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Becoming and Being Senior Female Academics in Ghanaian Public Universities

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Submitted to the University of Sussex for the

International Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD) Degree

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June 2019

DECLARATION

This thesis has not been and will not be, submitted anywhere else for a degree.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor Máiréad Dunne and Dr. Barbara Crossouard for taking me through this long academic journey. The guidance and support that they have provided, coupled with their patience and sense of humour, have made this journey not just intellectually challenging but also very enjoyable.

I would also like to express a special word of appreciation to my husband Mr. Samuel Kofi Ofori Danquah. Kofi, your support has been invaluable in helping me shape my study. The completion of this thesis has been well supported by my family especially my children - Taranta Afia Dakurah and S-J Kwaku Danquah. Thank you all for understanding the times that I had to compromise quality family time for academic and professional work. To Kofi Mawuli Klu, I am eternally grateful for your support and guidance. Ms. Esther Impraim you supported in managing domestic affairs so as to free me time and space for this pursuit, I am indeed grateful.

I would like to also thank my mentors in UEW, Mrs. Wilhelmina Tete- Mensah, Mrs. Christie Okae-Anti, Professor Yaw Sekyi Baidoo, and Professor Raheem Kolawole. Dr. Vincent Adzahlie-Mensah, “the Lord is indeed our shepherd” and you remain part of this success. Akpe!

I am also extremely thankful to the nine female academics for their invaluable contributions, without which the construction of this thesis would not have been possible. They have gracefully shared with us parts of their life histories. It is my hope that the findings of this research would in turn contribute to helping those who aspire to tread the path of an academic career.

Let us celebrate the successes of those who have made the grade in academia, be inspired and look forward to many more to come. To God be the glory.

DEDICATION

Taranta Dakurah

Samuel Joel Kwaku Danquah

Mr. Eugene Moses Adu Darkwah

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	-	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEGENSA	-	Center for Gender Studies and Advocacy
CEGRAD	-	Centre for Gender, Research, Advocacy and Documentation
CHPUG	-	Conference of Heads of Private universities in Ghana
DFID	-	Department for International Development
ESPR	-	Educational Sector Performance Report
GES	-	Ghana Education Sector
HEI	-	Higher Education Institution
KNUST	-	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goals
MOESS	-	Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport
NCTE	-	National Council on Tertiary Education (Ghana)
SDG	-	Sustainable Development Goals
STEM	-	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UCC	-	University of Cape Coast
UEW	-	University of Education, Winneba
UG	-	University of Ghana, Legon
UDS	-	University of Development Studies
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UMaT	-	University of Mines and Technology

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX
INTERNATIONAL DOCTORATE IN EDUCATION
BECOMING AND BEING SENIOR FEMALE ACADEMICS IN GHANAIAN PUBLIC
UNIVERSITIES

SUMMARY

This research addresses three fundamental questions about the under-representation of females in the academy and their consequences within Ghanaian public universities. The questions are: i) How do senior female academics explain the under representation of women in Ghanaian public universities? ii) How do the senior female academics account for their career progression within Ghanaian public universities? iii) What are the key challenges in being a senior female academic in Ghanaian public universities? In addressing these questions in this research, I employed qualitative research methods to elicit information from 9 senior female academics within three public Ghanaian universities. A multiple case study design was adopted to provide a wider set of contexts in which to explore the research questions. Using a post-colonial and a socio-cultural theoretical lens, the research explores the experiences of senior female academics by analyzing their perspectives on under-representation of females and their experiences of career progression within public universities in Ghana.

The analysis of the data discussed in chapter five illustrates that becoming a senior female academic in a Ghanaian public university is a struggle replete with gender tensions and misogyny. The process is rooted in traditional Ghanaian practices and colonial vestiges in education and gender that ensured the academy is male-dominated. The discussion in chapter six produced knowledge that being a senior female academic ushers them into a field where their numerical invisibility places them into two disadvantageous positions that are mutually-reinforcing. First, due to their restricted numbers and gender representation requirements, the senior female academics served on multiple committees. The time taken on these duties left them both ineffective in other realms of academic work and unable to support the development of junior colleagues. Second, the senior female academics were seen as gender representatives rather than professors expressing opinions in their own right. Contrary to views that characterized female academics as beneficiaries of affirmative actions and irrespective of tokenistic policies, the senior female academics attained and maintained their positions through hard work, private networking and collaborations as well as transgressions of traditional gender boundaries, institutional misogyny and male-dominance.

The thesis proposed by this research is that becoming and being a senior female academic is a persistent struggle. Further, neither the efforts at career progression nor the accomplishment of professorial status have significant influence on the traditional normative social positioning of women within HEIs. As such, it is evident that national policy and institutional practices need to consider how they might accommodate and promote females. It raises questions about how institutions might develop policy frameworks and strategies to support the career progression of females. In this respect, the experiences of senior female academics explored in this thesis can offer valuable insights.

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

This research builds on an earlier review of the literature on gender and promotions in Higher Education (Adu, 2013) and a subsequent study which focused on the experiences of faculty members (Adu, 2014). The former was a critical analytical study undertaken by me (a female administrator in a Ghanaian public university) as part of the study module for the Professional Doctorate in Education. The latter study was for the same purpose and focused on an Education Department in one university in Ghana and examined policy documents governing promotions, annual reports and other institutional publications alongside the views of eight faculty members including four females. The findings revealed that female faculty face unparalleled challenges when it comes to promotions. These were attributed to the existence of institutional policies/practices that work to disadvantage women. These findings, spurred me on to explore the career progression of senior female academics in more detail and in ways that do not solely rely on statistical data.

As my thinking and theorisation developed, I came to focus both on how female academics developed within the system and their experiences upon becoming senior female academics. While I was interested in their ‘becoming’ (experiences of career progression of senior female academics), I was also interested in their experiences of ‘being’ senior female academics. I was interested in exploring these concerns within the patriarchal Ghanaian cultural system and the educational system that is yet to extricate itself from its colonial roots (Dunne et al., 2010; Dunne & Adzahlie-Mensah, 2016; Adzahlie-Mensah & Dunne, 2018). In so doing, I wanted the experiences of

female professors (senior female academics) with the view that they have the full spectrum of experiences of becoming and being senior academics. My emphasis on the voices and lived experiences of the senior female academics informed the adoption of both a post-colonial and a socio-cultural theoretical frame.

Much of the international research literature on gender and education in Ghana has focused on the situation of girls in basic education (Stephens, 1998; Coclough et al., 2003; Dunne et al, 2007; Dunne et al., 2010). In this thesis, attention is focused on the situation of females in Ghanaian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which are not gender neutral. The research evidence across the world indicates that, there are several gender barriers in HE (Gazeley and Hinton-Smith, 2017; Cook-Sather, 2018; O'Shea and Delahunty, 2018; Luo, Guo and Shi, 2018; Barney, 2018). In Africa, there are painful stories of how colonialists conceptualized higher education as the preserve of males (Mama, 2003). The works of Assie-Lumumba (2005) and Tsikata (2007) have further described how African universities ensured that women were kept outside of their walls for many decades. In Ghana, Morley, Leach, Lussier, Lihamba, Mwaipopo, Forde, and Egbenya (2010) highlighted many gender gaps that affect widening participation for females. My experience as an administrator in charge of Gender in a Ghanaian university shows that the story of female under-representation in the public sphere is not alien to HEIs.

As such many initiatives have been implemented to improve the situation of females within HEIs. Notable initiatives include gender-sensitive admissions into HEIs, affirmative action such as requiring representation and participation of females in all aspects of institutional life as well as the adoption of gender equity policies. Gender

Centers have been established in many HEIs as a matter of policy in most African countries including Ghana (Adusah-Karikari, 2008).

International efforts such as the Beijing Conference, the United Nations Decade for Women, UN Women and the International Women's Day celebrations have been launched. In addition, the adoptions of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 along with the push for the establishment of national gender frameworks were to address the marginalization of and discrimination against women.

UN agencies have also promoted gender issues extensively. Aside UN Women, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have promoted gender equity as central to development. Within the SDG's, there is a more specific interest in the HE sector. For example, Target 4.3 of Goal 4 addresses the enrolment of males and females in tertiary education (UNESCO 2016). The UNDP commentary on the status of women, states that while there are now more women in public office than ever before, very few are in core leadership positions (UNDP, 2017). Unsurprisingly, the report recommends encouraging more women leaders across all regions to help strengthen policies and legislation for greater gender equality.

In Ghana, the efforts to promote gender sensitivity have included the establishment of a National Council on Women and Development, the inauguration of the 31st December Women's Movement, the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and the compulsory requirement to have gender desks in all public establishments (Ngulube, 2018). In line with this, all public universities in Ghana have gender

directorates responsible for gender mainstreaming. They all have gender policies and female representation on university boards and committees is a statutory requirement.

Despite several initiatives aimed at improving the representation and effective participation of females in the public sphere, the story of women does not seem to have changed in Africa. Research suggests that females continue to be under-represented in HEIs and do not seem to have the necessary conditions to compete with males for space, recognition and promotion (Boateng, 2018). The institutions are described as being male-dominated and replete with stereotypical gender role expectations (Rabaru, 2015). Institutionalized gender discrimination is cited as a major impediment to the rise of female academics to senior levels (Adusah-Karikari, 2008; Boateng, 2018). According to Tsikata, (2007) for women to be promoted they “would have to conform to certain norms and accept certain disadvantages as normal”. From my experience within the Ghanaian HE sector, accepting certain disadvantages as normal is a prescription for women to accept the affirmation of masculine authority and gender stereotypes. It is a call to ignore efforts to develop systems that give a sense of empowerment to female academics so that they challenge their marginalization within universities.

My concern is that, so long as social and cultural norms continue to subordinate women to men, gender inequality will continue to persist in universities. My eleven years career experience at a public university in Ghana has witnessed the promotion of three female professors, one as a full professor and two Associate professors. In the same period 36 males were promoted (12 full professors and 24 associate professors). This situation set me thinking and raised many questions for me as I reflected on my career, which have culminated in the research in this thesis. Several questions

plagued my thoughts and were critical in the foundations of this research. Predominant among these are: What might explain why there are more male academics in higher education institutions than there are females. Then, in my professional position as a gender desk officer in a Ghanaian HEI, I wondered how the questions could be addressed and what needs to change.

My review of the literature indicates that the problems of women in higher education is worldwide and it has been the subject for much research in the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA), Australia, and Canada (see for example, Hennig & Jardim, 1977; Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1989; Evetts, 1990; Spurling, 1990; Astin & Leland, 1991; Davidson & Cooper, 1992; White, Cox & Cooper, 1992; Bagilhole, 1993; Acker, 1994; Coleman, 1996; Hall, 1996; Heward, 1996; Carli, 1998; Blackmore, 1999; Luke, 2001; Morley, 2006; Lam, 2006). Studies have also been conducted in Singapore, Japan, and China on the barriers to women's career success (Cheung, Wan & Wan, 1994; Chow, 1995; Luke, 2001; Lo, Stone & Ng, 2003). These studies have addressed the questions of why there are apparently so few women in senior academic positions, and whether there are barriers (visible and invisible) that prevent women from reaching senior positions in higher education.

In Africa, similarly there has been research on women in higher education over the past decade (see for example, Prah, 2002; Mama, 2004; Apusigah, 2008; Adusah-Karikari, 2008; Ogbogu, 2009; Morley et al., 2010). The knowledge from these small but useful studies have enhanced our understandings about higher education. For example, Assie-Lumumba (2005), Mama (2003) and Tsikata (2007) have highlighted that colonialism has fundamental impacts on the creation of the gendered nature of universities in Africa.

In relation to Ghana, Boateng (2018) provided knowledge that a significant factor that ensured women are marginalized within institutions of higher learning is the colonialists' conception of education being the preserve of men, which was handed down to African Universities. Although women now participate at the highest levels of HE, there has not been a significant increase in the proportion of female senior academics as these colonialist conceptions affect their recognition and promotion. In Ghana, previous research on higher education minimally focused on women (see for example, NCTE, 1998; Akyeampong, 2001; Benneh, 2001; Boateng & Ofori-Sarpong, 2002; Glover et al, 2002; Afeti et al, 2003; Nsowah-Nuamah & Amankrah, 2003; Agodzo, 2005; Owusu et al., 2013).

Some of these studies discussed the introduction of competency-based training as a panacea to improving quality of higher education curriculum and instruction (Afeti et al, 2003; Agodzo, 2005; Achio et al, 2011). Others discussed the international dimensions of the curriculum (Dai et al., 2008; Newman, 2011; Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011; Nkrumah et al., 2011; Nsiah-Gyabaah, 2011; Achio et al, 2011; Owusu et al, 2013; Addae-Mensah, 2013; Varghese, 2013; Dattey, 2013). Even more recent studies on higher education and employability (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2014; Ananga et al., 2016) for example, only append gender as a small part of statistical analysis.

The gaps in the literature show that gender is largely invisible in research literature on Ghanaian Higher Education. This, together with my professional experience and educational orientation have spurred my interest in researching gendered issues in institutions of higher education with specific reference to Ghana. As a member of staff

in a Ghanaian public university, I have been engaged in the works of identifying issues of gender inequality regarding the institution's practices and policies and to make recommendations to influence policy change. Based on the Ghanaian Universities commitment to promoting an academic environment devoid of all forms of discrimination, for staff and students (UEW Gender Policy, 2009), and to achieve "academic excellence" (UEW Strategic Plan 2013-2018), I felt the need to explore career experiences amongst senior female academics in selected public universities in Ghana.

My resolve was further provoked by the significant under-representation of women across public universities in Ghana. As a starting point to assess the situation in Ghana, I examined the "faculty profiles" of five public universities in Ghana. The data presented in Table 1.1 clearly depicts the under-representation of women across different levels in senior academic positions in Ghana.

Table 1.1: Academic staff by rank and gender in five Public Universities in Ghana
Adu & Afful-Broni, (2013, p.40)

	Professors				Senior lecturers				Lecturers			
	M	F	F%	T	M	F	F%	T	M	F	F%	T
University of Ghana	140	37	20	177	195	47	19	242	348	112	24	460
University of Cape Coast	82	13	12	95	155	25	13	180	231	54	18	285
University of Education, Winneba	36	3	7	39	67	18	21	85	192	61	24	253
University for Development Studies	18	0	0	18	53	1	1	54	360	8	2	368
University of Mines and Technology	10	0	0	10	17	2	10	19	31	5	13	36
Total	286	53	16	339	487	93	16	580	1162	240	17	1402

Table 1 show that there are fewer women both in terms of percentages and absolute staff figures in the five traditional public universities in Ghana. The range is from two percent (2%) of total academic staff in the University for Development Studies (UDS) to 24% in the University of Ghana (UG) and the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). In UDS, there were only eight females out of 368 lecturers. There were no female professor/s in UDS and the University of Mines. In UG, only 37 (20%) of all 177 professors are females. In the University of Cape Coast, females constituted 13 (13%) of the 95 professors. UEW had three (7%) out of 39 professors. Only 112 out of 460 lecturers in UG were females. In UEW, females constituted 61 out of 253 lecturers. In total, total senior female academics (professors) constituted only about 16% (53) out of 339). In terms of senior lecturers, females constituted the same 16% (93) out of 580. The future does not look good when the numbers are considered at the lecturer level. Out of a total of 1,402 lecturers, only 240 (17%) are females. This suggests that females represent a minority in the academic community within public HEIs in Ghana.

The table further suggests that female career progression does not match that of males. Taking the oldest university - University of Ghana, it is evident that the males outnumber the females in all the three ranks. The majority of the females are concentrated at the lecturer rank and although we cannot infer much about career progression, it bespeaks a gender difference that may have implications for career progression. Clearly, these data are important as broad indicators and to highlight patterns in HE faculty positions. However, they cannot inform us of how and why these patterns arise and the all-important accounts of the processes and experiences behind the statistics are missing. These data are an important basis for us to raise

pertinent questions about the absence of women in senior positions/ranks in higher education in Ghana. In particular, given the fact that affirmative action policies have seen an increased number of female postgraduates, questions still remain as to why there are so few women occupying professorial ranks.

In this study, I attend to this question and approach it in a unique way using a “life-history” perspective to explore the career paths of senior female academics, those who have achieved career progression and promotion. Rather than exploring the conditions and experiences that might inhibit success for aspiring female academics, this study has focused on how these female academics have made sense of their life experiences in and out HE and achieved successes in their careers.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on my interest in the absence of senior academic females in HE in Ghana and my intention to hear the stories and viewpoints of successful female academics, I developed the following research questions to guide my study,

1. How do senior female academics explain the under representation of women in Ghanaian public universities?
2. How do the senior female academics account for their career progression within Ghanaian public universities?
3. What are the key challenges in being a senior female academic in Ghanaian public universities?

1.3. Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into seven chapters. In this introductory chapter, I set out the main rationale and parameters of the study that includes reference to my own professional interests, an overview of the issues of female academics in higher education globally and in the specific context of Ghana and provide the research

questions. Following this, in chapter 2, I present a historical account of education in Ghana with particular reference to higher education. This contextual setting for the study is developed in the first section that traces the origins of formal education in Ghana and its ‘colonial’ roots. In particular, I highlight education under British Colonial rule and the ways it instantiated gendered spaces. I turn to focus specifically on the historical participation of females in education and more pertinently on women in higher education in Ghana. This gender focus is sustained in the third section that reviews the various policies adopted to promote female education in Ghana. In the final section of this contextual chapter, I return to examine women’s participation in education at the universities in Ghana. This helps to locate the study within a historical context bringing out the discourse on colonial experiences and its bearing on women academics.

Chapter three presents a critical analytical review of literature related to gender and academic careers; gender inequity in higher education, gender and gender stereotypes and career progression, the influence of families and the institutional response to challenges of female academics in institutions of higher education. In this literature review chapter, I highlight my feminist, postcolonial position and draw together associated issues from which I developed the main research questions. The first section presents the theoretical underpinnings that I used to understand and analyse the experiences of female HE faculty, their career advancement and the challenges. The second explores gender equity in Higher Education and connects these with the implications of gender inequity. The third explores gender and academic careers. The fourth section reviews the institutional response to challenges of career development for female academics.

In chapter four, I discuss the methodology and methods of the study in detail. I set out the methodological approach to the research, the methods of data collection and the analysis. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the ethical considerations and my reflexive practices throughout the research process.

