisa by saying, *"As you get over the hills surrounding Unisa you are presented with this icon - this amazing thing. It looks like an airplane that is taking off"*. His first impression of Unisa was that it made him draw his breath in and think, *"This is an amazing place and I wonder if I will ever be worthy of it"*.

When he first came for interviews he noticed the big steps in front of the Theo van Wijk Building and these steps looked so learned and so wise. He remembers thinking, *"This is the ultimate dream, I hope they take me"*. He was overwhelmed by the intelligentsia that he experienced inside Unisa. He says it is unlike other campuses with many separate buildings symbolizing individual identities. At Unisa there is coherence of buildings, it is one big thing, an academic machine as he calls it.

His first impression of working at Unisa was that of awe and amazement. He found that Unisa had an amazing and incredible posting and printing system. He loved the fact that Unisa people close themselves in their offices and create syllabi and tutorial letters. There is efficiency in the way things are done. Within the department that he works in he feels that he is a part of the group and not on his own. The group processes pulls a person in and that is very comforting for him. Another thing that struck John about Unisa is its amazing library. He says it is one of the best libraries in the world and that it has a lot of resources.

When he started working for Unisa there were intimidating instances whereby full professors thought they were more learned than the rest of their colleagues. John found this intimidating and he scurried around trying to find his little place; to find where he belonged. It was not difficult however for him to accomplish this as he had an attitude of wanting to know. He went to people and enquired about everything. He says there were enough controls

around and he was never on his own except, when he was doing his own research projects.

John found that there were always enough people around to pull you in. However, did not always feel like he belonged, especially because he is a gay man moving into a system that was controlled by the apartheid regime. *“If you were a gay man you were on the edge”*. He soon realized, however, that even though he is gay, he was not being discriminated against. It was incredible that, given the miserable little salaries that they got he still thought *“Here I can be myself; I do not have to perform for anybody”*. He could be himself without feeling inferior. However, he later realized that being gay was used against him when it came to promotions. It was not done in a confrontational way; it was always in boardrooms behind his back.

Throughout all the years of experience at Unisa everything that happened to John was worthwhile. He went through seven selection committees before being awarded an associate professorship. He went through a depressing and difficult time of having to watch other people who were not on his level being promoted. Having to watch all these happening right in front of his eyes was not easy but he decided to make peace within himself because he believed that eventually his rewards will come. Generally the academic world is very slow and petty when it comes to rewarding its members.

John's office is his own personal space. His office is open to other people but because his department has a thoroughfare of people the doors have to be closed. This creates a problem as he prefers to have his door at least half open so that people can see that he is there and that they are welcome in his office. When entering his office, the first thing that John becomes aware of is the sweet smell. His office is also a comforting place; a place that he feels is his own even though he still has a computer without a sound system. Much of his identity is played out in his office. He can lock the door or not answer the phone if he feels like it. His office is his little space that he can control.

John is a research professor. He is the person who defines the rules of the academic game. He is the one who makes sure that people understand that if you are in this institution these are the rules, you can brake them, but you need to be aware of what is expected of you. The rules consist of things like having to publish, getting a masters degree and personal development. As a professor you are normally given a bigger office which is a sign of status. He refused to change his office as he felt that his office is now a part of him and he does not want to change it. He likes the carpet in his office and during winter his office is warm. Another thing that he likes about his office is its view; with all these he has formed his own personal identity in his office.

He believes that his identity and that of his colleagues lie at Unisa as they spend a lot of time there and he says it is not just work but having fun with each other. It is about seeing each other as human beings and not just as colleagues.

Since he started working at Unisa John went through many phases. Initially he was awed, but he realized that he can do this and that he fits in. Then he realized that he is actually better than others. This was followed by a phase of despondency when he did not get the recognition that he so wanted. Eventually recognition came and now he feels that Unisa is his stage, his theatre. He enjoys going to work. He feels that even if things get difficult in the future he is well grounded and therefore he will survive.

John sees himself as part of Unisa because the institution has given him recognition; the institution has nodded to him and said 'you are worthwhile'; they have acknowledged him. He feels that as he is a part of Unisa he will not let it go to the ground. Unisa will remain the place wherein he feels good.

John believes that Unisa has changed tremendously throughout the years. Initially there was a lot of oppression as in the previous years (the seventies and the eighties) '*die Broederbond*' (the brotherhood) was in control, even to the detriment of the white people. He describes the broederbond as "*an empowerment group formed by the Afrikaners after being defeated by the*

British. It initially consisted of very poor Afrikaaners who got together as a mutual support group. The aim of this group was to empower themselves culturally, politically, and financially. They had annual meetings that they held in a secret venue. This group became very powerful and most of them ended up in high positions in different organizations including Unisa. They were protective of their members and a person had to belong to the group to enjoy any benefits. They were very secretive and authoritarian. To be a member of this group, people were selected on the basis of their skills, they had to be Christians, and they had to belong to the national party”.

In light of the above information concerning die Broederbond, John comments that competency had very little to do with development and recognition at Unisa, it was politics that determined how things were done. He says a person does not realize this until he/she looks back. Not only the black people were liberated in 1994, but the white people too.

John says transformation formally started in 1999 when the universities started to change. He felt much freer and recognized. He realized that the new system is more chaotic, that they do not keep to deadlines, but it is a much more humane system in a sense that they let people live and find their feet, recognizing other's humanity and humanness. He sees Unisa as a better place and he has high hopes for it. Wagner (1999) says most people tend to feel that they are going to lose their identities when getting into new environments that are unfamiliar. This is something that is seen in many organizations whereby people feel that by opening up to the changes they will be losing a sense of who they are and what they have worked for. According to John the changes that are taking place at Unisa are threatening a lot of employees who have been with the institution for years because they are not sure what to expect.