Chapter five is the first analytical chapter. Here, I discuss the data and present my analysis of participants' accounts of conditions and processes that contribute to the underrepresentation of female academics in institutions of higher education. The first section examines the ways that family structures and practices have a specific influence on the under-representation of women in HEIs. In this section, I explored personal family histories and experiences which the respondents claimed were influential in their career progression. I further explored how the traditional roles of females as homemakers is reflected in their institutional positioning and constrains their academic career progression. This links to the second section which explored how the requirements of academic and professional life clash with family life and the gender roles that women perform. This is followed by a discussion of the effects of colonization on the institutions of higher education in Ghana.

Chapter six, my second analysis chapter, focuses on the ways that institutional culture and practices contribute to the under-representation of women. Through the respondents' accounts, I explored 'unfavorable' gendered spaces within Ghanaian Higher Education Institutions. This led me to explore the institutional practices and cultural codes that female academics navigated in the processes of becoming professors. I further investigated the respondents' experiences of promotion within an

evidently male dominated HE environment. Their accounts provided rich descriptions of their strategies in navigating male dominance on the boards and committees on which they served. They also provided insights into the ways they maintained their spaces within institutionalized gender regimes.

Chapter seven concludes the research. The main findings are summarized in this chapter. Also, I present the policy implications and contributions of the research to knowledge. The chapter concludes with my reflections on the entire research process and the recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

THE GHANAIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores literature that is country-specific on the history and development of education in Ghana. This contextual setting for the study is developed in the first section that traces the origins of formal education in Ghana. First, I begin by briefly exploring the ‘colonial’ roots of education in Ghana. In particular, I highlight the development of education under British Colonial rule and the ways it instantiated gendered spaces. In the second section, I turn to focus specifically on the historical participation of females in education and more pertinently on women in higher education in Ghana. This gender focus is sustained in the third section that reviews the various policies adopted to promote female education in Ghana. Following this, in the final section, I return to examine women’s participation in education at the universities in Ghana.

2.2. The historical development of Higher Education in Ghana

Higher education in Ghana is an intellectual borrowing from Europe bequeathed through the process of colonialism. Its ethos has been maintained through the human capital propositions that have eulogized the developmental externalities of formal education as the key to unlock personal and national progress (Kwame, 2001). The evolution of formal education in Ghana is traced to the arrival of European settlers during the 16th century. The literature on education in Ghana explains that European merchants and religious groups introduced formal education which persisted until

independence and beyond (Graham, 1971; McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Dei, 2002).

The education provided under colonial rule was gendered and ‘native girls’ “were trained as good servants and housewives, but above all for the Lord” (Debrunner, 1967:149-150; Pfann, 1965:23). Historical studies of the colonial school curriculum consistently showed gender discrimination where girls were trained in needle work or sewing and educated to become good home makers /wives, while carpentry, masonry, blacksmithing, shoemaking were organized for boys (Debrunner, 1967; Graham, 1971; Quartey, 2007; Adjei, 2007). Staudt’s (1981) argued that missionary education disproportionately extended educational opportunities to males and also accorded men’s education a higher priority than women. This has been cited as the beginning of formal gender hierarchical divide within education. In terms of higher education, research suggests that the field of academia was considered an exclusive domain for men (Boateng, 2018). One argument has been that the very institution of academia was once considered a terrain solely reserved for men (Romito and Volpato, 2005; Boateng, 2018). As various scholars argued, when women were eventually given access to HEIs, it was to train them to become better wives who would help their husbands to live the ‘colonial dream’ (Tamale and Oloka-Onyango, 1997; Mama, 2003; Boateng, 2018).

Higher education centers in Ghana were few. The colonial regime, their institutions and satellite agencies (including business, missionary and philanthropic organizations) tended to award scholarships to deserving Ghanaian male students to pursue higher education abroad (Amenyah, 2009). In the 1940’s, attempts to address this imbalance

in home and overseas institutions was made through the establishment of the then University College of the Gold Coast, (now University of Ghana, Legon) and its ancillary institutions. This was upon the recommendation of the Asquith Commission on Higher Education in the then British colonies following agitations by educated Africans on the British Government. The Asquith Commission was set up in 1943 to investigate Higher Education. The Commission recommended among other things, the setting up of University Colleges in association with the University of London. This was followed up by a number of separate Commissions in different regions of West Africa. The West Africa Commission was under the Chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. Walter Elliot.

In the period leading to independence, the Elliot Commission (1948) published a majority report which recommended the establishment of two University Colleges in the Gold Coast (Ghana) and another in Nigeria. This led to the establishment of the University College of the Gold Coast which was founded by the Education Ordinance of August 11, 1948 for the purpose of providing for and promoting university education, learning and research. At the same time, in 1948, Ghana government's funding of tertiary education started. At this point, higher education was entirely free and government funded. University students enjoyed free tuition, free boarding and lodging as well as allowances to defray incidental expenses (Chambas, 1998). For the first thirteen years, the University College of Cape Coast referred to two separate British institutions. These were the Inter-Universities Council for guidance on its broad policy and to the University of London for approval and control of details of degree regulations.

Following the attainment of national republican status in 1960, the Council of the University College of the Gold Coast made a request to the Government of Ghana for legislation to constitute the University College into a University with the power to award its own degrees. The Government appointed an International Commission to examine the issues and possibilities. On their recommendations the University of Ghana was set up by an Act of Parliament on October 1, 1961 (Act 79). The then President of the Republic of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, became the first Chancellor of the University.

In December 1960, the Government of Ghana appointed a University Commission to advise it on the future development of University Education in Ghana. The Commission proposed transformation of the University College of Ghana and the Kumasi College of Technology into an independent University of Ghana. The University of Science and Technology was therefore born out of the Kumasi College of Technology in 1961. The Kumasi College of Technology was thus transformed into a full-fledged University and renamed Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology by an Act of Parliament on 22nd August, 1961. The University's name was changed to University of Science and Technology after the Revolution of 24th February, 1966. However, by another act of Parliament, Act 559 of 1998, the University was renamed Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi.

Other efforts were made to promote higher education in the immediate post-independence era. The University College of Cape Coast (UCC) was established in 1962 (Effah, 2003). It was established to train graduate teachers for second cycle

institutions. The purpose was to train teachers who could drive the agenda of the Accelerated Development Plan for Education where emphasis was placed on teacher education and training to support the free compulsory basic education agenda (Republic of Ghana, 2002; Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013). The three Universities operated as the institutions of higher learning aside from the National Academy of Music and the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute where African nationalist leaders were trained.

The present Higher Education system and its regulatory structures and processes are largely framed by the recommendations of the Government White Paper on the Reforms of the Tertiary Education System (1991) following the work of the Universities Rationalization Committee (URC). The URC proposed an overhaul of the higher education system; the creation of a new University in the northern part of Ghana; strategies to expand access for the poor and female students; upgrading of polytechnics into tertiary education status in addition to the establishment of a Board of Accreditation as the Quality Assurance body to contribute to the furtherance of better management of tertiary education (National Accreditation Board website, 2014). Two institutions were opened in 1992. These are the University of Education, Winneba and the University for Development Studies. Ten Polytechnics were also established in the 1990s (MOE, 2008).

Following the liberalization of the economy in the late 1990s, private universities were allowed to operate and many private universities emerged. Currently, Ghana has more than 150 HEIs (MOE, 2013) including eight public (Government funded) universities and over 50 Private/foreign owned universities (ESP Report, 2013).

The number of HEIs has a direct impact on access. Ghana has over 100 higher education institutions providing different forms of higher education (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013; NCTE, 2014).

In addition to these, there are 48 unaccredited local institutions and 3 foreign institutions. The foreign institutions include the Shepherd University (West Virginia, United States), Atlantic International University (Hawaii, USA) and Cyprus International University (Nicosia, Cyprus). Five of the accredited private universities are also affiliated to universities outside Ghana. Examples include All Nations University College (SRM University, INDIA), Quality Distance Learning Limited (University of Leicester, UK), Strategic Business Solution and Networking International Center for Distance Learning (Paris School of Business) and University of Applied Management (University of Applied Management, Germany). There are 54 Private degree awarding institutions. There is one (1) regionally owned institution – The West African Regional Maritime University (MOE, 2013).

Thus, the higher education system that was started by the British colonial authority has transmuted from institutions for colonial economic infrastructure into national research and knowledge centres where graduates are trained to support the development of the country. The essential issues of concern to this research, however, are two-fold. The central argument, for me, is that HEIs have proliferated and it is not clear how their expansions have benefitted females. Also, it is not clear how gender stereotypes instantiated through established colonial practices have been addressed within their institutional cultures. Although women's efforts in academia are increasingly being recognized by governments, university councils and society at

large, the extant literature is replete with arguments to the effect that women in universities across Africa continue to face many hardships, gender stereotypes and general discrimination in their day to day activities on campuses (Mama, 2003; Adusah-Karikari, 2008; Prah, 2013). This is not limited to Africa. For example, despite accounting for 45% of the academic workforce, women hold only 20% of professorships in UK universities, and just 15.3% of such posts in Cambridge University (The Guardian, 2014).

2.3 Costs of Higher Education

As noted in the previous section, Ghana government's funding of tertiary education started in 1948, prior to independence. Higher education funding changed in the 1980's when structural adjustment programs were introduced in Ghana as part of World Bank /IMF policy that tied aid to a reduction in public spending by numerous governments around the world (Adusah-Karikari, 2008; Britwum, Oduro and Prah, 2013; Mama, 2003; Prah, 2004). When government could no longer afford the incentive packages for students due to rising cost of education, they were withdrawn in the 1980s (Dembisa, 2009). The Structural Adjustment Programme compelled the government to shift part of the cost of higher education to students and their parents. Since then, the Ghanaian Government has introduced the new system of cost sharing. According to the Department for International Development (DFID) (1998) cost sharing is "a term which combines the concept of direct cost recovery, and thus education pricing policies, and indirect contributions from pupils, their parents and sponsors". Cost sharing in Ghana's universities in the early stages of implementation used to be limited to user fees such as academic facility user fees (Johnstone, 2004). But now, it also includes tuition fees, academic facility user fees (AFUF),

accommodation, health, transportation, examination and practical fees for science students.

As observed by the World Bank (2011), Higher Education in Ghana is disproportionately “consumed” by the richest 20% of the population. I return to these inequalities of opportunity later in my analysis and in my conclusions.

2.4 Access, participation and equity

Access, equity and participation are critical concerns for higher education in Ghana. Students entering higher education in Ghana nowadays have normally qualified from three years of Senior High school education. University entrance usually involves the study for a degree, diploma or certificate. It takes a minimum of four years for degree programmes and two years for post-graduate programmes. English is the official language of instruction although a range of Ghanaian languages are offered as courses of study. While recognizing my primary focus is on senior women academics in Ghana, access and equity issues at student level are a critical aspect of the Ghanaian HE landscape. In addition, they are issues which my participants have all had to navigate, particularly with respect to gender, so this is addressed in some detail in the sections that follow.

Despite the considerable growth of the HE sector, grave inequalities persist (Apusigah, 2008). Following the institutional model in metropolitan universities in Britain, public tertiary education in Ghana was initially developed as residential (Republic of Ghana, 2002). As a consequence, student admission was heavily influenced by the availability of both academic and residential facilities. These developments were also highly gendered as illustrated by the first phase of

development at the University of Ghana that included four halls of residence for men and one for females. The gendered access to HE is evident in Table 2.1 which shows students enrollment at the University of Ghana for the ten years preceding independence in 1957.

Table 2.1: Students enrolment at the University of Ghana (1954-1956)

Level	Gender	Year	
		1954-1955	1955-1956
Bachelors	Male	204	211
	Female	4	6
	Total	208	217
	% Female	2	3
Postgraduate	Male	7	7
	Female	2	1
	Total	9	8
	% Female	22	13

Source: Adapted from Leney, (2003)

As the table shows, there were only four female students representing two percent of the 208 undergraduate students in 1954/55 academic year. The number increased marginally in the 1955/56 academic year where there were only six female students representing three percent of the 217 undergraduate students. For the postgraduate programmes there were only two females out of the nine students who enrolled in 1954/55. The number reduced to one female only in the 1955/56 academic year. These figures suggest great disparities in the enrollment of females when compared to men. The gender gap seemed to have persisted such that despite significant growth

and development in post-colonial times, gender inequalities remain a key element of HEIs.

The enrolment figures in table 2.2 indicate the massification of HE in Ghana and also the persistence of the gender gaps well into the 21st century.

Table 2.2: Types of Institutions and students enrolled for 2012/2013

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	NUMBER OF STUDENTS			
	Male	Female	Total	F%
Public Universities	85,145	43,181	128,326	45.26
Polytechnics	35,486	17,592	53,078	18.72
Public Colleges of Education	15,825	12,081	27,906	43.5
Private Colleges of Education	3,576	2,937	6,513	2.30
Public Specialized Institutions	4,502	3,213	7,715	2.72
Private Tertiary Institutions	31,592	23,769	55,361	19.53
Nurses Training Colleges	959	2,969	3,928	1.39
Colleges of Agriculture	625	54	679	0.24
Total	177,710	105,796	283,506	100

Source: Adapted from National Accreditation Board Reports, 2015

Overall, the data suggest that female students are under-represented at most universities. Moreover, the figures for the intake with subject specialisms, (polytechnics, agriculture and nursing) are also highly gendered, with agriculture heavily biased towards males and nursing heavily biased towards females. The enrollment statistics showed that gender disparities persist in favour of males. In the Universities where the gap is narrower, females constituted about 45% of total enrolments. However, the figure is as low as below one percent in the Colleges of Agriculture. Given the institutional history of HEI, the low participation rate of females in African universities is often explained as an effect of the misguided colonial educational policy. During these times there appeared to be very little space for women in higher

education. Historically, the colonial higher education model for Africa was primarily designed to educate males who will provide administrative assistance to the colonial government, and did not have any voice or important place for women (Assié-Lumumba, 2008; Mama, 2003). Oyewùmí, (1997) indicates that colonization was a twofold process of “inferiorization and gender subordination” of women. She asserts that African males accepted the established Western gender norms and colluded with the inferiorization of females in all aspects of life including schools where “the exclusion of women” became natural and immutable (Oyewùmí, 1997. p.123). According to Tamale & Oloka-Onyango (2000), “a systematic and deliberate colonial policy, ensured that, women were excluded from the various “Ivory Towers” that dotted the continent” (p.2).

Pillay (2009), argued that, although participation rates for women in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is “substantially” lower than males, where women have managed to enter higher education, their participation is often concentrated in so-called traditional women’s disciplines such as humanities and education, rather than in commerce, engineering and science (p. 20). In Ghana, while government policy suggests a 60:40 enrollment goal for men and women in programs in Science and Technology and Arts and Humanities, respectively (Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport [MOESS], 2010), enrollment trends over the past few decades indicate that this policy goal is far from being realized. For example, in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), the ratio of females to males in public universities were 36:64 in 2001-2002, 35:65 in 2002-2003 and 38:62 in 2007-2008 academic years.

At the University of Ghana, the percentage of students enrolled in science-related disciplines was just 23% in 1999 and by 2006; this had dropped to 17.3%. In view of this, the National Council on Tertiary Education (NCTE), has recommended pegging the STEM and Arts/Humanities growth at 5% and 3%, respectively (MOESS, 2010), which may take about 57 years to reverse the present trend. However, a study by Somuah (2008) cited in the 2010 Education Sector Performance Report indicated that, if Ghana wants to increase STEM education within 12 years, universities may have to peg their enrollment growth to 8% for science-related disciplines and 0% for the Arts/Humanities.

Despite all the measures and interventions by Government of Ghana and its development partners, there still remains a challenge with admission and enrolment of otherwise qualified students. This is illustrated by the statistics in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Enrolment in public universities in Ghana between 2006- 2012

YEAR	Enrolment	Female	Female %	Male	Male %	Difference	% of difference
2006/7	88,445	30,337	34.3	58,108	65.7	27,771	31.4
2007/8	93,973	31,669	33.7	62,304	66.3	30,635	32.6
2008/9	102,548	38,353	37.4	64,195	62.6	25,842	25.2
2009/10	107,058	34,579	32.3	72,479	67.7	37,900	33.4
2010/11	115,452	38,446	33.3	77,006	66.7	38,446	33.4
2011/12	109,278	36,062	33	73,216	67	37,154	34

Source: Adapted from Ministry of Education Report (2015.p.42)

Table 2.3 shows that female enrolment in the public universities in Ghana remains lower compared to males, although Government strategies to widen access and participation have increased overall enrolment numbers. The table showed that female

enrolments “remain low nationally and less than a third of total tertiary level enrolments in public institutions” (MOE, 2013, p.18). The percentage of total HE female enrolments continues to decrease from 34.3% in 2006/7 to 33% of total enrolment in 2011/2012. These figures are percentage of total enrolments that are female. The statistics shows an uncoordinated effort by the public universities to stem the relative decline in the percentage of female enrolments in these institutions. In 2006/2007 academic year, the difference between male and female was 27,771 representing 31.4% in difference. The period saw an increase in female enrolment (38,446 in 2010/2011 academic year as against 30,337 in 2006/2007 academic year) as compared to the previous four academic years.

However, the percentage increase of female enrolment is less than that of the male enrolment. Britwum and Anokye, (2006) in a prelude to their book on Sexual Harassment in Universities elaborated on gender inequalities in enrolment. According to Britwum et al, “the highest proportion of female students’ enrolment, (34 per cent), was recorded at the University of Ghana, (UG), whilst the lowest, (16 per cent) was recorded at the University for Development Studies (UDS)” in 2006.

Private higher education has also become a significant feature of the higher education system in Ghana today, (Effah, 2011) as a means of ensuring wider participation. Between 1979 and 2009, private provision of Higher Education has expanded from about one institution to over 50 accredited institutions. Increased participation of private universities according to Effah, has introduced flexibility in the provision of Higher Education, flexibility in admission procedures, continuous and distance

education, and creative ways of addressing inequitable higher education delivery in Ghana. This phenomenal expansion has come with it a lot of challenges and the obvious one is how to assure quality. Quality in this context refers to corresponding increase in physical and academic infrastructure to meet the needs of the student population. The irony here is that the expansion as perceived by Epstein (1995) is not addressing the equity problems it is intended to, but rather “driven by economic necessity in the new market culture” (p.238). Noteworthy is the point made by Johnstone (2004) and Effah (2011), that access to private higher education is still highly patronized by the wealthy and elites class in society. Higher education tends to be accessible to the sons and daughters of those who are themselves financially well off and well educated and who share the dominant language, ethnicity, and sometimes the “proper” cultural or political affiliations” (Johnstone, 2004, p. viii). The poor and the children from the working-class families cannot afford the high cost of private higher education. Unlike the public universities that receives government support through subvention, private universities do not receive any subsidized financial assistance from the government, and hence they are compelled to charge high tuition and accommodation fees.

It does not appear that African leaders reformed education with a gender focus during the immediate years after independence (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2014). Most first- and second-generation African leaders did not proactively make plans to improve women’s participation in higher education, thereby perpetuating the long-standing inequity derived from the colonial era. As Mama (2006) argued, African governments have not formally excluded women from participation in higher education as the colonial policies did. There have been gender-sensitive policies and affirmative

actions aimed at promoting female participation in higher education (Ananga et al., 2016; Ministry of Gender and Social Protection, 2015). Ghana, for example, has several gender policies which demanded special entry requirements for females (Morley et al., 2010). Thus, it can be argued that African governments have recognized the marginalization of females from HEIs and provided opportunities that consciously challenged gender biases which have precluded full and equal participation of women in the national project.

However, writers argued that African universities still operate through institutional cultures that are attributable to the legacies of colonialism, neo-liberal economic issues of the early 80's and socio-cultural factors peculiar to the African continent (Assie-Lumumba, 2005; Boateng, 2018). Several African scholars have spoken to the impacts of colonialism on the gendered nature of campuses across Africa (Assie-Lumumba, 2005; Mama, 2003; Tamale and Oloka-Onyango, 1997; Tsikata, 2007). Fundamental to all their arguments is the fact that colonialists' conception of education being the preserve of men was handed down to African universities and ensured that for many decades women were kept out of the walls of institutions of higher learning. While women have gradually started to infiltrate the male domain as both students and faculty they continue to struggle with men for space, recognition and promotion. The colonial legacy has continued up to today, resulting in female academics facing many challenges in their day-to-day activities. It is aspects of this struggle that are the main focus of this study.

2.5 National Policies on Gender Equity in Higher Education in Ghana

Acknowledging the long history of gendered exclusion in HE, a number of policy documents and initiatives have attempted to address the gender inequalities. The Government of Ghana has ratified various conventions and treaties that seek to promote the rights of women and children and their development in a coherent manner. Since 1992 the government has developed policies and programmes backed by legislative frameworks that offer strategies for the promotion of equity in education for all. These include, The National Gender and Children's Policy, 2004; 1992 National Constitution Article 27; the Education Strategic Plan (2003 – 2015) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (2001).

The establishment of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in 2001, was to serve as the central management agency charged with the responsibility of; (i) formulating policies and strategies to promote gender equality, (ii) the socio-economic empowerment of women, (iii) the protection, survival and holistic development of the Ghanaian child and (iv) coordination of all policies and programmes for the advancement of gender equality and the protection of the rights of women and children in Ghana (www.mowacghana.net). The Ministry of Education through the Ghana Education Sector (GES) has also established Girl's Education Unit of the GES, as well as gender desk offices in the senior high schools, training colleges and universities throughout the country. All public universities are required to establish Gender centers. The core mandates of the gender offices/centers is to support the government's efforts to achieve gender parity, widen access and increase the participation of women at higher levels of management and in key decision. All of the above are examples of how government policy has generated attention to gender

equality at the institutional level. It was anticipated that the implementation of gender sensitive strategies and affirmative action policies would increase women's participation in the academy both as staff and students (Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza, 2012).

Other inequalities have also been the focus of government policy. In particular the poor geographic distribution of HEIs has been identified (Apusigah, 2008). There remains a huge concentration of HEI's in southern Ghana and in urban areas. Six out of the seven public universities in Ghana are located in the Southern part of Ghana where many of the high status private HEI's are also located. It is only the University for Development Studies (UDS) that is located in a rural setting and the only one in Northern Ghana (Ananga et al., 2014). The University of Health and Allied Sciences was recently established in the Volta region of Ghana, where no University existed.

2.6 Academic Staff Recruitment

Gender disparities are also evident in the recruitment and promotion of academic staff and managers in universities in Ghana, with women forming a small percentage in all cases. A study conducted by Britwum et al. (2008) confirmed that recruitment of female teaching staff and their promotions followed a declining trend. Ghanaian Universities remain male preserves despite efforts at national and institutional levels to increase female participation (Britwum et al., 2008).

In terms of academic staff recruitment and promotions, available statistics for three public universities in Ghana, University of Ghana, Legon, University of Cape Coast and University of Education, Winneba show a wide gender gap within the ranks. A study conducted by Britwum et al. (2006) showed that recruitment of female teaching

staff and their promotions are consistently lower across public universities and mirrors what exist internationally. As Stanley (1997), summarizes, “the greater the status and monetary reward, the less likely there are to be women in organizational positions” (p.5). The statistics on career progression in chapter one show that there are few female academics at institutions of higher education in Ghana and the numbers reduce up through promoted posts towards professorial levels.

Table 1 in chapter one shows that there are fewer women both in terms of percentages and absolute staff figures in public universities. The table further suggests that female career progression does not match that of males. Whereas this does not really say much about career progression it bespeaks a gender difference that can have implications for career progression. While these data are important as broad indicators, accounts of the processes and experiences behind the statistics however are missing. This study will therefore explore the processes and experiences behind the statistics to better understand the perspectives of female academics about their career progression.

My previous research project (Adu and Afful-Broni, 2013) on the gendered nature of promotions and positions in an Education Department in one University in Ghana conducted in 2012 confirmed the works of Morley (2006), Apusigah (2006), Adusah-Karikari (2008), Prah (2002) and Mama(2004). The findings of my study showed that women were highly underrepresented at the higher echelons of the academic rank and in most academic leadership positions. In the study, I examined the trend of promotions between 2007 and 2012 and below are some of the findings in table 2.4. It is worth noting that education is typically quite a feminized field. So, the field of Education is one area where you might expect females to be in senior positions.

Table 2.4: Representation of Female Faculty by Rank at Public Universities in Ghana, 2007-2012.

Adu & Afful Broni, (2013, p. 41)

Year	PROFESSOR						ASSOCIATE PROF.						SENIOR LECTURERS						LECTURERS						TOTAL					
	M	F	T	% M	% F		M	F	T	% M	% F		M	F	T	% M	% F		M	F	T	% M	% F		Total M	Total F	Total	% M	% F	Grand Total
2007	7	2	9	78%	22%		17	1	18	95%	5%		57	11	68	86%	16%		157	35	192	82%	18%		238	49	287	83%	17%	287
2008	8	0	8	100%	0%		19	2	21	91%	9%		61	11	72	85%	15%		144	36	180	80%	20%		232	49	281	83%	17%	281
2009	9	1	10	90%	10%		20	0	20	100%	0%		64	10	74	87%	13%		174	51	225	78%	22%		267	62	329	81%	19%	329
2010	16	1	17	94%	6%		14	0	14	100%	0%		74	9	83	90%	10%		177	58	235	76%	24%		281	68	349	81%	19%	349
2011	19	1	20	95%	5%		17	0	17	100%	0%		76	12	88	87%	13%		182	66	248	74%	26%		294	79	373	79%	21%	373
2012	10	1	11	91%	9%		16	0	17	100%	0%		57	10	67	86%	14%		192	61	253	76%	24%		275	72	347	79%	21%	347

From Table 2.4, it is clear that the highest proportions of females are concentrated at the Lecturer rank. The gender differences in promotions are evident at the Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and full Professorial grades. The data in the table points to the fact that within a period of five years no woman had been promoted to the rank of Professor or Associate Professor. Within the same period, male representation on the Associate Professorial grade had not been stable. In the year 2009, male Associate Professors were twenty (20), in 2010 fourteen (14), in 2011 seventeen (17) and in 2012 sixteen (16) but represents 100% of the male Associate Professorial grade. Mama, (2004) suggests that women typically take longer than men to reach the rank of professor; compared to male colleagues. According to Wilson, (2012), women spend more time on teaching and service and less on research and writing and this also deprives them from attaining higher academic positions.

The study by Adu and Afful-Broni, (2013) further shows that there is evidently a problem with the promotions and distribution of academic positions for women more broadly in Ghana and in many higher education institutions in Africa. Table 2.5 gives a representation of gendered positions in UEW. In the study, three key academic posts were considered, that is: Deans, Heads of Department and Directors). Out of the sixty-six (66) key academic positions, only nine (9) females occupied such positions. This represents 14% (9) of the total against 86% (57) male positions. It should be noted that all these positions are assigned to those with the rank of Senior Lecturers, Associate Professors and full Professors.

Table 2.5: Distribution of Post by Gender in UEW

Adu & Afful Broni (2013, p. 43)

Position	M	F	% M	% F	Total
Deans	9	1	90%	10%	10
Heads of Department	40	5	89%	11%	45
Directors	8	3	73%	27%	11

These data on the gendered nature of promotions and positions in the University of Education, Winneba mirrors what persists in the wider context of higher education in Ghana and Africa. In Ghana's premier University-University of Ghana, Legon, women account for 26% of the working population but only 3.4% of the professoriate (Morley, 2006). In Nigerian Universities for example, women hold less than 35% of academic posts, and are mainly represented at the lower and middle level academic positions with their participation relative to men decreasing at higher levels (Ogbogu, 2011). In South Africa, as indicated by Adusah-Karikari, (2008), women comprise 37% of all academics but just 9% of senior management. Although this kind of distribution still pertains in other societies including the UK (Morley et al., 2010), the Ghanaian scenario has not been studied so that the consequences can be understood and challenged.

The evidence shows endemic gender discrimination within HEIs, a situation that has persisted since colonial times. The root cause of the structural problems in HEIs remains associated with oppression and domination that seems to be taken for granted and rarely raised or researched. Given this, research informed by a global justice

perspective and a post-colonial feminist standpoint (Mama, 2004; Oyewumi, 2003; Amadiume, 2000; Adusah-Karikari, 2008) can offer insights in my research work.

In the next chapter, I focused more on exploring the theoretical framework that informed the research. Also, I reviewed the policy literature on gender and higher education.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction

Chapter 2 provided the contextual background to the study by giving an overview of the history and development of education in Ghana and the patterns of gender inequalities. In particular, I highlighted education under British Colonial rule and the ways it instantiated gendered spaces which allows the reader to understand the historical and current position of women and girls in Ghana. This chapter presents the review of literature related to the theoretical underpinnings that I use to understand and analyse the experiences of female higher education faculty, their underrepresentation, career advancement and the challenges. The theoretical framework is based on postcolonial and postcolonial feminist paradigms which contend that the majority of women in the third world suffer injustices in their lives not only as a result of imbalanced gender relations but also as a result of intersections of colonialism, class, culture, and gender identities. After elaborating this view point, I turn to discuss how cultural norms, practices and expectations created gender inequalities within the family as an institution and also affect HEIs. The third section explores gender and academic career progression. The fourth section reviews the institutional response to challenges of female academics within institutions of higher education.

3.2 Postcolonial and postcolonial feminist paradigms

This thesis is overtly premised in discourses of gender and development that seek to challenge the colonially ordered cultural, structural and systemic marginalization of women within institutions. It is mostly influenced by postcolonial propositions and

tensions relating to gender and development. My interest in adopting a postcolonial approach is influenced by the fact that institutions of higher education in Ghana, date back to colonialism where females were de-privileged (Quartey, 2007). Philips (2011) pointed out that the epistemological origins of postcolonial theories are rooted in justice and fairness. Parsons and Harding (2011) added that postcolonial theory calls for justice, providing a framework to understand the social and psychological marginalization of people and further challenge the superiority of dominant perspectives. These assertions provide an important basis for this study. Importantly too, a postcolonial approach allows a view of colonial history as significant to current social relations in Africa. In particular, I see most institutions of higher education in Africa as creations and products of colonialism. Further, despite the current postcolonial times there still remains an institutional legacy within these institutions, their structures and processes. This recognition is important to my research interest in examining the *modus operandi* of institutions of higher education in Africa and their work in sustaining educational inequalities. As Dartey-Kumodzie (2009: 4) puts it

“the search for the cause of Africa’s social economic tragedy has revealed that in the advent of Africa’s contact with foreign cultures and contact, Africa has thrown away or suppressed its own indigenous cultural heritage or its knowledge foundations. In addition to that, Africa has ignored its language, religion, and philosophy, music and symbolism, describing them as “primitive and barbaric”.

Post-colonial writer (Dartey-Kumodzie, 2006) in African contexts has referred to several issues that removed ‘Africaness’ from the education system and other aspects of life in ex-colonies. According to Dartey-Kumodzie, Africa as at now has:

... completely adopted foreign languages, (English, French and Arabic), Christianity and Islam as its religious norms, European and Arabic symbolism and arts, and European and Arabic music culture. The adoption and adaptation of European and Arabic culture and religious educational system implies that,

Africa has deserted its own culture and lifestyles. This has resulted into a complete paradigm shift. (p.3).

Postcolonial refers to resistance to colonial power and its discourses and in particular associated with a critical engagement with practices that originated in the colonial eras and how these continue to shape cultures in contexts of postcoloniality (Spivak, 1988), including approaches to knowledge production (Foucault, 1980). To add to this, postcolonial feminists are concerned also with the representation of women in once colonized countries, and the ways that colonial discourse constructs gender differences (Mohanty, 1984; Oyewumi, 1997). This study of female career progression has emerged from my sensitivity to both postcolonial and feminist positions and worked to raise the profile of women and explore their views, career trajectories and institutional contexts.

Post colonialism, specifically postcolonial feminism has a key theoretical influence on this study. As Rajan and Park (2004) indicate, postcolonial feminism is an exploration of intersections of colonialism and neo-colonialism with considerations of gender, nation, class, race and sexualities in different women's lives and giving a voice to the marginalized. The relevance of this theory to the study is to locate the research subject within a historical context. Post-colonial feminist theory will facilitate the process of interrogating colonialism and its consequences during and after the colonial period particularly for the voiceless groups (such as women). Hooks (2000) suggests that research practices should seek to reveal the voices of the silenced and oppressed and "offer a framework to bring out the gender politics associated with the system". Consistent with this, in this study, through the lens of postcolonial feminism, I seek to highlight the importance of gender and colonial vestiges for women's experiences in academia.

Many feminist approaches have assumed that the oppression of women can be explained by patriarchal social structures and relations that secure the power of men over women. As such, an analysis of power relations is central to the feminist project of understanding the nature and causes of women's subordination (Young, 1990). Bearing in mind that there are multiple feminisms and feminist methodologies (Mohanty, 1984), my positioning in this study is strongly informed by African feminism. Steady, (1981) defines African feminism as emphasizing female autonomy and co-operation; the centrality of children, family, multiple mothering and kinship. Although indebted to the global feminist movement, African feminist discourse takes care to delineate those concerns that are peculiar to the African situation. It also questions features of traditional African cultures, history, class, patriarchy and matriarchy. Given this multiplicity, in this study of African women academics, I intend to focus on these African women telling their own stories within their specific historical context and institutional experience.

To better understand the ways in which women have on the one hand succeeded and on the other have been silenced and underrepresented in this study demands an engagement with the power relations embedded within the social and historical structures of the institutions and society at large. Foucault's (1980) conceptualization of power allows explorations of women's history and to retrace the place of women's agency within the complex institutional power relations. Institutional ethnographers are of the view that institutions control people's lives through institutional relations and rules evident in policy texts, as well as social norms and practices (Campbell & Gregor, 2002; Wright, 2003). In this study, I drew on these theoretical frameworks to

“open up hidden workings of gendered power/knowledge nexus” in institutions of higher education (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2005:12).

One of the fundamental principles of feminist postcolonial theory is the attention to complexity and interconnections between race, class, power, religion, sexuality and gender. Postcolonial feminists claim that “racialisation processes, gendering, Orientalism and heteronormativity” appear to be the components of colonial domination and central to its “civilizing” mission (FRCPS, 2008). It is in this vein that bell hooks in her book “Ain’t I a woman” (1981) examines the historical impact of racism and class on black women based on “white supremacy”.

Ritzer (2007) further reiterates that, “women experience oppression in varying configurations and in varying degrees of intensity.” Intersectionality highlights that knowing a woman lives in a sexist society is insufficient information to describe her experience. It is also necessary to understand her race, sexual orientation, class, etc., and the social norms related to these in her context. Thus, the situation of women is perceived not only as a result of unequal gender relations, but as the consequence of a wide range of oppressive situations that transcend gender categories and are related to race, class and other social cleavages.

Whereas there are many types of postcolonial feminism (Mohanty, 1984; Young, 1990), my positioning in this study is strongly informed by the works of third world feminist and especially the critical literature from post-colonial African feminist writers - Filomena Steady, (1987), Ifi Amadiume, (1987), Ayesha Imam, (1997), Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie, (1994), Amina Mama, (1995), Oyeronke Oyewùní, (1997), and Assitan Diallo, (2004). Those writers have provided criticisms of mainstream

feminists' assumptions of gender issues in Africa and highlighted the history and contemporary understandings of femaleness in Africa. In specific relation to academia, post-colonial African feminists such as Mama, (2003), Ifi Amadiume, (2006), Adams, (2006) and Apusigah, (2008) claimed that the unequal gender spaces in HEI were developed under colonialism and out of the European domination in Africa. They claim that colonialism by Western nations played a significant role in socializing African women into particular gender norms. Van Allen, (1976:5) writes:

“when they needed literate Africans to form a supporting mediating structure for colonial governments, they sought young boys for schooling. Even when girls were sent to mission schools, they often were not taught the same subjects. Girls’ ‘training homes’ taught some ‘domestic science’ and the bible in vernacular.

This “designates two binary opposed and hierarchical social categories” (Lugones, 2008:8) and created “the exclusion of women” (Oyewùmí, 1997:123) into stereotyped roles and responsibilities. African post-colonial feminists suggested that the authority patterns in colonial practices reinforced key aspects of hegemonic masculinity and indoctrinated women to be mainly mothers/ wives and carers. Dei’s, (2004:219) analysis of education in Africa, using Ghana as a case study, highlighted that structural processes in education kept women in gender stereotypic roles. The understanding fits well into the Gender and Development (GAD) approach to the analysis of women’s issues because it positions their circumstances as socially constructed in relation to maleness with established material practices that can be challenged and changed (Connelly et al., 2000).

Post-colonial African feminists’ propositions extend the GAD approach by highlighting the historical dimensions in conceptions of institutional power relations which are described as having roots in “power configurations embedded in ideas,

cultures, and histories” (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001:300). The ways in which institutions are organized – standards and norms characteristic of the institution - shape the conditions of all actions (Epstein, 1993; Smith, 2005). Further, institutions have particular configurations of people, histories, geographies, sets of ideas (Parker, 2000) such that there is need to focus on the role that “institutional structures have in maintaining power relations” (Epstein, 1993:12). It implies that institutions have particular configurations and concentrations of power, such that one group is consistently advantaged over another.