John also feels that the attitudes that his colleagues use to have towards him have changed. He used to be the youngest person in the department and he was treated as such for a long time. The people in power rarely gave him any say in any matter. He felt that they wanted to hang on their power. This

however changed when he established himself as an academic and got recognition. When he was promoted people's attitudes changed. He feels that now people are more afraid of him instead of respecting him (*laughs when he says this*). The fact that people are respecting him has improved his self-esteem. Lalli (1992) explains that when a person feels that he or she belongs to a place, he/she forms an identity which is connected to that particular place. He continues to say a person will also feel unique and special, and have a sense of belonging. John feels that Unisa is a place where he belongs and he has formed an identity towards it.

John embraces multiculturalism. He feels that when transformation started taking place things were becoming normal at last. He felt that normality was coming. He says if you embrace diversity, it welcomes you. If you start rejecting diversity it becomes oppressive and restrictive and ultimately it kills you. Erez and Earley (1993) add on by saying that cultural values differ from one group to another and in the workplace this can create problems as there might be misunderstandings between employees. John feels that things can get chaotic at times, that people do not understand each other, but diversity is making the institution a better place. Rules have to be followed to make sure that diversity is maintained.

John believes that if Unisa is diversified, this diversity must be worthy of this great institution. He says we are slowly getting there, with every equity promotion there will be pain and it is up to people like him to address these pains. He feels that as a leader he should go to people who are feeling this pain and tell them to look towards the future. When change started taking place, he personally ran towards it and not away from it. He can still recall some of his colleagues who were very angry with him. In 1999 the university implemented having a policy which says '*All formal messages should be sent in English and not in Afrikaans anymore*'. All the people who identified themselves with Afrikaans felt that something is being taken away from them. Proshansky et.al. (1983), when talking about language mentions that language is a very important factor in place-identity. He says it is through language that people identify with others who speak the language as they do

and that people's languages give them a sense of who they are. Territories are identified and defended by treating those who do not speak the same language as them as outsiders. This is probably the reason why the language policy of the institution changed as soon as non-Afrikaans speaking people joined Unisa. This was done so that these people should not feel like outsiders.

In the past, jobs were reserved for white people and that led to most of the companies consisting only of white employees, especially in the skilled labour. However, after the country's democracy things started changing; most black people started getting jobs at places that they could not work at before. This brought a lot of frustration for their white counterparts as most of them did not know how to deal with this change. Most of these white people started feeling that their place-identities have been invaded. John feels that change is something that should not be frowned at. He believes that given the opportunity diversity can actually work to everyone's advantage and that people have got a lot to offer and learn from one another.

There are different views that multiculturalism brings with it. John believes that people have to be allowed to air their views. Meetings should be held regularly on neutral ground where people can just be. People should listen to one another and they should be allowed to agree and disagree. When it comes to affirmative action, John feels that good intentions are not going to help and that some formal policy should be put into place. Policies like equity should be implemented but they should be coupled with excellence. He says promoting people without insight weakens the institution. It is a difficult process to implement. Somewhere in the future affirmative action should be phased out. The equity process is difficult on everybody even those who are promoted; as "they get blundered with swords over their heads", they have been told in a way that *'this is a credit card promotion, we give you the money now but you better deliver'*. Everybody then sits and looks at what you do; it is a painful process.

John believes that if you are good at what you do you will be recognized. The recognition might not come at the time that person expects it to and that is why some people feel that they are being discriminated against. He feels that what is happening now is nothing different from what was happening with the Broederbond in terms of other people being discriminated against. In his experience, if you are good and deliver the goods, eventually you will get recognition. It may be difficult at the moment for white men to get promoted but if they stick to it and are worthy, they will eventually get promoted. He is aware of people who have been promoted to high positions in the institution who are now burning out because they are not up to their jobs. He believes that if you are not up to your job the system will work you out. As a person you have to know your abilities and your limits. John is personally happy where he is at the moment. His dream has been actualized. Equity is a hurdle but people should not be hung up, if they are motivated enough they will get to where they want to be.

One of the things that have changed is the way in which the institution is being run. It used to be very controlled, and it was run in an authoritarian fashion. Now as he looks at it, people come and they are all over the place. Personally he does not feel invaded. He feels that he is contributing to the process of transformation. This new system is very open, unlike in the apartheid era where people were told what to do and had no say on the matter. Even though the way things are done at Unisa is changing, he can still identify with it and his self-identity remains unaffected. Proshansky et.al. (1983) mentions that a person's place-identity includes part of his physical world and the constant awareness of this world plays a crucial role in the way a person identifies himself or herself. If there are any major changes within this environment, a person's self-identity might be threatened. This threat is brought about by the fact that the individual might have to deal with things that are unfamiliar to him/her. The change might also include having to be in contact with people from the out-group that the person does not identify with. John is not threatened by the change and to him there are no in or out-groups because everyone deserves to be at Unisa, as long as they are competent to perform their duties.

There are many black people who are put in higher positions and they are struggling to cope. John feels that it is the responsibility of those who know how things are done to help these people. Most of these black people do not know what the rules are because they are pushed into high positions. Most of them prefer to keep their distance as they are afraid that they will be told that they are not competent in their jobs.

Initially John felt that the new signs on the campus of Unisa were a waste of money. He felt resentment in that his personal needs in his office are not being met whilst the money is wasted on making the campus look more colourful. Then he realized that these changes are making Unisa more user-friendly. He also noted that the security around the campus was too controlling and this for him is a sad reminder of the crime in the country.

John really enjoys working at Unisa and he enjoys the changes that are taking place. He believes that change brings opportunity for rethinking and renewal. He says change should not be viewed as a threat, new people in a place bring new ways of doing things and that should be embraced. He believes that Unisa is one of the biggest icons in this country, that its employees are very well placed; and that they have a lot to offer. People respect Unisa. As soon as they hear that you are a lecturer there they immediately give you the recognition and respect. This is another reason why John feels that it is an honour for him to work at Unisa.