Given the ways HEIs were developed in Ghana, the relations between men and women within universities may be located within “long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism” (Maldonad-Torres, 2007:243). I am attached to Adam’s (2006) argument that colonial influences propagated “an ideology of female domesticity”, placing much emphasis on women's reproductive and nurturing roles above their autonomy and productivity. What Adams refers to as colonialism’s “housewifisation” of African women provides basis for the arguments that institutional configurations that marginalize women exist in concatenation with open and hidden workings of gender (Campbell & Gregor, 2002; Wright, 2003; Smith, 2005; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2005:12).

African postcolonial feminists have provided criticisms of the liberal feminists' assumptions in relation to gender problems in Africa. They have provided in-depth anti-colonial critique that for example, ignores the missionary and colonial heritages that have reduced women in Africa to the margins of society (Mama, 2003; Apusigah, 2008). Oyewùmí, (1997:156) argued that, gender dynamics in Africa exist, “albeit in concatenation with the reality of separate and hierarchical sexes imposed during the

colonial period”. Oyewùmí, (1997:123-125), further argued that “the emergence of women as an identifiable category, defined by their anatomy and subordinated to men in all situations” was “one of the very first accomplishments of the colonial state.” Oyewùmí further asserts that colonization was a twofold process of “inferiorization and gender subordination” of women. She asserts that African males accepted the established Western gender norms and colluded with the inferiorization of females in all aspects of life including formal education institutions where the exclusion of women became natural and immutable (Oyewùmí, 1997:123).

3.3. Gender Equity in Higher Education

Gender equity in higher education has been discussed variously. From a social justice stance, various authors discussed the aspiration of success from the perspective of equity for students who were 'looked after' by governments as children (Gazeley and Hinton-Smith, 2018), equity-seeking students (Cook-Sather, 2018), students who are the first in their family to attend university (O'Shea & Delahunty, 2018), students of low socio-economic status (Luo, Guo and Shi, 2018) and Indigenous higher degree research students (Barney, 2018). These discussions have focused on students who are historically under-represented or marginalised in higher education and provoked a focus on thinking about success differently for vulnerable students (Nelson, 2018).

Many of the works on gender equity positions students' success in higher education as a relational phenomenon that involves interactions between students (Gazeley and Hinton-Smith, 2018; Peregrina-Kretz, Seifert, Arnold, & Burrow, 2018) or between students and academic staff (Cook-Sather, 2018; Luo et al., 2018). For example, Gazeley and Hinton-Smith (2017) discussed the barriers to working-class students'

participation in higher education. Also, Gazeley and Hinton-Smith (2018) discussed the role of near peer coaching on the 'success' of looked after children in Higher Education in England. In terms of wider changes to address barriers to participation in HE, Gazeley and Hinton-Smith (2017) identified better support for those experiencing economic hardship, more nuanced understanding of 'success' ensuring staff have access to professional development opportunities and supporting more nuanced approaches to addressing the effects of top down education policies and changing understanding of disadvantage. At the core of their work which is foundational to this thesis is the longer term 'success' for females. For this research success for females in HE implies continuing to become senior female academics, which has not been the focus of much research attention in Africa and in Ghana.

Theorizing equity and social justice from a postcolonial perspective, a standpoint which I share with authors such as Mama (1997), hooks (1981), Amediume (1997) and Mamdani (1996) is central to this study. This is because “discourses on social justice and equity” as argued by Sen (1992), “cannot be delinked from the contextual realities in which people live”. Considering Africa’s colonial past, legacies and global economic standing in society today, “one is compelled to engage with the ‘realities’ of unequal power relations within and between states (Nussbaum, 2004). This is an important issue that emerges in debates on social justice in Africa. In this perspective, theorizing of equity and social justice from a postcolonial perspective will address historical factors such as class, ethnicity and social status.

John Rawls (1971) asserts that, there is the need to distinguish between formal and fair equality of opportunity. Whereas formal equality of opportunity requires only that public offices and social positions be open to talents in the formal sense, fair equality of opportunity requires also “that all should have a fair chance to attain them” (p.53). Underpinning Rawls theory is the principle of justice as fairness. Rawls offers two principles of justice; the first is the liberty principle; where each person should have equal rights to an extensive system of equal basic rights. The equality principle also, applies where social and economic inequalities should be arranged so that they are to the greatest benefit of the least disadvantaged. In further explanation of the second principle, Rawls posits that natural inequalities such as inequalities of birth and natural endowment are undeserved and therefore must be compensated for.

Besides, Rawls explains that, people are born into different social groups. Those born into a higher socio-economic group have greater financial advantages than those born into a lower socio-economic group. This inequality can have major repercussions. Such inequalities, according Rawls, may persist throughout life and permeate all areas of existence where goods and services can be bought by those with capacity to pay for them, thus adding to the privileges enjoyed by those from the higher socio-economic groups. While this is a cogent critique, Rawls has a liberal understanding of power and power relations that does not sit well with theorists such as Foucault. These ideas do not seem to challenge Eurocentric notions of equity that do not recognize the way that colonialism included race and gender in the inferiorisation of African women. Indeed, African men have appeared to have sided with the colonial organization and continued to subordinate women.

Drawing on the varied perspectives, and theorizations on equity and social justice above, I observe that at the centre of the issues raised is the need for fairness and equality in the distribution of gains and losses, and the entitlement of everyone to an acceptable quality and standard of living, whereby people can realize their full potential in the society they live in. In practice, equitable treatment involves acknowledging diversity, recognizing and celebrating our differences, and eliminating the barriers that prevent the full participation of all peoples (UNESCO, 2006).

From an African perspective, Kodelja (2013), explains that the application of equity principles in education is in fact the application of the principle of “justice as equality of opportunities”. For Kodelja, one of the necessary conditions for accomplishing equity in education is that society establishes “equal opportunities of education for all regardless of family or income”. This in practice require the creation of conducive environments which address power relations grounded in misogyny in the educational delivery processes, outcomes and promotions. Such approaches will, however, have to confront the patriarchal power relations of HEIs that have systematically privileged male perspectives and knowledge.

Braveman and Gruskin (2007) describe equity in relation to education as the absence of socially unjust or unfair educational disparities by virtue of being poor, female, and/or members of a disenfranchised racial, ethnic, or religious group. Also, from a development point of view, lack of education is part of the definition of poverty and a denial of one’s basic human rights (Lewin, 2007). Education lies at the heart of development and knowledge and skills do transform capabilities and competencies that are acquired in degrees through various stages of education (Lewin, 2007). Given the extensive social, economic and personal benefits that results from education, it is

essential that there is equality of access and opportunity, respect for diversity and inclusiveness to ensure the realization of the full potential of all peoples (Dunne, 2009).

In the past two decades, countries in Sub-Saharan Africa for example have pursued various policies of equitable higher education provisions in order to make higher education accessible to all and to achieve a high rate of returns (Burke, 2013). Such policy directives include equal opportunity, widening participation, gender focused scholarships, affirmative action, accessibility, and gender mainstreaming. Ideally, it is envisaged that such equitable policy interventions may improve fair access and equal opportunity to all to access higher education (investment) which in the long term will increase economic growth (returns) for development.

A study by Morley et al. (2007), on two African countries namely, Tanzania and Ghana, shows that despite incorporating numerous diversity initiatives in many institutions of higher education in Africa, most higher education systems have not met their aspirations for equitable outcomes. One reason, perhaps, is because such diversity programs in higher education tend only to focus on enrolment data pertaining to African students and staff. The argument is that focusing on numbers alone does not adequately explore how gender is performed in particular contexts, and is shaped by cultural norms that vary from context to context. For me, statistics matter. For example, statistics regarding equity issues in Nigeria points to a “rapidly expanded student enrolment rate doubling every 4-5 years”. Yet universities in Nigeria still face an imbalance in the representation of females both as academic staff and as students (Morley et al, 2007). Similarly, in South Africa participation rates in higher education institutions have not increased at the levels anticipated amidst a

conscious policy strategy to promote equity and access to all races, class and marginalized groups, “the higher education workforce continues to be overly representative of white men in the middle-or late middle-age group” (CHE, 2004, p.91).

Morley (2006) argues that most studies on equitable higher education today have been reduced to quantifiable economic analysis leaving out qualitative and structural analysis in terms of power, class, sex and pedagogy. Mama, (2003) points out that the absence of intellectual capacity across Africa has now become a key feature of the development crisis and its perpetuation. This, she argues has had major implications for the capacity of universities to generate the much-needed cadres of skilled professionals for national/regional development, autonomy and integrity. Her interrogations of African intellectualism pose challenging questions about the kind of education and knowledge transferred to students in our modern institutions of higher education. She sees the complexities and legacies of post colonialism as generating African intellectual identities that are contradictory in their diversity, recognizing even what Bourdieu (1998) describes as “negative intellectuals” (pp. 91-95). This refers to a situation where intellectualism does not lead to any critical discussion and analysis of issues that confound social progress.

According to Mkandawire (2000), institutions of higher education in most parts of Africa today are a far cry from what they used to be. Mkandawire draws on Bernstein’s (1970) scepticism about the potential of education to fully compensate for societal development. He argues that the value of higher education for economic growth and broader social and sustainable development has not yet been fully recognized by many African governments. This is because there are other great

concerns about equity that is not being addressed in addition to who gains access to higher education (Morley et al., 2008).

Examining equity issues from a post-colonial standpoint, Ajayi et al (1996), Aina (1994) and Assie-Lumumba (2002), confirm the fact that, universities and other institutions of higher education in Africa are in a state of crisis. Most universities and institutions of higher education in Africa are still linked and influenced by European and North American institutions, which affects curricular and organization of resources (AAU/ World Bank Report, 1997). Explaining further, Aina (1994), points out the historical legacies and impact of colonial experiences on many higher education institutions in Africa. According to him, universities in Africa that were established during the colonial period were modelled very closely on European origins. The overall purpose of “these institutions were meant to provide the necessary indigenous support staff for the colonial administration” (Aina, 1994, p.9). This was characterized by separation and alienation from the rural majority particularly in sub Saharan Africa which has contributed to the ivory tower nature of the colonial institutions (Saint, 1992).

Nkrumah in his inaugural speech during his installation as the first Chancellor of the University of Ghana (1961) said, “Higher institutions of learning in Africa were in the past designed to suit their colonial order and their products therefore reflected the values and ideals of the colonial powers” (1997b, p.138). Consequently, colonial institutions of higher learning, however well-intentioned, were unable to assess the needs and aspirations of the societies for which they were instituted. The colonial policy introduced a regime where males were given the option to further their

education and to take up leadership roles and positions whereas female access to formal education was a second thought (Kweisiga, 2002).

Besides, access to higher education was also limited since most of the universities were geared towards serving the elites. Emphasis was also placed on the arts and humanities, with little attention given to the sciences, technology, economics and other professional subjects (Aina, 1994). The legacy of this colonial experience has left a lasting impression on universities in Africa (Ajayi, 1994), which most universities are trying to overcome by seeking to address such imbalances/problems. As Saint (1992) observes “Legacies from the pre-independence era still shape the structure and substance of African universities in important ways” (p.1).

3.4. Gender Equity and its Promotion in Higher Education in Africa

In this section, I focused on the African context to explore gender equity in higher education. In so doing, I am departing from totalising ‘grand narratives’ so that this work is contextualised instead of being bound by universal essential truths (Stephens, 2014). As indicated already, gender has been identified as a major barrier to equitable higher education by many scholars (Morley et al., 2006, Dunne, 2009). Long ago, Persell (1983) argued that women are not only more likely to hold lower ranks than men but also experience differential accountability measures when being reviewed for tenure (McElrath, 1992). My own previous work on gender and promotions in HEI in Ghana (Adu and Afful-Broni, 2013), asserts that, women are underrepresented at the higher echelons of the academic hierarchy particularly at the professorial grade.

Studies have shown that in almost all Sub-Saharan African countries, with the possible exceptions of Mauritius and South Africa, women have substantially lower participation rates in higher education either as students or staff (Ifi Amadiume, 2006; Mama, 2003; Adams, 2006; Apusigah, 2008). According to them, colonial and missionary policies played significant roles in socializing African women into European gender norms. Colonialism created stereotyped roles and responsibilities for women and indoctrinated them to be mainly mothers/ wives and carers, particularly in the spheres of formal and informal education. It is also about gender relations i.e. men viewed this as the ‘natural’ subordinated location of females in society.

Arguments exist that colonial administration operated a school system where women were confined to the home and family. According to Adams, (2006) the colonial influences propagated "an ideology of female domesticity, placing much emphasis on women's reproductive and nurturing roles above their autonomy and productivity". This she refers to as the "housewifisation" of African women.

Academic literature is replete with concerns about masculinities and femininities within higher education. A critical analytic review of literature on equity and social justice points to the fact that higher education institutions are gendered, globally (Mama, 2004; Morley 2006; Apusigah, 2008). Research is essential for career success in universities and publishing is of paramount importance because one's academic career and progression depends on it. McCabe and McCabe (2000, p.45) pointed out that "academic institutions reward individuals who have publications and bring income into the institution" and "too often, superb teachers do not receive appropriate

recognition”. The literature variously argued that although there are no separate criteria for promotions for female senior members of the Universities, it seems that female faculty members face unparalleled challenges more than the males when it comes to promotions (National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics, 2003; Morley, 2010; Adu and Afful-Broni, 2013). In particular, the National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics (2003) asserts that gender bias reduces promotion possibilities such that men and women experience promotions differently.

Roberts’ (2002) identifies three categories of people who pursue careers in academia. The first category includes those who value the qualities of logical thought, research, and scholarship above all others, and gain satisfaction and status primarily through publication in journals and conference proceedings. The second category includes those whose primary focus is likely to be spent on the teaching of undergraduate students. They derive satisfaction and status from seeing students learn from the material presented, from direct expressions of appreciation, and from low attrition rates and high pass rate. The third category includes those likely to spend significant portions of their career working for government or private industry. Their focus is on conveying practical skills and real-world expertise to students in the most effective and efficient manner, with less emphasis being placed on publication than would be the case of the first category. This last group may be more interested in teaching than researching. This suggests that career progression of female academics can be affected by how they navigated these choices or what categories they choose to belong. The implication is that female’s career progression can be impeded by sociocultural norms. At the same time, this research can be critiqued for its lack of attention to

context, and its rather individualised psychological frame, which also fails to attend to the significance of local social practices and norms in shaping the career trajectories of women academics.

Writers on women and promotions suggested that promotion systems and criteria are unfair towards women (see Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Heward, 1996; Fox & Colatrella, 2006). First, Heward, (1996) argued that the notion of career is gendered and constructed around men and masculinities. Explaining the gendered nature of careers in higher education, Heward noted that due to childbearing and childrearing women are not likely to follow the anticipated pattern continuously. Such arguments are premised in the results of a study conducted by Aisenberg and Harrington, (1988) which revealed that women have different career trajectories compared to men. The study argued that institutional culture, practice and policies tend to privilege men and masculinities to the consistent disadvantage of women and femininities.

Promotion processes have other dynamics. Fox and Colatrella, (2006), have suggested that there are ambiguities in the criteria for promotion as well as entrenched institutional practices which disadvantage women. As a result, the majority of women who are hired in academia generally remain at the bottom of the progression ladder with just a minority climbing through the ranks to the highest echelons of the professorial grade (Fishel, 1977). This is so because, female faculty are less involved in conducting research and obtaining research grants and therefore are disadvantaged with fewer publications than men (Creamer, 1998). In effect, majority of female

faculty members tended to be over represented as non-publishers and under-represented among prolific authors (Adu and Afful-Broni, 2013).

Organizational cultures may also account for the difficulty in examining whether women are indeed discriminated against in hiring and promotion practices. Research on process of promotion show a range of influences in what tends to be a variable process in different institutions. Some researchers claim that in certain cases promotion is based more on trust than performance (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). What trust means is not clearly delineated and that makes a critique difficult. However, it could be argued in that, in such cases, promotion is not based on merit. Also, some other authors such as Over (1993) and Sagaria and Johnsrud (1992) explained that individual attributes play a role in promotions. The authors explain that, the main attributes such as the degree of aspirations, education, age, and the structure of work are huge determinants in an individual's promotion. Within this thinking, this research explores the promotion processes (in the context of career progression) of senior female academics in institutions of higher education to understand how the experiences of the senior female academics are defined by organizational cultures.

In Ghana, Apusigah (2008, p.18) shows how “grave inequalities remain in the higher education system” in spite of numerous efforts dating back to colonial times to address the problem. Apusigah argues that one of the major equity issues in all university campuses in Ghana is accessibility which remains highly under-researched. In addition, unfavourable macro-economic policies have also widened the inequity gap. Considering the current trends in increasing costs through the introduction of the

residential and academic user facility fees, some younger students especially females and parents from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are excluded from higher education participation.

Ghana is not an exception because Morley (2010) has identified instances of the marginalization of women in HEIs in many other contexts. In situations where few women have managed to gain entry into institutions such as universities, there are concerns that they are clustered into administrative instead of academic tracks (Mama, 2003; Morley et al., 2010).

3.5 Gender and Career Progression in Higher Education

In this study career is defined as “an occupation undertaken for a significant period of a person's life and with opportunities for progress” (Hooley, Watts, Sultana and Neary, 2013). Heward, (1996) and Rey (1999) suggest that the notion of career is usually constructed around men and masculinities. Post-colonial feminists such as Ifi Amedi (2006), claims that colonial and missionary policies played significant roles in socializing African women into European gender norms. Scholars argued that colonial administrations, missions, and informal organizations - narrowed women's sphere of activities and increasingly confined them to the home and family (Adams, 2006). Recounting the historical roots of the gendered spaces, Van Allen (1976: 35) explained that, the colonial administration started discrimination in education when they sought young boys for schooling’ and the young girls were sent to training homes to learn ‘domestic science’ and the ‘Bible in vernacular.’ Adams (2006), in support of this assertion also reiterates that the colonial influences propagated “an ideology of female domesticity, placing much emphasis on women's reproductive and

nurturing roles above their autonomy and productivity; which she refers to as the “housewifisation” of African women.

Culturally, African societies also believed a woman’s place was in her home, caring for her husband and children, as opposed to the workplace. Valued feminine traits such as meek nature and submissiveness were feared to be lost if women entered the workforce (Astin, 1984; Nieva and Gutek, 1981; Akinlabi and Olatunji, 2012). Women are expected to perform duties as wife and mother, in addition to fulfilling their professional responsibilities. Because women’s work and family demands are simultaneous, these demands have a significant impact on women’s careers; achieving professional status may be more difficult for women than for men (Tadic, 2005).

There is vast literature on women’s career advancement in the West. A significant amount of the literature discusses the impact of education on career advancement (Ross & Green, 1998; Seibert et al., 2001; Umbach, 2003). Scholars such as Seibert et al and Porter et al have used theories of human and cultural capital to examine the effects of education on career aspiration, career trajectories, or career mobility (Seibert et al., 2001; Porter et al, 2001). Some also explained the significance of education and training as a form of social capital which is important to career trajectories (Porter et al, 2003; Madsen, 2008). For example, Madsen highlighted the significance of levels of education in their career education. The proposition was that in every institutional type, those who often become leaders are individuals with the most professional experience and the highest level of education.

Further literature from Ghana provided justifications for discussing career progression of females in the academy. The work of Prah (2002) highlighted the intersections between female career progression and participation in decision making at the institutions. Prah's argument was that, the absence of women on academic/influential boards and committees occurs concomitantly with career progression to professorial levels. These institutional practices, according to Fraser (1977), represent cultural stereotyping, material and intellectual oppression and as a result the structures of many universities remain deliberately masculine in terms of representation, decision making procedures and the culture of their members. However, there is limited research deconstructing the perspectives and experiences of women on the constraining and enabling factors that underlie the career progression of women within universities in Ghana.

With specific reference to the focus of this study, it has been argued that Ghanaian universities are male dominated institutions and the women within these institutions (academics, administrators, support staff and students) face major obstacles because of lack of attention to their specific needs and problems (Prah, 2002). Commenting on HEI access, Mama, (2004) points out that although women have been able to gain entry to African public universities in incrementally increasing numbers, with the hopes that HEI access will give them the opportunity to get out of "servitude", they are often crushed as they are met with series of unforeseen and sometimes traumatizing challenges within the institutions themselves that makes them "dropout".

In addition, Mama, (2003) raises another legitimate concern about the positioning of female staff within institutions of higher education. She questions how and why the small pool of highly qualified women, particularly those few women who have made it to the top of their careers are clustered into administrative tracks. According to Mama, this is a form of exclusion from the academic stream where the females have opportunities to become accomplished researchers and contribute to knowledge production and thinking. This pattern of staff deployment certainly has long term implications as it creates a deeper under-representation of women at senior academic levels.

3.5.1. Family and career progression

Research conducted by Stephens (2014a) in South Africa and Stephens (1998) in Ghana highlighted participants recounting of positive and negative experiences of early family life, successes and setbacks at school and the struggles and critical decisions taken in pursuing a teaching career. Family life is thus presented as a significant issue in pursuing a teaching career. A significant amount of literature on gender and career reveals that the nature of the relationship between parents and children could also affect the career development of children. Astin and Leland, (1991) concluded that family influences on female leaders were significant. White, Cox and Cooper, (1992) explained that the influence of siblings on a person's career choices, and a possible association between birth order and achievement orientation, have also received some attention in the literature. The authors concluded:

The number of siblings that a child has, his/her place among the children (that is, birth order), and relationships with brothers and sisters constitute important aspects of the child's learning situation in the home. The child may learn patterns of loyalty, helpfulness, protection, or of conflict, domination and competition, which may later be generalised to other social relationships (White et al., 1992, p.41).

In general, White, Cox and Cooper, (1992) claimed that the family upbringing of the successful women in their study provided respondents with autonomy to choose the roles to which they were attracted, rather than being bound by culturally prescribed roles. This explains that childhood stories of female academics might be useful to explain their career progression.

As argued above work life and everyday life intersect and the responsibilities for everyday home life fall heavily on females. The ability to balance work and family responsibilities is another factor that impacts on female career advancement within an academic context (White, 2003; Thanacoody, Bartram, Barker, & Jacobs, 2006). Universities have been slow to respond to work and family balance issues both in Ghana and internationally (Raabe, 1997; Thanacoody, Bartram, Barker, & Jacobs, 2006). Women in academia are often confronted with the challenge of having to manage their work and family responsibilities and this affects their career advancement (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Hochschild, 1997; Ismail et al., 2004; Thanacoody et al., 2006).

Over time, research across cultures has indicated that women carry the major responsibility for domestic arrangements and caring for the young and the elderly (Evetts, 1990; Acker, 1994; Cheung, Wan & Wan, 1994; Coleman, 1996; Blackmore, 1999; Luke, 2001; Lo, Stone & Ng, 2003). This domestic and caring role applies not only to women who are working at home but also to women who have full-time positions in the workforce like those of their male counterparts. In a study conducted by Evetts (1990) on women in primary teaching, she depicted the difficulty women have with balancing their traditional gender roles with career progress as follows:

... family commitments such as childcare do not stop, although they might be eased, ... the collecting of young children from school is a constant worry for working mothers; for school holidays, including occasional days, special arrangements have to be made; and for the sick child, complex coping strategies need to be devised. (Evetts, 1990, p.118)

In a report on female managers in education throughout the world, Ruijs (1993) emphasized that men's daily contribution to domestic activities has increased but it appears some women get little or no support from their husbands. Those who prioritized their family responsibilities were often viewed by their fellows as uncommitted, disinterested and apathetic (Blackmore, 1999, p.78). The literature further reveals that for married senior women in academia, having a supportive partner was key to a successful career. For example, in Coleman's, (1996) study in one English Shire county, all successful female heads had husbands who were working in education and were supportive of their spouses' careers.

There were also some instances of joint career planning and of taking turns in giving priority to the career interests of each partner. Luke, (1998) explained that some husbands were supportive of their career choices and willing to contribute to housework and child-care. In extreme situations the senior women are less likely to be married and more likely to remain childless; if they do decide to have children, they are more likely to delay having those children (Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Coleman, 1996; Luke, 2001). In addition to the implicit assumption of heteronormativity that could be implicated, it is to examine if a focus on family does not involve an understanding of gender that equates it with sex, rather than attending to the ways gender can be done differently, whether by men or by women.

3.5.2. Formal/informal networks and career progression

Formal and informal networks are other factors that are associated with female academic career advancement (Ibarra, 1993; Rothstein & Davey, 1995; Thanacoody, Bartram, Barker, & Jacobs, 2006). Women who enter a traditionally male dominant workplace such as academia are often marginalised. A study of women deans by Glazer and Raymo (1999), Thanacoody, Bartram, Barker, and Jacobs, (2006) found that women without informal networks of support find themselves blocked as they near the top of the administrative hierarchy where promotions are more likely to be based on trust than on performance. (Clawson & Kram, (1984); Noe, (1988); Asiedu-Appiah, Aduse-Poku, & Frimpongmaa, 2014).

In most studies focusing on the role of mentors for women faculty and administrators, mentorship has been identified as one of the motivating factors for women's career advancement (see Beck, 2003; Collins, 1983; Noe, 1988; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001; Williams, 2008; Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002). Different perspectives are debated on the subject. Madsen (2008) interviewed 10 women presidents in American universities who shared how their mentors inspired them to achieve their best potential. The mentors taught them about the politics of higher education. A study conducted by Williams (2008) on the effect of mentoring on career advancement of African-American female administrators revealed that mentoring has an effect on women in all stages of their careers. Therefore, according to the study, it was more important to have mentors who are better able to help others navigate the political landscape in the university.

Beck, (2003) also studied women faculty and administrators in a large research university. According to her findings, women who enter the academic profession

needs support from colleagues as well as other people in their departments to be able to understand the culture of the institution so as to adjust to their profession. In addition, the presence of mentors, both formal and informal, is most often beneficial for women in the professoriate or administrative positions because those mentors are already familiar with the overall organizational culture in their institutions. Mentors serve as a useful source of information about the organizational culture, how things are accomplished and managed in particular institutions (Beck, 2003).

3.6. National and institutional responses to gender inequality in Higher Education

Before returning to Ghana, it is worthy to note that, at the level of international education policies, the MDGs paid scant attention to higher education (UNDP, 2016). However, there is a more specific interest in the HE sector within the SDGs, including within its different targets. For example, Target 4.3 of Goal 4 addresses the enrolment of males and females in tertiary education (UNESCO 2016). The SDGS were implemented after this study however, and it is clearly too early to gauge their impact.

Across the world, there are a number of policies adopted by governments and some institutions of higher education in sub-Saharan Africa to address gender inequality issues. I have already signalled their development at national and institutional level in Ghana in Section 2.5.

More generally, the literature suggests a widespread failure of such policies to support greater gender equality. In Asia, the literature on the gender discrepancy has suggested that the issue of gender equity is even much more complex due to the clash between modernization and Asia's traditional socio-cultural values (Altbach, 2004; Luke, 2002; Roces & Edwards, 2000). In Africa, Governments have acknowledged

the efforts of feminist movements and therefore made commitments to improving gender equity. However, such commitments, according to Luke, tend to be rhetorical because of the peculiar African socio-cultural values entrenched in their patriarchal systems (Luke, 2000). For all these reasons, both local and national policy makers have not fully succeeded in establishing gender equity. Moreover, in situations where gender equity programmes exist, decision makers and policy makers have been found to be reluctant to promote women to top positions (Jayaweera, 1997).

A closer look at studies that address gender discrepancies in higher education in Africa, including in Ghana, reveals that gender equity policies do not always directly improve the gender gap in HE staffing (Glazer-Raymo, 1994; Lie 1994). For example, several studies (Mama 2003; Prah 2004; Adusah-Karikari 2008; Britwum, Oduro and Prah 2013; Boateng, 2018) have shed light on the struggles and challenges of women in academia. Boateng (2018) discussed the experiences of some women in academia and highlighted the different ways through which they challenged the socio-cultural norms to attain the successes they are enjoying in their careers and homes. However, such a lens tends to over-individualise the issues, rather than attending to wider socio-cultural norms. In addition, in African countries, women's movements have been depicted as focusing more on education and training than on rights and equality (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2014)). Government policies were designed to empower women and to equip women with sufficient education to be able to participate in society. Their outcomes are generally disappointing however. Whether these projects are successful remains open to debate, as they are again highly individualized, typically trying to instil skills of entrepreneurship into the women, but without reconstructing wider social norms. Education "has not been able to counter the economic and social

constraints that perpetuate poverty and social class differentiation or the social construction of gender that reinforces gender inequality in the family, labour market and society” (Jayaweera, 1997).

More recently, women’s right to education linked to their rights to economic self-determination has been a key discourse used in NGO/INGO projects (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2014; Ananga et al., 2016). In addition, policies and practices by Governments have the potential to assist or impede women from moving into higher administrative positions. Despite the efforts by Governments in both developed and developing countries to design policies and practices to address gender disparities, factors such as patriarchy and societal values, women’s resistance, and absence of commitment restrict their implementation. In Ghana, for example, the absence of female representatives in the political arena further slows down the efforts to improve gender equity (National Gender Policy, 2015). Considering the centralized characteristics of higher education institutions in Ghana, it is, essential to identify the kind of government policies that contributes to women’s career advancement and those policies that impede women in reaching the top positions within the academy.

In Ghana, several gender sensitive policy initiatives including the national gender policy adopted in 2015 have been implemented over the years. Initiatives include the establishment of the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD), and later the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs, and the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service. Ghana has a gender policy that requires all public institutions to establish gender desks (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2014). The nation adopted the Domestic Violence Act in 2007, which offers strong protection against the violation of women and children in particular. Ghana presently

has a Ministry of Gender and Social Protection. However, the practical actions taken within HEIs to address gender issues remain largely unknown. Some critics allude to the fact that traditional subordination of women translated into underrepresentation of females in senior academic positions (Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango, 2009; Morley et al., 2010). This calls for a qualitative analysis that uncovers critical dimensions of the under-representation of women in the academic life of Ghanaian HEIs, rather than focusing only on statistical enumeration.

3.7. Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter highlight several concerns. It shows that higher education in Ghana and much of Africa is a colonial inheritance. It also highlights that women in African higher education institutions were de-privileged from the colonial beginnings of the institution. While many efforts have been made to promote the participation of females in higher education institutions, it seems that challenges remain. Whereas many scholars in Africa (Adusah-Karikari, 2008; Britwum, Oduro and Prah, 2013; Mama, 2003; Prah, 2004) have shed light on the struggles and challenges of women in academia, not much attention has been devoted to the strategies they employ to overcome such challenges and succeed in their careers (Boateng, 2018).

As such, it is important to discuss the experiences of some women in academia, and to highlight the different, the complex and continuous struggles in which they had to engage in, in order to attain the successes they are enjoying in their careers and homes. The first is the issue of under-representation of females in HEI especially in Africa. The under-representation seemed to have been grounded in age-old stereotypes and institutionalised practices. The under-representation of females itself

produces some form of invisibility which in turn has negative implications for the ways in which females navigate their status within institutions of higher education. What is missing in the literature is the females' accounts of their representation within their institutions of higher education and the consequences for their personal as well as their family life. Also, the literature is not clear on the factors that females within HEI identify as accounting for their statistical invisibility within the institution.

The second major gap within the literature is how females progress within the HEIs. The literature does not highlight the accounts of females on their career progression, therefore there is little to argue about the challenges to the career progression that different females navigate within the institutional regimes. On promotion and everyday institutional practices, it seems the demands on the few females within African and Ghanaian HEIs is less explored. The institutional support available and their efficacy to help females navigate institutional discourses on a daily basis are less known. As such, this research focuses specifically on exploring, for our learning, the experiences of senior female academics. This means that this research illuminates the stories of success.

The main concerns that this research focused on were: senior female academics' accounts of the under-representation of females; accounts of their career progression and the institutional supports that were available to ensure the career progression of females. In so doing, I choose to explore the experiences of successful (senior) female academics on the grounds of their experiences with various processes such as university administration, teaching and research within their institutions.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the methodological approach to the research, the methods of data collection and the analysis. Dunne et al. (2005b) and Pryor (2010) maintain that methodology includes the entirety of the research design, which takes account of the theoretical as well as the practical concerns of the study, whilst methods embodies the specific techniques used to produce data in ways that are consistent with the methodology. Given this, in this chapter, I address these dimensions in three sections. In section 4.2, I connect back to the literature review by elaborating how post colonialism and postcolonial feminism helped to shape my approach to knowledge production in this research. In particular, I elaborate the significance of history for these approaches and the way this helps to interrogate the intersectional relationships between race, gender and class inequalities that are central to my study. Section 4.3 discusses the methods employed in the data collection, which involved interviews and documents analysis. In this section, I also discuss how I analyzed the field data. Section 4.4 discusses the ethical considerations of the study, and reflexivity.

4.2 Methodology

A study seeking to explore the experiences of senior female academics will have as a primary concern, the importance of presenting multiple perspectives and subjective realities. Different people may experience or interpret the same life situation in different ways. The individual experiences of participants represent subjective realities which the researcher must make sense of (Denscombe, 2007). The experiences may be multiple, varied and reflect subjective interpretations of context

specific social and historical experiences (Cohen et al, 2000; Creswell, 2003). Given this, I approached this study with the view that there is no single interpretive truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) but multiple realities which are contextual, and perspective bound (Usher, 1996). I expected the data to vary as I asked the same questions to different women on different occasions. To add to this, I recognize that my interpretations of the data are also a textual construction (Usher, 1996, p.30) influenced by my identity as a woman and a member of staff in a public HEI in Ghana. A male researcher, another female or someone working in a different sector might interpret the same data differently (Dunne et al, 2005). The research product is an outcome of the subjective contextual experiences of participants, our exchanges in the research, my influence in the process of interpretation and my role in this textual construction. All this, however, has been guided by my theoretical positions developed in the literature review.

In adopting postcolonial theories, I sought to explore the experiences of the marginalized (women) through critical analysis of their own perspectives. It attends to the experiences of marginalized groups who have historically suffered from imperialism/colonialism. As such, the methodology is premised in subjectivist epistemology and nominalist ontology of social *reality*, as a product of individual consciousness or outcomes of the multiple interactions rather than phenomenon out there and separate from those involved in its construction (Bryman, 2004, p.266). For me, the *realities* (women academics' experiences) are multiple or idiographic, contextual and subjective - perspective bound (Usher, 1996; Yin, 2009) and so, there is no single interpretive *truth* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). As Foucault (1972) suggests, *truth* (my re-construction of women academic's experiences and what their identities

produce) will be produced only by virtue of multiple discursive formations that shape the social research process.

I adopted an epistemological approach in which I see the experiences of senior female academics as social constructs – subjective interpretation of meanings from their subjective social positioning within HEIs - which are conflictual, negotiated, and evolving and not cohesive, fixed, and static. In my view, their experiences do not exist "out there" in the world. They are constructed only in and through the social experiences in the course of their lives and within the HEIs.

Given the Ghanaian cultural context and the colonial orientations that lay at the beginnings of HEIs, I interrogated the multiple experiences or cases within a sociological setting using interactionist methods: prolonged dialogic investigation, spending time on site and interviewing (Creswell, 2009; Stake, 2005). For me, the social construction of reality occurs via the meanings of past and present events and processes. In my view, those events and processes are continually being re-evaluated based on the exigencies of current situations and typified understandings. The interactionist methods were intended to fit into my research process which involves interrogating my own attitudes, identities, biases and other personal influences (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Cohen et al, 2011). Therefore, I did not attempt to construct a nomothetic universalising theory. My thesis is intended to be a textual construction of women's experiences within particular normative and technical regimes within HEIs in Ghana (du Gay, 2007).

The study adopted a qualitative approach using multiple cases. The cases explored were the experiences of nine senior female academics whose characteristics I further

explicated in 4.3.4. The nine cases were selected from three Ghanaian public universities. The nine cases formed multiple sources of evidence to ensure that “the end product...is a rich, ‘thick’ description of the phenomenon under study” (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). The lived experiences of the nine cases were examined using the phenomenological case study approach to best capture the entire context, process, and causes of their perceived realities (Flyvbjerg, 2011). According to Lester (1999), phenomenological approaches are effective in bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives. Thus, phenomenological case studies allow the researcher to understand the essence of a human experience in order to gain a rich understanding of a particular experience from the participants’ perspective (Patton, 2002; Merriam, 2009; Flyvbjerg, 2011). The phenomenon (experience) explored in this study was the experiences of senior female academics in Ghanaian public universities. The multiple cases provided the opportunity to examine the cruxes of the participants’ descriptions of their experiences to produce the knowledge that has been generated in this research.