John concluded by saying: *“Unisa represents human knowledge. It is the ultimate, the most sacred place if you seek knowledge. It is the temple, with its library being the holiest”.*

6. 4 Cindy’s Story

Cindy’s mother studied through Unisa. This means that she connected with Unisa even before she started to work there. Working at Unisa was the last thing on her mind. Starting to work at Unisa was a different experience for her

as she used to work at an information technology company. When she started working at Unisa she found its building very impressive and a bit daunting. At her previous company she worked in an open plan office whereas at Unisa each person has his or her own private office. She appreciates her privacy and was therefore very excited about having her own private office. This is the kind of set-up that she could identify with. Proshansky et.al. (1983) explains that place-identity is a changing structure that get modified over the course of the person's life cycle. These changes are brought about due to the change in the environment itself and also due to the person existing within various environments, for example, a person finishing school and moving to a new environment like the workplace. Cindy moved from one workplace to another and she found the new workplace appealing as it accommodated her need for private space.

When Cindy started working at Unisa she felt alone and lonely because she did not know anybody there. She had to be in her office all by herself and do her job and this was a bit daunting for her. Although she liked the privacy of an own personal space, the loneliness provoked anxiety. Sarbin (1983) found that people arrange their offices to create an impression and by so doing, they communicate and give answers to unasked questions about themselves. Therefore people formulate their personal stories or narratives within the places that they exist in. Cindy has made her office her own by decorating it with things that have a personal meaning to her.

Cindy has been working for Unisa for the past eight years as a junior lecturer. She has ambivalent feelings about working for Unisa as she is still not sure yet what the future holds for her in this institution. She enjoys the freedom that she has; the fact that she is trusted to control her own comings and goings. On negative side she is disillusioned about the development of her career as she wanted a progressive, active, dynamic career and this is not happening

Cindy says Unisa is not really a part of who she is. It is just a place where she enjoys working. She identifies more with being in the academic field,

rather than being at Unisa specifically. According to Lalli (1992) different places suggests different identities for different people in accordance to the way people perceive them. Cindy identifies herself with being an academic and not just as someone working at Unisa. The more she thinks about it, the more she realizes that she prefers to be at Unisa more than any other academic institution. She believes that Unisa is different from other academic institutions because of the variety of students that it has. She also prefers writing down her ideas rather than speaking or giving a lecture and that is why Unisa is the place for her.

During the first few years of working at Unisa Cindy thought that Unisa was just another organization like any other. However, later was amazed at how things are done. She remembers thinking, "*Wow this is a very involved machine*". The organization itself and how they handle things is good. She says she respects Unisa. On the other hand, she wonders if Unisa's standing is still high. From the outside it appears as if this is a prestigious institution, but after working here she sometimes wonders about its prestige.

When she joined Unisa, she got along very well with her colleagues and she still does. She says she was a bit intimidated at first but then she realized that people are different and they have different approaches to life. So things have actually become better with time as she started to identify with her colleagues. This helped her in forming a working relationship with them. Smith and Henry (1996) believe that the identification that a person has with the group that he/she belongs to, makes the group to be a part of the person's self-esteem. Cindy did not feel that she is going to loose her self-identity by opening up and identifying with her colleagues, instead she felt that by so doing she is going to learn from them.

Unisa is a multiracial institution and Cindy finds this invigorating as she gets bored easily. She perceives some inequalities which make her disillusioned. Personally and interactionally she perceives the diversity as being great but when it comes to how it affects her career she worries about it. The only differences that she encounters are work related and not personal.

Cindy feels that affirmative action is a necessary process as long as it does not lead to reverse discrimination. Although affirmative action is needed, it can be uneasy at times. She feels that it should apply to everyone; the criterion that is used should be for all. She has a problem with the criteria that is used for promotions as well, something she feels very disillusioned about as she realizes that she is not going to get promoted soon. Promotions should be done on merit. She also does not like the fact that certain jobs are singled out in terms of quotas. Proshansky et. al. (1983) mention that people experience and record all the things that happen within their physical environment. Cindy feels that affirmative action is a necessary step even though she believes that the criteria used is not always the best. Proshansky et. al. (1983) also mention that there are needs and desires to be satisfied. The environment differs from time to time in its capacity to satisfy these needs and desires. Cindy would like to be promoted but she feels that the way in which the process is conducted, there is no chance for her to be promoted anytime soon. At present her environment does not satisfy her needs and desires and that has disillusioned her.

Cindy believes that Unisa is a territory that belongs to everyone occupying it, regardless of race or cultural background. She does not experience any invasion of this territory; she only has a problem with unfairness. She believes that everybody must be treated the same and for this she is willing to work day and night to make sure that equality is reached.

Cindy likes the new image of the institution. She feels that it gives Unisa a professional and organized feel. The "*Unisa Welcomes You*" sign that used to be on the wall and was visible from the highway was removed and Cindy feels that by removing this sign they lost the friendly gesture. The new signs with people's faces are very professional but not friendly. If Cindy could have had her way, the welcome sign would not have been removed. According to Proshansky et. al. (1983) major changes within the person's physical environment can affect the person's identity that he/she derives from his/her

environment because such changes make a person feel like he/she is not in total control of what happens around him/her.

Cindy is aware of the changes that the institution is going through and her concern is for the quality and the standard of education. She is afraid that these might be lowered by the change in management of the institution. She says however, the variety is very interesting. Cindy says she experiences working at Unisa positively and she enjoys it. There has been a shift over the years from what the institution used to be. The focus should be the people as they make the institution.

6. 5 Thandi's Story

When Thandi first saw Unisa she was amazed at the beautiful infrastructure. She could actually see quality from a distance and she believed this must be a very respectable institution. She experienced the building as huge and impressive. A person could see that there are a lot of resources just by looking at it from a distance.

Initially Thandi's experience of working at Unisa was one of dissonance and confusion. Even though she was looking forward to working at Unisa, the reception was very confusing. This was caused by misunderstandings in terms of her joining the system. Relph (1976) in Proshansky et. al. (1983) says people tend to feel secure when they can identify with something and also having the knowledge that they are accepted. The confusion that Thandi experienced made her wonder whether she wanted to be at Unisa or not as she was not sure whether she was going to be accepted by her new colleagues or not. She says she was very excited about joining Unisa, the department that she was going to be a part of and the prospects of doing academic work. Her background is that of doing both academic and clinical work and at Unisa she was going to be involved only with academic work. She felt unhappy about not doing clinical work as well.