The intent of this qualitative case study research is to make sense of complex social construction of meanings (see Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Schwandt, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Qualitative case study research focuses on in-depth understanding of the social world through detailed examination of participants’ understandings and how they subjectively make sense of their contextual experiences (Bryman, 2004). Also, qualitative research takes an ontological position described as constructivist: social realities are outcomes of the interactions between individuals rather than phenomenon out there and separate from those involved in its construction (Bryman, 2004, p.266).

With regards to research involving women's experiences, Greig and Taylor (1999) argued that the qualitative research tries to understand the social world from the points of view of the women living in it. The qualitative case study researcher seeks 'naturally' occurring data by entering the life world of the participants (Silverman, 1992; Flick, 2006). The researcher becomes immersed in the everyday life of the setting chosen for the study and seeks participants' perspectives and meanings through on-going interaction (Creswell, 2003). The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection, and in data analysis.

The case study, and in particular the multiple-case studies design, is used primarily when researchers wish to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under study (Yin, 2009). It relies on interviewing, and document analysis (Denzin & Yvonna, 2003; Yin, 2009). Also, Stake (2005) suggests that qualitative case study allows access to a body of knowledge, observational depth and in-depth studies and relationships that could not be possible through larger quantitative studies. I entered the world of the subject(s) and focus on in-depth understanding of context specific information with the aim of discerning patterns, trends and relationships (Grix, 2004). Stake (2005) explained that qualitative case study is characterized by the main researcher spending substantial time, on site, personally in contact with activities and operations of the case, reflecting, revising meanings of what is going on. The data that emerged are thick inductive descriptions of the phenomenon within the context studied. In this research, the Ghanaian HE context is one with which I am familiar as a resident citizen, a University Administrator and the head of a Gender center at the time this research was initiated. This wealth of experiences added significantly to my

understanding of the participants' positions and perspectives. Considering the nature of the research questions this study sought to answer and my methodological positioning, I found the qualitative approach most appropriate and useful. The entire study was regarded as a process progressing from the design of the research, selection of the cases to be studied, to data collection and interpretation.

My interest was primarily to explore the career experiences and progression amongst senior female academics in Ghanaian public universities. So, I adopted a phenomenological case study design to illuminate the lived experiences of the senior female academics involved in the research. As Patton (2002) described, the lived experiences of the participants provided a firmer understanding that allowed me to gain a more in-depth understanding of the participants' total experiences and to produce a rich and holistic account. This helped to make sense of the essence and the underlying structure of their experiences as a phenomenon that is "anchored in real-life situations" (Merriam, 2009, p. 51).

I found phenomenological case studies useful as I sought to explore the experiences of the small group of female professors in Ghanaian public universities. In focusing on senior female academics as the particular group, I wanted to both understand how they broke the glass ceiling and the beneath-the-surface experiences of what appears to be their successful academic career progression. From a gender-based perspective, this phenomenological approach was both emancipatory and empowering in the sense that it seeks to provide opportunities that allowed senior female academics to validate their statuses while reflecting on their experiences in ways that can fundamentally

challenge thinking and theorisation of gender-based norms that may have been taken for granted.

4.3. Research Design and Methods

As indicated in 4.2, my research was situated as a phenomenological case study design, where researchers aim to understand or interpret a phenomenon in its natural setting through various data sources and data collection methods that leads to interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The methodological description in 4.2 has both confirmed and provided justification for utilizing the phenomenological case study to facilitate an understanding of real-life complexities that directly relates to the experiences of senior female academics in Ghanaian public universities. The phenomenological case study design, enabled me to collect data through fieldwork, involving what Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) would call an interactionists' method – in-depth one-on-one interviews (see 4.3.1). The data were collected by exploring individual accounts of experiences that traces several aspects of personal, cultural and professional development, as each participant navigates what she could construct from her life history. As indicated earlier in 4.2, the human experience under study was the experiences of senior female academics in Ghanaian public universities. Thus, the phenomenological case study was adopted for its utility to explore the participants' personal, first-hand knowledge and their lived experiences of becoming and being senior female academics. My design avoided group interviews, not because participants could not have communicated their points of view during group interviews. What I did, was to ensure that each had a private opportunity to talk about their experiences without having concerns about how others were expressing their experiences.

The data collection was a process involving several decisions. The entire process lasted for a period of six months. First, there was an effort to identify the female professors in the three public universities that were selected for the research. This process began with reviewing the number of female professors in each university and their departments. Once their departments were identified, contact was made with the heads of departments through the Human Resource Divisions of the selected universities. The contact details of the first female professor to be interviewed from each of the universities were obtained from their respective heads of department. This was not considered as constituting too much risk as the participants are matured and senior professionals. Besides, their names and identities were not associated with particular comments in the text. The second part was to contact the professors personally to explain the purpose of the research and to enlist them as participants. Subsequent participants were selected based on the recommendations of the previous participants.

The process of enlistment for each participant began with explaining the entire purpose of the research and then the kind of data being sought was also explained to each female professor. This was meant to ensure informed consent. Their roles in the data collection (how they were to be engaged) were discussed with each participant, individually. The convenient time for the interviews and how much time that would take were also discussed with each individual (as described in Section 4.3.1). This was necessary because each participant appeared to have overloaded schedules. These overloaded schedules and their effects are further discussed in section 6.2 of chapter six.

Given the busy schedules of the various professors, it was difficult to collect data from one university to the other. The data collection was rather scheduled on an individual basis, just as each participant was available. I had to travel to and from the various universities depending on who was available for interviews at what time. As such, each participant was interviewed in one single face-to face interview session, which lasted for a minimum of one and a half hours to a maximum of two and a half hours as described in section 4.3.2. This was necessary because each participant appeared to have overloaded schedules. However, each participant had at least two additional telephone contacts with me where some data were crosschecked and further information was obtained. This was their way of ensuring that they supported me to obtain the data I needed for this thesis.

Decisions about sample size were informed by issues of confidentiality and balance in the data collection process. My selection was informed by these considerations because I wanted a balance in representation and “depth” in the data. Three universities were selected as the sample universities. As my focus was on exploring the lived experiences (phenomenon) of the female academics, I selected institutions that (a) have longer and more established institutional practices (b) had established Gender Centres (c) tend to be larger institutions that could offer a larger pool of professors to be selected for the interviews.

Selecting three female professors from each university to participate in the study was to obtain a balanced view in terms of representation across the three universities. Given that some of the universities did not have a larger pool of female professors at the time of the study, a minimum number of three was used across the three selected

universities. This was to ensure that more females were not selected from a particular institution so that, a particular university's views did not become dominant. This was also to ensure that the participants' identity and sites remained anonymous and confidential. In addition, selecting three females was sufficient to triangulate the views.

Aside that, the smaller number of participants allowed me to have deeper reflections with each participant's account and to have more informal follow-up interviews that occurred mainly via phone and moments when I visited each university in the course of the research. The advantage of scheduling interviews just as people were free was that, I visited each university at least on three different days. What this helped to achieve was follow up interviews, with the help of my research diary, where I had the opportunity to check in with previously interviewed participants. My reflections on the notes in my research diary enabled me to identify gaps in the data whenever I visited to interview another participant, I was fortunate to meet those I had previously interviewed and the informal interactions made it possible to crosscheck some data and to gather more data. This made the data collection more iterative. The main disadvantage was that it made the cost of data collection more expensive. However, the value of having three individuals from the same institution reflect on their experiences at different points and time was helpful to build a consistent argument that can be trusted as reliable.

Collecting data just as the female professors were available as opposed to from university to university was fundamental in the ways in which the data analysis was constructed. I did not analyse the data on institutional basis. Rather, I generated themed findings to construct an organized account of female professors instead of

constructing institutionalized-specific arguments (Creswell, 2012). Although that would have its own advantages, I did not privilege that, given that the experiences of the female professors I interviewed, did not suggest that one institution was doing better than the other. This does not suggest a homogenous experience of the female professors. Rather, it allows a construction of the experiences of female academics in a holistic way that speaks to policy deficits and practice gaps that need the attention of authorities. It also avoids the situation where the results of this research would have become politically disingenuous to one university. This was important as public universities appeared to be universally regulated and share common policies on various issues at the time of the research.

Finally, the scheduling of data collection just as participants were free allowed me to keep a good research diary that helped in constructing points that were helpful in the follow up interviews and to observe some policy practices. The advantage of this approach to data collection was that it helped me to cross check some data with other participants in the same institution at different times. Additionally, it allowed me to explore points made at one university with participants in another university. This does not mean checking individual accounts, but it refers to the situation where I cross checked the promotion processes as narrated by participants from one university with participants in the other universities to identify similarities or differences. In so doing, I was able to adapt the interview questions more reflectively.

In effect, the use of qualitative method (the phenomenological case study) in this study was aimed at facilitating the collection of appropriate data. As Stephens (2007), Silverman (2011) and other qualitative researchers have noted, these contexts were fundamental to understanding the experiences of the senior female academics

involved in the study. Qualitative techniques and in this case semi-structured interviews are regarded as effective in obtaining insightful information as respondents participate (Stake, 2010). This kind of method requires using data collection instruments (interview guides) that are sensitive in bringing out underlying meanings during data collection and interpretation. In the analyses, I needed to present pieces of context-bound personal narratives of the different participants in the form of plural perspectives and voices in representing the findings (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2014). As Adzahlie-Mensah (2014, p. 93) described, I “needed to knit the fragmentary experiences into some kind of multi-dimensional whole” of organising themes into which all accounts tumbled. As such, the explication of the experiences of the senior female academics in this research was a task of interpretation, involving continual reflection about the data (Baumann, 1997; Dunne et al., 2005a) as described further in section 4.3.5.

4.3.1 Data collection and methods

The data for this research were primary, soft and thick context-based data collected from participants in their familiar environment. The main method for the data collection was a semi-structured interview schedule with guideline interview questions (Witzel, 2000; Flick, 2006). Interviews, according to Dunne et al. (2005) are flexible tools for gathering in-depth knowledge about a phenomenon and provide an opportunity for the “voice” of “individuals from marginalized groups to be heard” and “legitimized through research” (p.35). According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994) using interviews as data collection strategies helps to move the respondent beyond the surface talk to a rich discussion of thoughts and feelings. The rationale for choosing individual interviews as the technique for data collection was because issues of career

experiences and progression could be very sensitive. Some participants may not be comfortable discussing them and the individual engagement in the interview offered me the opportunity to probe further for the respondents to open up to the concerns and share in-depth, their academic experiences.

The research used the semi-structured interview technique for the collection of data. According to Kvale (1996), the semi-structured interview is often the most useful interview format for conducting qualitative research (it is sometimes called “moderately scheduled”). This means the interview is not highly structured, as is the case of an interview that consists of all closed-ended questions, nor is it unstructured, so that the interviewee is simply given a license to talk freely about the topic. I drew upon a semi-structured interview guide composed of twelve (12) open ended questions, which I used in a flexible way (see Appendix 1 for interview guide). This enabled deeper engagement with the research respondents and provided the space to explain the questions if they were not immediately understood by the respondent(s).

In using interviews as the main method of data collection, I was faced with several challenges. First, interviewing requires continuous attention. I had to listen and make notes and ask important follow up questions. The processes of establishing rapport, navigating the researcher-researched power dynamics and the challenges of making sense of the rich and detailed data that were collected are but some of the challenges associated with the use of interviews as the main method of data collection. In some moments of the interviews, I realised that many things were emotionally troubling for the participants to either recollect, to say or for me to hear. A typical example was

when participants talked about their promotion experiences in the university. When they recounted such experiences, I could sense the burden they bore and the pains they endured as well as the marginalisation they have suffered. In those moments, I was somewhat helpless, not knowing how to console the participants. They were more senior to me, and I have my personal experiences and previous baggage of how females are treated during promotion based on my years of work at the university. There were questions of trust and temptations to engage in arguments over some controversial issues such as what exactly constituted support from family members or what constituted preference for males to the consistent disadvantage of females. There was another challenge with how to establish an appropriate atmosphere through which the interviewees would feel more at ease and thus talk freely.

Also, the selection of interview environment was a challenge. It was not possible to sit just anywhere and to conduct the interviews due to the status of the participants. As such, the interviews were held in their offices. Whereas this was convenient for the participants, there were frequent interruptions from their colleagues and other individuals who wanted to see them. Sometimes, it prolonged the interviews and distorted the flow of the participant's accounts.

Another challenge was the timing of interview appointments. As noted, the participants were very busy senior female academics. They had busy work schedules and different social and work-related appointments. Therefore, I had to interview each participant just as they were available instead of collecting data from one university to the other. Thus, the use of interview was expensive and time-consuming.

However, the interviews offered advantages. As previous researchers claimed, I found interviews more powerful in eliciting narrative data that allowed me to investigate people's views in greater depth (Kvale, 2003; Alshenqeeti, 2014). The interviews were valuable for obtaining first-hand information from the participants' construction and negotiation of meanings from their experiences. As Silverman (2011) and others noted, the interviews created an opportunity for the participants to speak in their own voices and express their own thoughts and feelings (see Berg, 2007; Cohen et al., 2011). When I visited and interviewed them in their offices within their respective institutions, I was able to connect to the participants' social life and how they navigate their daily realities within their institutions (Cohen et al., 2011). Aside that, the interviews, also helped me to obtain 'in-depth information' about the career progression, (especially the promotion experiences) of the participants, as I observed them express it directly to me. So, in my particular research, I found interviews useful despite its disadvantages, because I was interested in hearing the stories of their academic career progression. I needed to engage with the senior female academics to understand their experiences, the contexts of their experiences and the nature of the experiences as told by them and associated complications. I needed to understand how they navigated their experiences within the institutions and how these are connected to their experiences in the broader social contexts.

4.3.2 Interview Process

Prior to the interviews, all the interviewees were contacted and provided with information about the study and the interview. I met all the respondents individually in a private space or in their offices to conduct one-on-one interviews with all the 9 (nine) participants. This does not mean that participants were docile and could not

have communicated their points of view during group interview. What I did was to ensure that each had a private opportunity to talk about their experiences without having concerns about how others were expressing their experiences. The one-to-one interviews allowed individuals to open up to me and confide in me and say things they might not have said openly otherwise. I sought permission from the interviewees to record the interviews and to take notes as well. Each interview session lasted for a minimum of one and a half hours to a maximum of two and half hours. These were in-depth interviews which put emphasis on the richness of information from selected female professors (Aaker & Day, 1995).

I commenced each interview with an ice breaker to get the respondents relaxed and settled in and also to diffuse the possible power interplay that could emerge between a professor and a senior administrator. My commitments to reflexivity which entails making explicit the power differentials (see Dunne et al, 2005a) implied that there was not a simple case of my position dominating the research process and the construction of the final textual product. The participants were far more powerful people than me. It was then a relief every time one agreed to be interviewed. Although they respected me, I was nervous at some moments of the interview, feeling like my questions might be considered inappropriate. I wondered what the reactions might be if my question was understood to be offensive. However, I was thrilled about the way I was received and guided by each participant throughout each interview session.

I considered, reflecting on the interview processes, that much of the positive reception I received was grounded in the fact that we were having a 'women's talk'. The

participants saw me more as an insider and a colleague, particularly considering the fact that I am a staff at one of the universities and that was why they gave me the opportunity to interview them. Reflexively, however, I observed that there were dynamics of unequal power relations in terms of a junior colleague interviewing senior colleagues. Since this was my first time interviewing senior colleagues in academia, I was too careful not to sound rude or cross boundaries. This however, constrained the extent to which I probed for further details. For example, I could not probe further the aspects of the data where participants repeatedly suggested that they had made it to become professors because they were brilliant and academically exceptional women. This was one challenge I encountered by relying so heavily on interviews for data collection. Within the Ghanaian normative cultural context where the research was conducted, it would have sounded disrespectful for a junior colleague to probe a more senior colleague on such issues. It would have sounded that I doubted their accounts. Although, I had no reason to doubt their accounts, it would have been more useful to crosscheck what being brilliant and exceptional meant. Also, it was obvious that they made it up the academic ladder because some of them had the support they needed from either their family members or their spouses. The power dynamics were also reflected in the way respondents continually made reference to the fact that I am quite new to the system and had very little experience with the system. Power relations and their influence on research has emerged as paramount in contemporary research, an assumption that I share with Lather (1991) that discourses happen in a shifting and dynamic social context in which the existence of multiple sets of power relations are inevitable. I was however keen to learn from them and their stories were important to my research. One of the female respondents

who spoke freely and without inhibitions went to the extent of sharing her personal story including the challenges she faced growing up as a Ghanaian woman.

All the interviews were held in the offices of the interviewees. Obviously, this was for convenience and also to ensure the privacy of the respondents, but more to that I believe due to the sensitive nature of the topic, the respondents were comfortable to speak in their own spaces where they were assured of privacy, confidentiality and unexpected surprises, even though a few surprises popped up. An example is, in two instances, the children of my participants had closed from school and were waiting for their mothers, so they could go home. Intermittently, the children will come into the office, demanding they go home. These were moments when the data was live, and I realized I was not alone in this work life balance situation. I was well received by the professors and their staff as they saw me as a colleague.

Some of the relationships I have built require that I have longer term contact with some participants where we can continue to discuss broader issues about gender. I have also become part of their networks and we continue to share experiences which have been helpful to my professional career outside of the research process.

The annual round table meetings held by focal gender persons from public universities in Ghana was also another useful networking avenue for me, particularly, it made it easy for me to access the participating universities. Reflecting on the various presentations I made at other conferences and workshops within the period of this study aided to enrich this work. Whenever I had to travel out of town to do the interviews, I went with my family as my husband drove and would keep the children

whilst I conducted the interviews. The gender roles shifted for as long as the interviews lasted. Moreover, I had programmed myself to finish this work before any childbirth.

The interview questions were open-ended so as not to suggest certain kinds of answer/s to respondents (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2012). Interviews were then transcribed, and cross checked with the interviewees to seek clarifications and confirmations as a true reflection of the interviews.

4.3.3. Selecting Research Participants

The target population for the study were all female professors in public universities in Ghana. The study adopted the purposive and convenience sampling to select the participating universities. According to Patton (1990), purposive sampling illustrates the characteristics of particular subgroups of interest. In this case three established universities were selected as the sample universities as they have (a) longer and more established institutional practices (b) as they tend to be larger institutions and they could offer a larger pool of professors to be selected for interview and (c) had established Gender Centres.

In this study I adopted the multi-stage sampling technique which combined snowball and purposive sampling in selecting the respondents. In each of the selected universities a sample of three (3) female academics who have attained the rank of Professor or Associate Professor were selected as key participants. According to Schutt (2009) the multi-stage sampling method is the use of more than one sampling method to select respondents from one category in the population of the study. Nine

(9) female professors were selected through the purposive and snowball sampling method. Snowball is a non-probability sampling technique which permits study subjects to suggest future subjects for recruitment from among their peers. According to Patton, (2002), this is a technique for locating information-rich key informants or critical cases.