She felt disgruntled whilst she had to adapt to the new system. Not knowing people and not knowing the right way of doing things did not help. She felt that she was walking on thin ice, having to be careful of what she says because she was new. She did not want to create a wrong impression about herself. Wagner (1999) says when we come in contact with new experiences we enter into unfamiliar territory. When Thandi first joined Unisa, she walked into an unfamiliar territory and she was not sure what to expect. She started the same time as another colleague but she realized that they were not treated the same. She could not understand that. She wondered what kind of system this was. Was it a system with double standards? She tried to clear things up, but was not happy with the answers that she got. She decided that, *“These people do not know me and in order for me to earn their respect I have to work hard”*. This is what she did. As the years passed the situation improved and she managed to show that she is a professional and that she has the skills to be a valuable member of the team.

Thandi's office is her personal space, her private area that she is in control of. She can clearly define herself in that room and she does not feel invaded in any way. Proshansky (in Korpela, 1989) mentions that when a person is new in an organization he/she is given an office and he/she soon starts rearranging and decorating it the way that he/she likes. This personalizing of the office gives a person that feeling of owning that space and therefore it becomes his/her territory. Thandi has personalized her office by decorating it with her own personal things. She once had a very nasty experience. She found torn papers all over her office floor. When she looked at these papers, she realized that it was the material that she had printed out and forgot to collect. However, she is happy about the way the head of the department handled the situation. She says he is the type of person that would go an extra mile to ensure that everybody has their own personal space and privacy.

Her position at Unisa is that of a lecturer and she is a member of different teams. She teaches both undergraduate and postgraduate students. She is also a member of the Senate and says she enjoys this very much because as a newcomer at the institution, being a senate member puts everything into

perspective for her. As a member of Senate she represents her faculty, but more specifically the department within which she works. She looks at issues concerning the courses and the rules of the institution and their impact on employees. Being a member of Senate impacted on her in a positive way because it orientated her to the Unisa community (management style, how Unisa functions and the policies and processes). It enabled her to understand the institution better. She says she now knows where to go and whom to talk to when she needs assistance.

Thandi has been working at Unisa for four years and she identifies herself with it. People respect Unisa and that makes her to be proud of being a part of it. Lalli(1992) mentions that when a person feels that he/she belongs to a place he/she will feel unique and special, and have a sense of belonging.

Thandi feels that she has grown over the years. She mentions that her previous workplace was where she studied as well. This made it difficult to move from the student role to being a lecturer. Somehow she always felt like a student. Coming to Unisa thus meant that she moved from a student role to a professional role.

Initially when Thandi joined Unisa there was a bit of doubt or uncertainty in terms of her skills, her capabilities and potential from her colleagues. She concluded that in any new system people will have doubts about you. For her it was a normal process of adaptation into a new system whereby people who have been in the system for a longer period might wonder whether this new person will fit in or not. As time went by attitudes towards her changed, people became more accepting and supportive of her role. Vaske and Kobrin (2001) say that place-identity makes a person feel good to know that they belong. Thandi began to feel like a significant member of the team.

Thandi does not feel pressure to be more social with her white colleagues. She experiences a relaxed attitude whereby she can join in whenever she wants. She does not feel compelled to talk to anyone when she just wants to be in her office alone. However, she feels that there is that unspoken norm

of, *"I'll meet you where you are."* There is respect for personal space and one does not necessarily have to conform and go to tea with colleagues even if one does not feel like it.

Thandi believes that affirmative action is a necessary process to correct the imbalances of the past. However, this should be done on merit alone and not in terms of token appointments. Thandi believes that Unisa is not yet fully transformed as most of the senior positions are occupied by whites. She feels that we still have a long way to go.

Thandi is disillusioned about promotions in general. There are different rules for different departments. The whole system needs to be revamped and things have to change. There has to be uniform rules. She also has a negative attitude towards equity appointments. She wants to compete on the same level with her white counterparts and be promoted on merit and not be promoted because she is black. She does not want to be looked at as a black appointee.

6. 6 George's Story

George grew up on a farm in the Cape Province as a member of a 'very typical' Afrikaans family. The nearest town where he went to school was a small involved community. After school he attended the University of Stellenbosch. After completing his studies he was appointed as a lecturer at Vista University in Port Elizabeth. There he stayed for eleven years until he joined Unisa about six months ago.

George first saw Unisa a number of years ago when he was still in school. He came to Pretoria for the first time then and that is when he saw this building. He says Unisa was impressive and you cannot miss it when you enter Pretoria. From day one up until now he has a good feeling about the building of Unisa. His association with the building is a positive one. He mentions that when he was young to him Unisa symbolized a place that he would not mind working in. When he had these thoughts he was still in the Cape and moving

to the Old Transvaal was part one of his future journeys. For George, Unisa, both the building and the name, then and now still symbolize a place that he wants to be a part of.

George mentions that when he walks into his office he gets an interesting feeling. He reflects back on his previous offices as he believes that there is a link between them. He says he cannot just think of his present office at Unisa in isolation, but if he thinks of his experiences of offices over the past few years he realizes that there has been a sense of movement. His office now is much nicer than his other offices in the past. If he however compares it with offices in the corporate organizations he feels that those offices are state of the art. He does not have a negative feeling towards his office, instead he says he loves his 'little office' but also thinks there is a room for improvement, for example, the carpets are extremely dirty. Lalli (1992) mentions that people assign identities to environments that they live in according to the way they perceive them. George identifies himself with his office even though he believes that with little alterations it can be better than it is at the moment.

George continues to say that when he moved in his office he brought a lot of himself into it and by doing this he has put himself into the office, a part of his own aura and that contributes to a more positive experience of the office. Sarbin (1983) supports this by saying that people arrange their offices to create an impression by arranging their offices in a certain way. He continues to say that by so doing they communicate and give answers to unasked questions about themselves. George says he personalized his office immediately after moving into it. He says the office has got an extra door that opens to the balcony and this gives him a positive feeling. He says his door is always open and that enlarges his office space. By so doing he extends his office to the outside even though he does not have a nice view from his office. He believes he does have an office with a view because he is very low in the hierarchy of Unisa (laughs). He says if he looks over the building from his office he sees a little hill and some bushes and that is rewarding for him.