I had a contact person in each of the universities who assisted me in reaching my first respondent through whom I subsequently located the other two (2). This was achieved through a conscious interpersonal relationship I developed with the first respondents. This contact was extended to the other two respondents which enabled me have access, develop my own relationship with each and elicit in-depth responses from them. This is quite a small number from which I selected the participants. So, I did not indicate the faculties or key identity markers such as comments related to their fields which could potentially compromise anonymity.

Qualitative (narrative) research depends on small samples that are purposively or purposefully selected (Cohen et al., 2011). In international education and development, it is argued that narrative approaches are necessary to contextualise and understand experiences of participants (Stephens, 2014c). Qualitative research employs purposeful sampling (Stephens, 2009). As Patton (1990) contributed, “the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus, the term purposeful sampling” (p. 169). The focus of the study was in exploring the stories of

successful women. The intention was to highlight their experiences and to observe patterns in their career progression and struggles for promotion within the Higher Education sector.

4.3.4 Background of the participants

All interviewees were female professors selected from public universities in Ghana. The following paragraphs present summaries of the participants' backgrounds, drawing on the interview data. Although essentializing, the summaries are intended to provide a context for understanding their experiences as discussed in this and the following analysis chapter.

Participant #1: This Participant has been in the HE system for more than 30 years and has served in several academic and senior administrative positions in various Universities in Ghana. She grew up in an elite family. The parents were well educated, and she was pampered or as she puts it, "really very protected." The parents were committed to her education. The father supported her education. He bought her books and taught her to read. In her words "I can say I am very lucky. My mother was very anxious that I should get the best education ... she was insisting that I get a proper girl's education." She attended first class schools in Ghana and had a smooth education to tertiary level and up to the completing of her PhD. She began her academic career at a time when she had two children. Her career has been hampered by promotion problems, for example, on occasions it took more than two years for her papers to be assessed. She described herself as a feminist and has issues with the ways in which HEIs operate in Ghana.

Participant #2: This participant has been working in the HE system as an academic for more than 20 years. She served in various positions as academic counsellor, examination officer and Head of Department. She became a Dean and served on many Boards, Committees and Councils in the institution. She grew up with father and mother who did not benefit from formal education. She had seven siblings comprising five boys and two girls. In her words, she “learnt all the household chores, cooking to help ... mother” until she left for the secondary school. She treasured education very much. She had difficult entry to Secondary school as a re-sit candidate. She sat for the common entrance¹ twice. She passed but there was no money for her to go to the secondary school at that time. She had to serve as a Nanny in another village for some time “just to make few cedis to help my parents to send me to secondary school”. According to her she did that until she entered secondary school. The parents supported the boys’ education much more. She grew up with macho characteristics as she stated that “aggressiveness is also good, a little strong face in the family as a woman - as a girl so that you are not intimidated.” She holds a doctorate degree.

Participant #3: This participant has been in the HE system as an academic for more than 25 years. She had a successful academic career as a Head of Department, a Dean of Faculty and served on various committees and Boards including the Governing Council of one Public University in Ghana. She had a difficult childhood. The parents divorced when she was about four years old. She was nurtured and brought up by the mother who was committed to her initial education. The mother later became worried

¹Until 1990, students were required to pass a special examination called Common Entrance to gain admission into secondary school

about her desire for further academic pursuit. The mother believed that too much education could lead to conflicts with the spouse. She encountered and navigated this complexity during the time she decided to enroll for an MPhil programme. She now holds a doctorate degree. She has been married with four children.

Participant #4: This participant has been teaching in the HE system for nearly 30 years and has been a professor for 4 years. She is strongly connected to family life. Her parents were teachers. She pursued her doctoral studies overseas on Government of Ghana Scholarship. She served in different institutions and in positions related to HE management, governance and administration. Within the institution, she served in nearly all positions including Unit coordinator, Head of Department and Dean. She has been member of myriads of committees, Academic Board and other ad hoc committees within the University. She is married and had three children. She lives with the husband.

Participant #5: The participant has been teaching in the University for more than 20 years. She has been a professor for three years. Her upbringing was in a rural community. She lived with both parents who were farmers. Her mother was very desirous to see her pursue higher academic levels and therefore offered her all the necessary assistance. Her application to Associate Professor was initially refused on the basis of poor quality of her research papers. She has served on numerous committees in the university in an acting capacity. She has one child.

Participant #6: This participant is professor and has been teaching in the university for twenty-one years. She has served on many committees and boards. She grew up living with both parents. She was brought up in a typical Ghanaian village setting

where there was preference for the education of boys to the consistent disadvantage of girls. She was taught to perform roles traditionally assigned to girls' in Ghanaian society. In her words, she performed many roles as cook, waiter and fetching water. The girls in the family were not allowed to be in school. In her family, females cooked and served the food to the family. The females wash the dishes. They sweep the rooms; and they had no quality time to play. In her words, while females did this, "our brothers and male cousins will be in school learning or playing football with their colleagues." She studied in Ghana for her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. She has been a professor for nearly three years.

Participant #7: This participant holds a PhD and was a Dean of Faculty. She grew up in an urban environment living with both parents. Although her father was educated, her parents preferred male children. She was advised to learn how to become a good wife instead of engaging in academic pursuits. She left home to live with an auntie who supported her education. She served on various committees within the University and understands the inner workings of the Ghanaian higher education system. She is a mother of five.

Participant #8: This participant has been Professor for more than 10 years at the time of the research. She holds a PhD. She grew up in the countryside. She served on many promotions and appointment Boards, academic Board and the University Council on different occasions. She has served as head of department and mentored many young academics to senior levels. She was married and is a mother of five children. She gave birth to all the children while reading for the MPhil and the PhD degrees.

Participant #9: The participant has been Professor for over ten years. She has been Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Dean and a Head of Department at different times. She holds a PhD. She grew up living with both parents. The parents had no formal education. She had ten (10) siblings, comprising five boys and five girls. She is the only girl to attain higher education as the parents preferred to support boys benefit from formal education. Her education was not a priority for the family. However, she was supported because she was academically good. Also, she was inspired by her music teacher at school. This participant served in various positions within the University. She was married and had three children.

Despite their differences, there are several commonalities among the participants that provided a useful starting point to discussing their experiences and differential perspectives. In terms of academic progression, they were all professors. They all served on many different committees and found that taxing. They all tell stories of difficult academic life that did not depict any idea that they benefited from any kind of preferential promotion practices. Seven of the participants had doctorates while two held Master of Philosophy degrees. Out of the nine, one studied abroad while eight studied in Ghana. Four were married. All seemed to be very experienced with their years in professional practice in the university ranging between 20-30 years. Six suggested gender as a factor in lack of access to education. It is the accounts of these nine senior female academics that are the data analysed in this study.

4.3.5 Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were mainly qualitative data from interviews and the research diary. These were all analyzed in different ways and for different purposes. As Stephens (2014b) argued, I adopted an approach that paid less attention to the

analysis of holistic life histories and more to what the individual voices said about the problems and solutions for improving conditions for females in HE. So I focused more on generating what Stephens called “policy useful knowledge” (Stephens, 2014b: 28). Coffey and Atkinson (1997) explained, in analyzing narratives, care must be taken not to merely report what the study shows but also to construct accounts of what one encounters in the interview, text and interaction. The analysis of the narratives in this study was the task of interpretation involving continual reflection about the data (Baumann, 1997). Riessmann, (1993) emphasized that narrative analysis systematically interprets how people construct meaning around events and of themselves. As such, my analysis and interpretation of the narratives was done from the perspective of the participants - paying particular attention to the context, use of language and gestures.

Key substantive themes that cut across all the narratives have been presented and discussed based on the research questions. I also drew on the central elements of critical discourse analysis (van Dijk, 2001; Fairclough, 2006). Embodied in such analysis is making meaning of accounts and experiences in relation to the theoretical propositions underlying this research (Cohen et al., 2011). The analysis also accounted for personal discourses within the institution and an acknowledgement of my researcher responsibilities (van Dijk, 2001) including half-involvements and half-detachments as an outsider and insider researcher. In addition to the interviews conducted, key official documents regulating institutional practices, norms and mobility were also referenced.

The Education Council, and the Universities’ Human Resource Departments, enabled me to collect data on the various statistics on women as faculty and their progression.

I also analyzed the unified conditions of service for public universities in Ghana. Additionally, the Gender Centers in the three universities provided me copies of their newsletters which contained information about gender issues and faculty data, all useful to my research. According to Patton (2002), “learning to use, study and understand documents and files” as part of the research process is paramount in the “repertoire of skills needed for qualitative inquiry” (p.295).

The data collected were subjected to analytical induction as the design involved speaking to people and contextualizing their experiences (Katz, 2001; Cohen et al., 2011). This is a research logic used to organize the presentation of research findings through the progressive redefinition of the phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2011). In using this logic, I drew from the data, a specification of the individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for the explanation of the experiences of the senior female academics. Initially, individual cases were inspected to locate common factors and provisional explanations. Then, the various cases were examined for contradictions and common themes. This was used to formulate the explanation of the phenomenon (academic progression experiences) of the senior female academics and the explanatory conditions. The methodological value in employing analytical induction strategy was that during each interview encounter, I sought new varieties of data in order to, as Katz (2001:480) puts it, “force revisions that will make the analysis valid when applied to an increasingly diverse range of cases” in the various study universities.

In the process of the analytical induction, I constantly reflected on my interactions and the dialogue with participants. Given the complexity and naturalness of the data, I depended on my research diary to recollect key outcomes from my interviews. My

reflection on the notes in my research diary was helpful in identifying gaps in the data. These gaps informed my iterations and follow up interviews with the participants. Those reflections also led me to further interrogate HE policy texts in order to better understand why things were happening in a particular way. So, my research diary was very helpful in (re)thinking through the data, searching for gaps and providing feedback to my research participants (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2014). Also, the research diary was useful in developing a fuller understanding of what was happening within the research context and how that is helpful to the analyses.

During the analyses process, I familiarised myself with the data. The familiarisation involved transcribing the audio recordings, reading through the text and my research diary. The analysis happened as an iterative process, starting from data collection until the final text of this thesis was constructed. The first stage of the analysis started during data collection. At this stage, various accounts were crosschecked through follow up interviews to fill gaps in the data collected. Typically, during each interview session, I sought new insights from the participants in order to clarify or crosscheck data and to revise or further understand how different participants experienced and made sense of their career progression in the various study universities. This was done until I felt I have achieved saturation - where I thought I had enough data to construct an account of the experiences of the senior female academics in Ghanaian public universities.

At the second stage of the analysis, individual data sets from the various participants were inspected (thoroughly read several times). This was done to locate key comments and factors that provided provisional explanations for the individual accounts of their academic progression experiences. This helped me to highlight key

comments made by the various senior female academics concerning their academic progression experiences. For example, appendix 3 is an extract from one of the interviews. In the extract, key comments were marked and highlighted in the various individual cases. I highlighted various phrases in different colours and assigned each one a code. This enabled me to sort out the information transcript into manageable and meaningful transcript segment (Creswell, 2012). Each highlighted phrase expresses an idea in the full text and relevant to the subject of the study. In these comments, key words were then identified. For example in the highlighted extract, keywords such as “privileges for males and females”, “educational opportunity”, “family upbringing”, “siblings”, “primary school”, offered explanatory comments on the early childhood experiences and educational opportunities of the participants. So these keywords were grouped under the code “early schooling/gender issues”. In another example, keywords such as, “roles as wives”, “mothers” “work”, “researching”, “academic work”, “intellectual work” were also grouped under a code “Adult life and career”. The next stage is where I then moved on to group the data based on themes developed from the research questions and emerging themes from the inspection of the individual cases (see appendix 4). In so doing, I looked across the data from the various cases to identify contradictions and common themes that could be used to formulate organized explanations based on the key substantive themes that cut across all the narratives of the academic progression experiences of the senior female academics involved in the research. This was followed by the mapping of patterns that emerged from the accounts of the participants.

I went through all the transcripts to highlight all the typical comments and sentences that matched each code. This stage of the analysis was helpful in the construction of

emerging themes which involved putting all the codes under various themes. This is illustrated in appendix 4. At this stage, I identified patterns and common values among the codes created, to develop potential themes that are relevant to the research questions. So for example, under research question one, I looked out for emerging themes that related to the “Under representation of women”. Such themes included “Early School and Home”, “Adult life”, and “Career challenges”. These themes were then drawn on to highlight the tensions around the gender roles of the female participants in their early life at home and in school.

The final stage was focused on the construction of “policy useful knowledge” (Stephens, 2014b: 28). I went beyond merely reporting patterns in the data. I was interested in what the study shows and the implications of the accounts in the context of the policy practices in the institutions and the Ghanaian higher education context in general. I tried to situate and connect the analysis of the narratives to the post-colonial and the normative socio-cultural context in Ghana. I tried to understand how the accounts speak back to the ways in which they systematically interpret and construct meaning around the everyday policy practices within their institutions, life histories, events and the gendered socio-cultural context in Ghana. This helped to construct the text as a more organised account of the senior female academics as a group, using the individual accounts to highlight persisting gender tensions and misogyny.

My choice to construct a more high-level account had value. It enabled me to draw on discourses which, as Foucault (1967) points out, indicate how people’s subjectivities are regulated and defined within institutional history and broader socio-cultural context. In this way my analysis revealed the ways that members become unequally positioned as “power is employed and exercised” (Foucault, 1967) through discourse

in public universities in Ghana. The analyses congealed around various themes and common experiences along the research questions. It involved a thick description of the formal university descriptions and processes so as to provide rich contextual data about promotion. Female academics' experiences and perspectives on appointment and promotions criteria were also highlighted and discussed. Personal background, domestic conditions and key barriers - structural / institutional masculinities that have implications for women's career progression were discussed. Again, this highlighted how female academics account for the under representation of women in HE in Ghana; the key challenges in being appointed and promoted in HE in Ghana and the ways in which universities respond to the challenges on the academic progression of females.

4.4. Ethical Issues

Stephens (2014b) argues that by acting ethically and mindfully, it is possible and necessary to create liminal spaces in which advances in research can be deliberated and put to good use by all researchers working on education and development in Africa. Therefore, ethics in this research was not just a commitment to my research participants. It was to enhance the professional and analytical utility, and the development externalities of the results. I conducted this research with the awareness that research involving human subjects is often obstructive, representing an intrusion into the life world of the participants (Creswell, 2009). As such, the set of ethical guidelines and procedures for respecting and engaging with participants as 'equal' partners was observed. I spent time to familiarize myself with tutorials to enhance my capacity in conducting interviews.

In advance of conducting the interviews ethical approval was sought from the University of Sussex Ethical Approval Board for ethical clearance. Interviewees were then contacted and provided with appropriate information about the study and the interview in conformity with the ethical requirements.

After conducting all the interviews, the recorded interviews were transcribed, and cross checked with the interviewees to seek clarifications and confirmations as to the transcription being a true reflection of the interview. This was in accordance with Patton's (2002) advice that for the sake of clarifications on ambiguities, it was important to do member checking after transcription.

Other ethical issues that were observed throughout the study were:

- a) Avoiding plagiarism: Works of people which were used to buttress analysis and in my literature were duly acknowledged both in-text and in reference.
- b) Seeking informed consent: In order not to violate the principle of informed consent in social research, letters of introduction were sent to the Human Resource Divisions of the selected universities to seek permission before the conduct. In these letters the purpose of the study was clearly stated to both the respondents and the authorities.
- c) Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity: The participants were assured that their identities would be concealed. In achieving this purpose, the data was presented with pseudonyms in the analysis so that it would be difficult to attribute voice to any of the participants. Individual respondents were assured of voluntary withdrawal from the study. Absolute

care was taken to observe my researcher responsibilities to anonymity and confidentiality. The participants were further assured that the tapes and notes would be destroyed as soon as the research thesis had been examined.

As stated earlier, there were signs of power dynamics which I had to bridge in the research relationship. My status as a researcher and a junior staff in terms of rank to the professors made me feel less powerful in our interactions. It was therefore important for me to act with responsibility and great sensitivity to the unequal power relations between me and the professors. This was to ensure that the participants did not keep information away from me or control the interviews (Asif, 2001). As Mander (2010) suggested, I remained non-judgemental, sensitive and accepting as possible. I tried to take no moral positions overtly or covertly which could worsen the power dynamics. For example, I tried in each interview to use an ice breaker to relax the environment.

4.4.1. Trustworthiness of the study

One of the researcher's most salient tasks is to ensure that the findings are trustworthy. Qualitative studies commonly utilize several techniques to ensure that the findings meet the aforementioned criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2003). I also used member checking to control personal biases.

Peer examination refers to feedback from peers, colleagues, or other academics during the duration of the research project (Shenton, 2004). According to Shenton, peer examination is crucial in a qualitative study because a researcher can use the feedback to challenge assumptions made by the investigator, whose closeness to the project frequently inhibits his or her ability of viewing it with real detachment. In this study,

the researcher received continuous feedback about the interpretations from the various supervisors of this thesis.

During the writing of the thesis, my supervisors challenged and scrutinized the assumptions of the researcher and made me to rethink the interpretations. I also received feedback from my colleagues who helped me crosscheck the translation of the interviews.

According to Maxwell (1996, pp. 89-90), one of the threats to validity in qualitative methodology is the interpretation: “The main threat to valid interpretation is imposing one’s own framework or meaning, rather than understanding the perspective of the people studied and the meaning they attach to their words and actions” . Some scholars use the term ‘researcher bias’ to refer to this type of threat (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). One of the ways to minimize researcher bias is member checking. Member checking is also known as participant feedback (Johnson, 1997). It refers to the process in which a researcher tests the accuracy of the data, analysis, themes, interpretations, and conclusions with the participants in the study.

During data collection and analysis, a researcher commonly comes across confounding or ambiguous data. In such situations, it is vital for the researcher to ask for more clarification and verification from the participants in order to minimize possible errors in the interview and interpretation. Researchers are not value-free, and to some extent, researchers bring their own values and beliefs to their research either consciously or subconsciously. In addition to preventing misinterpretation, member checking is vital to ensure that a researcher’s personal bias does not distort the

findings. In this study, I sent emails and made phone calls to the participants to ask for further clarification. The participants were comfortable with the description and findings of the study. This took place after I finished transcribing and translating the interviews.