He mentioned that Unisa is different from what he is used to. On the one hand it feels good to work for Unisa and he feels positive about the environment and the colleagues and on the other hand he feels it is difficult to come into the system as an outsider. He says he thinks this is true for most companies and institutions. If George compares where he comes from with Unisa he says moving to Unisa feels like going back to the 70's or 80's. The physical building, the grounds and the garden symbolize the old South Africa. To him Unisa symbolizes something that still needs to change. He sees that it is still going to change. Proshansky et. al. (1983) mention that place-identity is a structure that changes and is modified over the course of the person's life. They say change is brought about due to the person existing within various environments, for example, George moving from Vista/Vudec to Unisa. George says in terms of the public's eye and in terms of power when he hears the vice-chancellor of Unisa speak, he sees a black face and a black voice but in terms of what he experiences in the corridors it is a different experience, there the voices and faces that he sees are white.

George says he is a quick mover and therefore became a part of Unisa immediately after joining it. He made a decision since day one when he joined Unisa that he is going to make it a part of his life. Since joining Unisa he realized that he started to conform, e.g. *"starting to wear brown shoes"* to what he thinks Unisa standards are in terms of dressing, the expected behaviour and also the way of doing things because he realized that there is quite a rigid structure at Unisa and he prefers that. Ashford and Mael (1989) support what George says by mentioning that a person forms a self-identity around the group that he belongs to and this affects his/her behaviour. They say that if a person is a member of a group, he or she is likely to act according to the group's beliefs. George says he found changes in himself after joining this new structure, changes in the way he dresses and also committing himself to processes that he believes in. He says he believes that there are million opportunities at Unisa, and he feels that if people do not utilize these opportunities then it is their own fault. He envisages change within himself and he is willing to empower himself.

When looking at Unisa, George says he does not view it as a multicultural environment. He says he can imagine that over the past ten years Unisa has changed in terms of gender, race, sexuality and culture but he thinks there is a very large group of white people at Unisa who have been there for decades and in his subjective opinion as he calls it, they still rule. He has been exposed to different cultures in his previous work environment and that has given him a sense of who he is, that is, his identity.

When it comes to attitudes towards him by his colleagues at Unisa, he says that is something that he is still trying to answer for himself. He says it is a difficult one for him and he hopes I am going to ask him the same question in six months time again. At the moment he feels the acceptance on different levels, on the one hand he feels an overall acceptance, he says he gets a feeling like *“we accept you even though we do not really know where you fit in”*. The second message that he gets which is a non-verbal one is *“just do not ask us to assist you, do not expect anything from us”*. This he says he experiences on a daily basis. There are some individuals from day one who committed themselves to assisting him, and then there are people who do the polite thing by saying *“knock on our door whenever you need us”* but the meta-communication is already there and it says do not knock on my door. Wagner (1999) says in many organizations people do not want to open up to changes as they believe that by doing so they will be losing a sense of who they are and what they have worked for. George feels that he is welcomed in the department but his colleagues are not sure where he fits in and what he is bringing with him.

George says he feels that the institution still has a long way to go. At the moment, the institutional culture does not make sense to him. He believes that time is the healer, if things have to work people have to be patient and take everything a step at a time. He says a lot of communication and workshops are needed, people should talk otherwise we will have window dressing. He says we must remember that human beings have emotions and individual identities. While George says we must look at human beings as having individual identities, Wagner (1999) says it is wrong to just look at

identity in terms of it being part of the human being alone or the community alone because both of these aspects are incorporated in analyzing identity.

George feels that transformation was 'unfortunately' a necessary step. He fully understands and supports it. Unfortunately there are a lot of negative things attached to it. When he started working at Vudec eleven years ago the whole top management was white with the majority being male. He says back then the institution was one of the financially successful institutions in the country. Transformation started taking place and since its implementation he saw the institution going down the drain, he says whether that and transformation link is an open question, but as an employee he saw a link there. He has mixed feelings about the whole process. If transformation is a process steered by planning, good structure, good communication, and taking expectations into consideration then it can work. He gave an example saying that he saw tea girls becoming human resource managers and that saw the institution going down. What scares him is that the first place that transformation takes place at its management level and usually these people are from outside and do not know the organizational culture. These people come in and the first thing that they want to do is to change everything. This can create a problem as most of the time employees are not prepared for this change. Graumann (1983) as cited in Lalli (1992) mentions that people identify with the places within which they work and they become very protective of this place of work. With transformation comes change and this change can have a negative effect as some employees might feel that there is no need for change.

With transformation came things like equity promotions. George feels that promotions are politically driven and this has caused a lot of frustration. Most of the people who get promoted are black people and they never do their jobs and that he has a problem with. He says he has had a negative experience working with colleagues from other cultural groups. He always felt that he had to watch what he says to his black colleague. He says "*you have to treat your black colleagues in a politically correct way*". This whole thing affected him negatively in his professional life.

George says he enjoys working on his own and he strives working on his own because he can do things in his own way. When talking about the merger again he says he feels that it was forced on him but it was a necessary move. He feels good about the change and the challenges that are facing him. He says all this is in line with what is happening in the country at the moment. He feels positive about it and he looks forward to the journey ahead.

6.7 Thembela's Story

Thembela hails from Umtata in the Eastern Cape Province. He first saw Unisa three years before he started working there. When seeing the building for the first time he thought 'Wow'. It looked like this forbidden building and he thought it is really too much of a dream that he could never chase after because he could never get in there. However three years down the line there he was applying for a job at this place and being called for an interview which he found very exciting and fascinating. He was offered the job and was happy to accept.

When he left home to come and work at Unisa people back home were very excited and they gave him unspoken messages of *'please do not disappoint us.'* So to him there was a sense that he is carrying the weight of a group of people –a whole nation. He got messages like *"you are going to this new territory-Unisa so you must be productive, you should do the right things and you should be a shining star that never fades because we have got all our hopes pending you"*

When he started working at Unisa, Thembela had this gnawing feeling in him all the time that everybody was looking at him and checking whether he could produce because he was just this one black face in the midst of an all white department and just one coloured guy. The coloured colleague was given the benefit of the doubt because he was from the University of Cape Town (UCT) and there is a belief that UCT produces quality. He mentions that he was a black boy from the Eastern Cape, quite above average and capable, but still

there was always that sense of black, black, black. He says he had this feeling that people are going to look at him and say there he is that black person, he cannot produce, he cannot write and Unisa is an institution where academics have to write a lot. There would be remarks like *“look he is late for a meeting- oh, what did you expect, he is black”*. Tesser (1995) mentions in this respect that people always look at those they perceive as the out-group and say they are all alike. When they come in contact with someone who is considered to be from the out-group, they judge him or her without giving him or her a chance first. These are stereotypes that Thembela experienced on his joining Unisa.

All this was quite daunting for Thembela but eventually he realized that it was really debilitating him. He says he felt that he had to stop being the sacrificial lamb for the whole black nation or for the people from the Eastern Cape that know him. He says he feels that if he fails he would have failed because he did something that he should not have done and therefore the failure would be his and his alone and maybe for his family as well. On the other hand if he succeeds it would again be for himself. Thembela says he also realized that the perfectness of white people is an illusion, academically those who are bad tend to be very bad even with their Phds and those who are good are very good and some even without Phds. He says at the end of the day it is about where you want to be and whether you can do things or you cannot. He says he just channels his energy into the right direction.

Thembela believes that when you enter a new place there is always some form of expectation. When he joined the department that he is now working in, he used to go for coffee with his colleagues but later realized that the things that they talk about are the things that he is least interested in. He says he likes and is more comfortable with certain colleagues, especially his boss because with him he can talk about challenging and stimulating things. He says from this he concluded that he does not have to spend time with his colleagues, he can be his own person, do whatever he wants and whenever he wants to.

The place that Thembela can be himself in at work is his office. His office is gorgeous. He says he used to be in another office before moving into his present office. The previous one was facing the sun but what was beautiful about it was the fact that he could see the union building from his office and he could also see the city all the time and that was fantastic for him. The only negative thing was that it was incredibly hot because it was facing the sun all the time. His present office on the other hand, has no view. He is facing a giant tree that obscures everything else.

Thembela says he just looks at this green tree in summer that turns a bit grayish in winter. However, he loves his office; he says he finds it to be a sacred place for him. He does not open his door and he prefers using the natural light therefore his light is always switched off. This makes people think that he is not there and he likes that as it means he can do his work without being disturbed. He feels quite secure in his office; it is a beautiful and spacious place. He says it is an old building and there is a sense that to him it does not feel like an office, instead a very welcoming place. Proshansky et. al. (1983) mentions that people experience and record everything that happens within their environment. They say there are needs and desires that need to be satisfied and the environment differ from time to time in its capacity to satisfy these needs. Thembela's previous office had an excellent view but was very hot and on the other hand his present office has no view but is very spacious and more beautiful.

Thembela finds Unisa very huge and very stimulating. He says he also realized that there are particular race and ethnic anxieties and sometimes he finds these to be problematic. He says he is a carefree type of person so he does not let things bother him. This is his fourth year working at Unisa as a junior lecturer. He says he identifies with it as his place of work even though it does not pay him enough, he cannot see himself working anywhere else. Lalli (1992) mentions that when a person feels that he or she belongs to a place, he or she forms an identity that is associated to that place. Thembela feels that he belongs at Unisa as he loves the academia, coming up with ideas, theorizing and writing and Unisa gives him the opportunity to do all these.

Unisa also gives him the space to do other things that he loves like performing in the choir. He says he is a performer and he is busy developing himself as one.

Themabela mentioned that at the moment he feels very lucky to be at a transformed and a transforming university. As a young black professional he feels that in terms of what is happening things are really looking up for him. Things are not handed to him on a platter, but are happening and he is encouraged to be productive and to go to the right direction so that he can be one of the finest academics. Young academics are encouraged to study further, publish and collaborate with each other on writing papers. He feels that he has grown and benefited by being at Unisa.

He also feels that over the past four years of working for Unisa he has less of a 'wow' feeling. Instead he feels privileged for being part of such a huge institution. He feels grand to belong to an institution of an international stature. As a person one of the major changes that have happened to him is that he is putting a personal stamp on his work. He has matured and gained depth in what he is doing. He makes a contribution and he has authority over the things that he does. People respect him for what he is capable of doing. He no longer has insecurities of thinking what will people say and think. He experiences a sense of maturity and a sense of contentment. He is now in a position to make a positive contribution without feeling that he is too small, too young or too junior.

Themabela feels that transformation is a process that was necessary. He believes that people should be put in places that they have to be in, coached and trained efficiently so that they can deliver as expected. Previous regulations did not allow people to be where they could be. A good thing about transformation is that different points of views can be heard. He mentions that he once applied to study at Unisa and was told that he had to start a few levels below his standing. Now he is a lecturer in this same department that did not want to admit him as a student, all thanks to transformation. He is even regarded as one of the finest academics.

Themabela believes the downside of transformation is that there are times when people who know nothing about certain jobs are put into positions without prior training or nurturing. This affects people's self-confidence negatively. Affirmative action should not just be window dressing. According to Themabela people should be coached so that they can start developing and producing. He says he feels that nobody did him a favour for him to be at Unisa.

Themabela says that with the merger taking place there is a bit of confusion among some employees. The merger does not bother him as his department is not affected by it, except if the free space and the freedom that he has been having is affected or limited. In this whole process he is worried about things like salaries and promotions as he does not know how these are going to be affected. Fullilove (1996) mentions that it is important for people to feel secure and safe within the environment that they exist in and any threat to this environment may affect the self. People generally get satisfaction and protection from the things that are familiar to them. Themabela feels that the merger might bring certain changes that he might not have anticipated and these uncertainties are bothering him.

Themabela says in general Unisa is a great place to work in, however, he believes that it has got many other issues that it has not forwarded or looked at. He says they are very much concerned with race issues, disability and HIV/AIDS and they are not doing enough on other issues like gender and alternative sexuality. He says if Unisa can move and open up a little in other directions so that there is enough breathing space for everyone and doors for overall diversity are opened and not just have selective diversity, then Unisa will be the best place to be at.

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I explored six stories of academic employees of Unisa in order to understand their place-identities at work. All of them identified with Unisa's

impressive building. All the participants mentioned that the first time they saw the building of Unisa they were amazed at its beauty and to them it represented quality, something that they would like to be a part of. Most of them mentioned that they even felt that they were not good enough to be part of such an amazing institution. This suggests that their identities were almost overwhelmed by the building. “Will I be good enough?”

After becoming a part of Unisa, they all felt that there is so much that they have to learn about this institution and they mentioned that the other staff members were helpful in that regard even though for some they felt that they were not welcomed with warm hands. Some participants felt that it was a bit difficult to be a part of the Unisa system as their roles were not clearly defined, but with time everything fell into place and they started enjoying working for the institution. It thus becomes apparent that the importance of the physical structure of the building quickly recedes. The identity theme during this phase is, “Will I fit in?”

All the participants mentioned that they loved their offices; they perceive their offices as their own personal spaces that they are in total control of. They say they love the fact that they can bring their own personal tastes by decorating their offices the way they want. They say that within this massive institution they have their own little spaces that belong to them. The identity theme related to the office space is, “Here I can be who I am”.

Another theme that came up was that of the relationship between colleagues of different cultural/racial backgrounds. The participants mentioned that Unisa is going through a transformation process which they all feel is necessary. They mentioned that everything should be done on merit and not on the basis of advantaged and disadvantaged groups even though they agree that people from previously disadvantaged background should be given priority. The identity process here relate to in an out-group dynamics. On this level the participants grapple with the question, “Who am I in the context of diversity?”

The University is going through a merger process at the moment and therefore most of the participants felt that they want to share their opinion concerning the process. They say that initially they thought it was an unnecessary process and it is going to take Unisa's high standard down, but when they started understanding what the merger was about they realized that it was not a bad idea. One of the participants mentioned that this whole process is in line with what is happening in the country at the moment therefore he supports it wholeheartedly. In the next and final chapter, I will revisit the salient aspects of place-identity of the two workplaces I have researched. The merger process seem to supercede cultural issues and what we have here is an in and out-group dynamic related to place; us here in Pretoria and them there in Florida.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

Place-identity has been extensively researched by Proshansky (1976). He believes that the physical environment plays an important role in the formation of a person's personal and social identities. He convincingly argues that our personal identities are greatly affected by the environments within which we exist.

The terms place and identity were initially researched separately and thereafter as a unit. Lalli (1992) mentioned that the term 'place' can be used to refer to a number of environments within a person's life. The places that are mostly focused on are those that are significant to a person's life. In the case of my research, the places that I focused on were the catwalk and Unisa.

When people get attached to *places* they also form *identities* towards these places because of the meaning that they inscribe to and who they are in these places. Identity consists of all the events that take place within a person's life. It consists of all the experiences that a person goes through. Wagner (1999) relates to this idea by stating that our identity consists of us being able to shape the meanings that define our communities. The events that we participate in, the people that we relate to, and the environment that we live in, help in forming our identities.

Place-identity thus relates to the relationship that a person has with his/her environment. My study focused on two workplaces namely, Unisa and the catwalk where I explored the stories of place-identity that people formed around these contexts. In the present chapter I will discuss the major themes revealed by the participants in terms of the objectives of my study, namely:

- To understand the nature of place-identity at work.
- To understand the impact of change on place-identity.

- To understand how social selves and cultural background relate to place-identity.
- To compare Unisa and the catwalk as contexts of place-identity.

To conclude I will also make recommendations and discuss the limitations of the present study.

7.2 The nature of place-identity at work

The stories that I was told by my participants revealed that they all formed identities around the places that they work. Looking at the Unisa participants, they all mentioned that they loved the 'place' Unisa before even knowing what the processes inside the building were. Their initial feeling was that of falling in love with this place without identifying with it. At that stage they could not identify themselves with the place as they did not know what it was all about and what it had to offer them.

Their first experience of Unisa was the beautiful building that they saw from afar. They all wanted to be a part of Unisa because they perceived it as a beautiful institution and in addition to that it is respected by those who know it and therefore they wanted to be associated with it. They all felt that being associated with such a prestigious institution would be an honour for them, and therefore identifying themselves with such a place was something that they looked forward to.

They mentioned that they had expectations when they first joined Unisa. Their expectations were that of high quality education, wonderful working conditions and colleagues. Initially for some of the participants their roles were not clearly defined and therefore they were a bit confused in terms on finding themselves within the system. This made adjustment difficult for them and they could not really identify themselves with Unisa at that stage. With time and through the help of enquiring and communicating, things started becoming clear and they started feeling that they belong. When they started

feeling accepted in their place of work, they began to identify with it. At that stage, the place started having meaning for them and it was significant to them. This finding is supported by the theory that people identify themselves with places that have meaning to them.

With modeling on the other hand, I picked up certain similarities in terms of the identities that models form towards their place of work. Being a model means being recognized by the public and it also means getting recognition; therefore my participants felt that being a model would bring them recognition. These two workplaces are similar in that people working there perceive them as being very prestigious and also as places that open doors of opportunities to further careers.

Unisa is a place that most people aspire to work in or be associated with because it is an internationally recognized institution, therefore saying you are a part of Unisa immediately makes you a respectable person, meaning that people will listen to what you have to say and also respect your contributions or opinions. With modeling, a person is always in the limelight and there is a lot of exposure to different types of people and the networking is very wide and this leads to most people wanting to join the industry because they want to be on television or on magazine covers.

The above shows that people work better if they can relate to their places of work and also if they feel that these places of work form part of who they are.

7.3 The impact of change on Place-identity

Generally people want to belong and they want to be accepted. A person feels worthy if he/she knows that others care for him/her and they value that which he/she has to offer. Among the African people there is a saying that goes '*Motho ke motho ka batho*' – loosely translated this means no man is an island. People want to be a part of a group that they can identify with. Here the theory on social and group identity becomes relevant as it mentions that

social identity is formed by how a person is perceived by other people and whether he/she is accepted by these people or not.

My participants at Unisa all feel that Unisa forms a part of who they are and in addition to that they have formed a social identity with the people that they work with and they feel that they belong to this social group. All of them say they get along very well with their colleagues and they feel that they belong as their colleagues are people who are similar to them. This sense of belonging however was not automatic on their joining Unisa, it was a process. They had to get to know their colleagues before they could say they get along well with them. One participant mentioned that when she joined the institution she was very confused as to what was expected of her. She felt that her role was not clearly defined and that made adaptation a bit difficult for her. However, as soon as everything got sorted out she started fitting in and became a part of the system.

Unisa as an institution has a culture of its own which consists of rules and regulations that have to be followed. My participants mentioned that they felt that if they did what they had to do, that is, get their work done and not invade in each other's personal spaces everything was fine. The relationship between colleagues is that of sharing ideas with each other and helping each other with work related matters. At Unisa people learn from one another even though they mentioned that there are times when they feel alone. There is a sense of group identity among my participants because they all mentioned that they believe it is a privilege for them to work for such a prestigious institution.

With modeling on the other hand, the group identity is there however it is on a different level than the one at Unisa. Models generally group themselves according to their racial and cultural groups. Black South African models form an identity of their own, white models form an identity of their own, and foreign or international models also have an identity of their own. This division could be caused by the tight competition that is found in the modeling industry. White models feel that the industry is not offering them enough jobs anymore,

Black South African models feel that the industry is opening up for them, but the international models are invading in their territory and they are taking the jobs that are rightfully theirs.

Language also plays a role in people's identification of themselves. At Unisa Afrikaans use to be the official language until the transition started taking place and the official language changed to English. This was not welcomed warmly by all staff members but John mentioned that even though he is white, he was very happy that the language policy changed as it meant everyone could now be included. Social groups generally identify themselves by the language that they speak and all those who do not speak the same language as them are not welcomed into the group. Proshansky et.al. (1983) theory of place-identity supports the fact that language is an important factor that determines people's identities with their group or places within which they exist. Language also plays a role in modeling as well, whereby models group themselves according to their racial or cultural groups. The participants' stories revealed that language is sometimes used as a form of excluding others in a conversation. In her story, Mary mentioned that her agent would speak to the models in Afrikaans even though she knew that Mary did not understand it. Mary perceived this as a form of exclusion and she concluded that she did not belong. Language is used as a determinant of who belongs to the in-group and who belongs to the out-group.

Changes within the workplaces affect people's personal identities as they tend to form their identities from things that they have experienced in the past, what they experience in the present and what they will continue experiencing in the future. If this flow of the familiar experiences is disturbed, a person might feel that he/she is losing his/her identity.

The above can be seen in my research where some of the Unisa academic employees are feeling that the changes within Unisa are affecting the way in which they used to view it. This in turn affected the identity that they had already formed towards Unisa. They feel that their place-identity has been

negatively affected. There is a feeling that this place that they used to identify with is not the same anymore.

Another major change that has taken place at Unisa is the merger that recently took place. Unisa has merged with Technikon South Africa and Vudec and this has caused a lot of uncertainties among the employees. They mentioned that they were not sure of what to expect from this process and some were afraid that Unisa' standards of teaching would be jeopardized. They also mentioned, however, that as soon as they were informed about how the process was going to take place and what the merger meant, they were at ease with it.

I concluded from the models' stories concerning the changes that are taking place in the modeling world that white models feel they are being sidelined and not given sufficient modeling assignments anymore. They see black models as threats who are taking over the industry. On the other hand, black models feel that they are now being given the opportunities that were not there before.

7.4 Unisa and the catwalk as contexts of place-identity

These two working environments are similar in that they both form part of who I am. When I am at Unisa I feel that I belong and I have formed an identity with it as my place of work. I get along very well with my colleagues and I feel that there is space for me at this place. The catwalk on the other hand also forms part of who I am in that when I am modeling I get a sense of belonging and I identify with it as part of who I am.

The similarities between these two workplaces are that in modeling I do the catwalk on the ramps and I show off various clothes made by different designers whereas at Unisa as an academic I do the academic catwalk where I show off my scholarly abilities through writing articles, books and presenting papers at conferences.

The challenges that are experienced by my participants, both at Unisa and in the catwalk are similar in that in both these workplaces they struggle with unfounded stereotypes where white people sometimes believe that black people are incompetent. At Unisa for example, a black academic has to prove him/herself in order to gain respect from other colleagues. In the modeling industry the increasing numbers of black models in the industry show that they too have something to offer. When it comes to performing of the everyday duties however, there is respect for each other's space and contribution.

The Unisa participants, both black and white, mentioned that they do not have a problem working in a multicultural environment, one participant mentioned that he feels that it was about time Unisa becomes a multicultural institution as diversity means people can learn from each other different ways of doing things. A multicultural environment meant certain things had to be changed, for example, the language policy of the institution had to change from Afrikaans to English, which meant no more official e-mails in Afrikaans. This change was not welcomed by everyone as some employees felt that a part of their place identity is being taken away.

With models a multicultural working environment meant black models were now being seen as having the potential of making it in the modeling industry. The stereotypes of the past are being put aside and the black models are being given the opportunity to show what they can do. Again here, white models feel that it is a good thing to give black models the chance that they never had before because they also have something to offer to the modeling industry. The only problem that these white models have is that they are not getting as many jobs as they used to before the black models joined the industry.

7.5 Limitations of the study

This study is limited in that it tends to be subjective. However, I took this into account by giving the participants copies of their stories to check if what I said about them is a true reflection of what we discussed in the interviews. Another limitation is that at Unisa only academic employees were interviewed and experiences of non-academic employees were excluded from the study.

7.6 Recommendations

This study was qualitative and concentrated on a few subjects. It is my recommendation therefore that more research be done whereby issues that came up can be investigated further. I intend to do a further quantitative study focusing on the catwalk and using more representative subjects in order to generalize findings.

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