According to Dwyer and Buckle (2009), the discussion of insider-outsider in any qualitative study is imperative because a researcher “plays a direct role in both data collection and analysis”. A researcher is an insider when she shares commonalities with her participants. On the contrary, a researcher can be an outsider when she does not belong to the group under study. Both membership roles have their advantages and drawbacks. Being a member of the group under study increases the possibility of understanding the culture of the group and the ability to communicate naturally (Breen, 2007). As an outsider, a researcher can reduce her subjectivity for the reason that she does not share similar backgrounds with the participants. Nonetheless, she might face some challenges in getting accepted and establishing rapport with the group under investigation.

In this study, I had no experience in relation to female lecturers and as such, could not be biased in this situation. I saw myself as an outsider in this study because I am not a female academic although I work as an administrator within the Ghanaian HEI's. However, I am aware that being female, being an administrator in charge of gender and my attachment to gender issues are important aspects of my identity that shaped my engagement with the participants and the data. In taking up this study, I am overtly privileging female issues and challenging the processes of their marginalization within Ghanaian HEI's. So, I entered the research from an

emancipatory perspective with the aim of telling the stories and struggles of senior female academics within Ghanaian public universities.

CHAPTER FIVE

ACCOUNTS OF FEMALE UNDER-REPRESENTATION IN GHANAIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter begins my analysis of the participants' accounts focusing on their views on factors that contribute to the under-representation of female academics in institutions of higher education. Research and debates on this issue tend to focus on the problematics of higher educational institutions, their institutional process and an implicit deficit view of women in comparison to male academics (Morley et al, 2010). However, the women respondents in this research all referred to their early childhood and family conditions as important to understanding the under representation of senior female academics. The discussions in this chapter are based on the participants' accounts of their experiences in two major social institutions, the family and education. In this chapter, I present my analysis of the respondents' accounts in three sections. In the first section, I focus on early home and school life to examine the ways that family structures and practices position females and produced gender differences. It highlights tensions for them as they grew up amongst brothers and male cousins with whom they competed for time, education, opportunities and other resources. Through this exploration of the early childhood experiences of the participants, I trace the ways that gender inequality is constructed around heteronormative gender positioning in the home. As illustrated earlier in Chapter Two, in a typical Ghanaian family, gender stereotypes operate in ways in which girls and boys reproduce the domestic division of labour which tends to constrain girls to the home and family. Western style education, however, introduced opportunities for girls to participate in formal education and move beyond the more restrictive sphere

of the family and home. These were key elements in the respondents' experiences and explanations.

In the second section, I trace the operation of gender norms and positioning through senior female academic's accounts of their adult female status as mothers, wives, unmarried women and as career academics. This provided the space for the respondents to reflect on how they navigated the gender tensions in early life and whether they continue to face these in their careers (Best, 1996: 101-2). In the third section, I turn to explore historically, the gendered nature of educational inequality, its foundation in colonial times in Ghana and its relevance to female under-representation in HEIs.

5.2 Early School and Home

In this section, the discussion is focused on the gender inequalities in the early life experiences of the female professors both at home and in school. As described in other research, gender and social stratification are central influences on child upbringing and schooling in the Ghanaian context (Nukunya, 2009; Dunne & Adzahlie-Mensah, 2016). Gender differentiation in childhood occurs within the institutions of the family and school. For girls, the equalizing promises of education are in tension with the gender positioning in cultural expectations in the home. In Ghana, girls as they grow up are expected to perform household chores at the same time as going to school. This dual role is not expected from young men (Nukunya, 2009). Discussions with the participants highlight these tensions and gender inequalities in their early life experiences. The following were typical examples;

I grew up in a village... and a typical village girl growing up among [male] siblings. We followed our parents to the farm ...you will go to school in the

morning, you will come back and eat and do some household chores and go back to school in the afternoon... sometime we will go to the farm to bring firewood to the house and go back to school in the afternoon. ... While the boys relax, the girl has to cook, sweep and clean dishes as additional responsibilities (Participant #2)

You are aware that girls in traditional Ghanaian society performed many roles as cooks, waiters and fetching water. We were not allowed to be in school. We cooked and served the food to the family. We wash the dishes. We sweep the rooms. We had no quality time to play. Whilst we did this, our brothers and male cousins will be in school learning or playing football with their colleagues. (Participant # 6)

The participants, #2 and #6 are highlighting the gender differentiations in the home. They point to the gender inequalities of these early experiences in which females work while boys go to school or play. This differential treatment by gender is more acute in situations where parents prefer to send their sons to school rather than their daughters/females (Twumasi, 1986; Nukunya, 2009). These differential practices illustrate social relations and practices in which females are subordinate to males. Importantly here, it marks the introduction of academic disadvantage experienced by females arising from the heteronormative gender assumptions within the family. This effectively (re-) produces the advantage of males. This male preference in educational access provides gender pathways that allow males to progress academically. Females on the other hand are persistently required to fulfill domestic duties which are constraining factors to academic progress and may prompt drop out (Dunne & Ananga, 2013).

The gender differentiations in educational access and its impacts on academic progress and performance were mentioned variously by the participants. The gender patterns are highlighted by Participant #7 as she reflects on her school experiences:

In our days, most parents did not enrol girls in school. Those enrolled were withdrawn by parents at various stages ... I had quite a brilliant academic

pursuit at that time as a girl growing up... that is how I managed to keep up the educational focus till this time. ... when I cast my mind back we were about 30 students or so and only seven of us were girls in the class. ... We [the girls] competed hard with the boys... there was one girl whose name I have forgotten, that rubbed shoulders with me very much academically... if she was second I will be third, if she was first I will be second, and then one boy was competing with us. I will say academic brilliance prevented my parents from getting me out of school. (Participant #7)

From the participants' perspectives, academic brilliance was a factor determining whether girls remained in school or are withdrawn. There is a sense in the above extract that girls who were in school must 'prove' themselves. In addition, girls must appear to be gifted, intelligent and demonstrate academic excellence. This was regarded as significant to girls remaining in school in a context in which family decision making processes consistently privileges education of boys to the disadvantage of the education of girls. As Participant #7 suggests, being academically brilliant was necessary to prevent parents from withdrawing a girl child from school. The need to prove academic excellence further reinvigorates the cultural norm which serves as a gendered barrier to equitable access in education (Apusigah, 2006; Morley et al, 2006). The participants' accounts illustrate the importance of the early family life of girls to the academic and career progression of senior female academics. Conversely, under-representation of females in education is connected with practices of withdrawing girls from school.

The role of the family in the perpetuation of gender differentiation is a critical index in this study. In the home, most African women and men tend to socialize their female children into stereotypical gender roles (Chabaya et al., 2009) and the study participants constructed their early life experiences within this discourse. The words of participants #8 and #5 provide accounts of the way their family perceived girls education;

Our mothers were taught that the woman must grow up to be a quality wife. They defined this quality to mean an obedient woman who diligently serves the husband from bed and the kitchen. It did not include educational attainment. This was the mentality with which we were brought up as girls and women. ... It affected the education of many girls. ... They were denied education, withdrawn from education or dropped out because there is a perception that the woman's place is in the kitchen, not in school, not the offices. They used these ideas to train us. (Participant #8)

We knew from our community life that they say no matter how much education a woman receives, she ends up as a wife. ... This view has been used to deny education to many girls. Look at all those girls hawking on the streets of Accra. They should have been in school. Some are even hawking or working as porters to get resources that they would use to buy item in preparation for marriage ... so you end up having more boys than girls progressing in education. (Participant #5)

There are many issues that can be highlighted. The words of Participant #8 endorse the heteronormative gender assumption within the family which expects girls to be subservient to boys as obedient serving wives. In her account (participant #8), she describes her mother's perspective on the future life of girls in which she was rather negative about her education and all girls. Alongside this, there is reference to a wider community culture in which girls' education was not considered useful and an active socialization process that promoted male leadership and responsibility.

While the above perspectives represent the dominant experience of the participants, some had more affirming experiences in their childhoods. Some parents, for example, did not accept that females were good only at domestic tasks. Positive experiences and the support of the mother were described by participants #6 and #4.

My mother gave me a lot of freedom to do what I liked. One thing about her ... she loved education. Because I loved education, she didn't treat me as her daughter. We were like sisters, and we confided in each other. My mum is great" She inspired me to aspire beyond the limitations society places on me. Anytime I am challenged by any limitations, I am motivated by her words (Participant # 6).

Mum was the boss in the family, and her words were orders. She had a very strong personality. She saw education as the only way to our good future. Although she was illiterate, she decided that we should have good education so we wouldn't end up like her. (Participant # 4).

The responses challenge the ideas of Chabaya et al, (2009) who assert that boys and girls right from childhood are socialized into stereotypical gender roles; and girls grow with these perceptions and learn to fit neatly into these stereotypes (Chabaya et al., 2009). Contrary to views that African women socialize their female children into female socially constructed gender roles, the participants constructed their early life experience and access to education within a discourse that presented their mothers as their inspiration. Perhaps, the mothers being conscious of their own lack of proper education had projected their hopes onto their daughters and therefore allowed them that much freedom and encouraged them to study hard.

The extracts show how, despite the wider cultural tendency towards heteronormative subordination of females and the consequent barriers to educational success for girls, families and mothers in particular can be a source of support and inspiration for young females. Nevertheless, the disadvantages experienced by the senior female academics in their childhood have been highlighted by them as significant to female under-representation in HEI.

5.3. Adult life

This section continues to explore gender inequalities focusing on the later life experiences of the female professors and in particular the tensions between their traditional cultural gender positioning and their careers as women. Here, I specifically focus on the participants experiences after their university education. An overarching

finding of the study points to the sustained tensions experienced by the participants between cultural expectations around gender and the opportunities offered by education. The tensions are related to the participants positioning as mature females, variously as married women and/or mothers set against their careers. The cultural expectations of women who are married and /or have children, produces particular tensions for working women and their career roles. The strongly held view that getting married and having children is the main focus of life for all women reinvigorates tensions for those women who want to keep and progress their careers.

In material terms, the academic participants who were also mothers had to juggle their domestic role and their career. The multiple roles of females as mothers and wives impacted on their career progression. As I suggested earlier, the difficulty that senior female academics experience in navigating both family and academic work, is a critical index in the under-representation of females. The constraining effects of serving two 'greedy institutions' have been elaborated in other scholarly works (Coser, 1974) and it features prominently in the participants' accounts of the ways they had to navigate their undivided loyalty to their family (husband and children) and their commitment to pursue careers in academia.

I am expected to write and research, present papers at conferences in order to be promoted, all these require sacrifices beyond the working hours; it is difficult for me to forge ahead because I am confronted with the challenge of being a mother, a wife and a career woman. I am expected to manage my academic life and family life (Participant #8)

My role as a mother has certainly cost me a lot, when it comes to the job. (Participant #7)

It hasn't been easy. I could have even climb the academic ladder earlier than I could have attained the professorial level ahead of this, but this family problem where will you be going- traveling forth and back, always make sure there is food at home... as it is now I am still driving between... and ... all weekends and it's not easy to combine it with my heavy schedule ... but as a woman you only have to err... hmm pretend like there is nothing wrong. (Participant #3)

The tensions between professional and domestic demands are clearly illustrated by the participants above. All the three participants had young children when they began their careers. They were clearly torn as on the one hand, they wished they had been able to spend more time with their children and on the other hand, academic responsibilities required them to spend more time at work. Ultimately, all three participants indicated they had to resist the all-consuming demands of the domestic sphere in order to promote the careers they have worked so hard to achieve. These tensions are delineated in other studies that have identified family responsibilities as a factor that impact negatively on female career advancement within an academic context (White, 2003; Thanacoody, Bartram, Barker, & Jacobs, 2006).

At home, as explained by participant #3, she is a mother and a wife in charge of all domestic duties, combining this with the demands of her career means that she commutes every weekend between two Regions, a journey of about 90 km on bad roads in order to meet the family needs. Participant #3 claims that but for these demands, it would be possible for women to rise faster up the academic ladder, as they could concentrate all efforts on building their careers. However, she also points to women's readiness to sacrifice everything for the wellbeing of their families even if means taking risks as she does by driving a considerable distance all alone in order to meet family needs. This illustrates norms of the patriarchal society in which most

Ghanaian women find themselves and the expectation that women have to adjust their lives to cope with conflicting employment and family roles (Nukunya, 2009).

The discussions with participants #3, #7 and #8 substantiate the proposition that the timing of their family and career cycles is a key issue for women (Acker 1994). Caring for young children is a demanding task that draws upon a mother's time, energy and emotions. The combination of family and career suggests interminable stress, conflict of interests and constant tension. The timing of child birth is another important issue for the female academics. However, even if a female postpones having children until her higher education is complete, the arrival of young children will still coincide with the age and career stage when she is expected to make an impact on the academic field. It is in this regard that Currie, Thiele and Lewis (2002) assert that it is easier to get along with one's career when the children are older rather than having to juggle the career while rearing younger children. This point was also been made by Participant #2,

"If you are fortunate and you are like me and your children are older, then your husband can fix dinner and wait for you, so you walk home to a warm dinner and" ... (Participant 2).

Nevertheless, the social expectations of women as mothers together with their career demands meant that as participants #3, #7 and #8 explained *'they had to make extra efforts to balance those multiple roles'*. They agreed, however, that family well-being would always be their priority. In contrast, an unmarried participant describes the space she has to focus on her career while at the same time acknowledging the societal expectations on married female academics:

Without a family, I have more time for work and research. I can work until late in the office. There is always a trade-off. If I were married, I might not have gone this far ... The way I worked, I wouldn't have time to look after a family ... a family would be in my way. Oh yes, I enjoy being single. My colleagues ask me for advice when they have personal problems. Sometimes, I can help because my values are different. (Participant # 4)

This comment implies that unmarried academics have some level of independence and did not need to seek 'permission' from a spouse as is the usual case of the married participants (see comments made by Participant #6). While it was not the focus in this study, the differences highlighted by Participant #4 raise interesting issues for further comparative explorations of the career progression of married and unmarried senior academics and to what extent marriage constrains career progression for women.

The research participant accounts strongly suggest that their family situations placed limitations on females' work in ways that subtly and overtly affect their career progression. This was emphasized in terms of research and publication. The point is that the latencies in the family situation have serious consequences for female under-representation within HEIs and subsequently for their career progression. A major challenge was the task of combining motherhood with academic life. The participants elaborated the ways that their academic career was nested with motherhood and other domestic responsibilities. Participant #3 illustrated this succinctly.

The participants' stories also illustrate the need to constantly negotiate their position as wives and /or mothers at different points in the careers. These extracts show the ways that gender heteronormative assumptions of women interact with their career aspirations and the ways they make extensive efforts to navigate them.

It was a challenge for me to enroll on a fulltime PhD programme, particularly in a University outside of ... Ghana. I cannot leave my family behind and I

don't think my husband will be too happy about such a decision. (Participant #6)

It was quite a challenge because my husband was also working at ..., he was also a teacher, a music teacher ... it was difficult for him to come here and stay with me in ... and I too cannot leave my post here to go and join him, so sometimes we alternate, he comes here and I go there but in the long run I happen to travel more. I will always go to (Participant #9)

...This is a German colleague. she asked me, how did you get your husband to manage and support you and I said you have to negotiate before the marriage, (Participant #1)

The comments above, point to the tensions around expected gender and cultural expectations of the participants as females, wives and their careers. Hence, they have to make choices to be able to manage these tensions. Acquiring a PhD is critical and a requirement for career progression of faculty members in HEI, participant #6, is ready to sacrifice that in the interest of her marriage, family and husband, although family responsibilities are not the sole preserve of women. In that consistency, both the real and the opportunity cost of females' commitment to pursue academic career progression was the neglect of some family responsibilities.

So far in this chapter, I have explored the importance of early childhood experiences and post-university adult experiences of successful female academics. I have highlighted the ways that gender inequalities and heteronormative assumptions are reproduced in families and society and how these have impacts on the educational and career development opportunities of female academics in Ghana. In the final section of this chapter, I draw the spotlight on how cultural norms and colonial legacies have influenced formal education for females in Ghana and the constraining effects of such tensions.

5.4 Institutional Colonialism

This section continues the analysis focusing on the cultural norms and practices within education that promote under representation of females in Ghanaian HEI. It is rooted in the understanding of how education in Ghana is located within colonial codes of logic that marginalized opportunities for females (Oyewumi, 1997; Dunne & Adzahlie -Mensah, 2016). Within that thinking, the tensions between cultural norms of gender inequality and career progression still pertains even when women have been able to navigate their way into institutions of higher education. This concurs with the inequalities that have pervaded access to higher education in Ghana (see Sections 2.4 and 5). Therefore, the participants can be considered to be relatively privileged. However, becoming a senior female academic is not a finished business; rather it opens another chapter of struggle around heteronormative gender assumptions and institutional cultures and practices. In this section, I explore how the gender inequality in formal educational institutions may be traced back to the foundations of education in Ghana during colonial times. Analyses of education in Africa often refer to the colonial legacies, insisting that the influence of colonialism in education has “proved impervious to change” (Harber, 2004:71). Several works highlight how colonial vestiges continue to define educational experiences (Dunne & Adzahlie-Mensah, 2016; Adzahlie-Mensah, 2014; Adjei, 2007; Quartey, 2007; Dei, 2004). This includes the institutional gender regime that continues to operate in educational institutions.

Two perspectives shared by the participants highlighted how higher education institutions have become necessarily colonizing for women.

One thing you must know is that the kind of formal education started in Africa was not to be granted to females. The history of education in Ghana taught us that males were those who attended school. Girls learnt needle work and

home science. Ours is not further education to higher levels. It was to prepare us to become good cooks etc. No wonder institutions of higher education are unwelcoming of females (Participant #5)

... You know that colonial thinking permeates our social thinking even in some communities today. We were victims in those days and victims today. Many females never had the opportunity nor the support to enroll. It is a legacy or what I may call product or part of the absences of colonialism, not cultural, I will argue. (Participant #8)

Here, the participants are reflecting the theorizations of post-colonial feminists such as Ifi Amadiume (2006) and Apusigah (2008). They have pointed to the ways that European colonization in Africa produced gendered spaces; and how the institutions of formal education created inequity. In their views, the under-representation of females in universities was occasioned by the ways in which colonialism introduced schooling by drawing lines of division between males and females and also informed the historical development of higher education in Ghana, within the literature reviewed in Chapter two (Mama, 2003; Adams, 2006). This argument finds support in much of the literature on education in ex-colonies. More specifically, previous research in Ghana highlighted the subordination of females in schools and other educational institutions (Dunne and Adzahlie-Mensah, 2016; Adzahlie-Mensah, 2014; Dunne et al., 2005; Avotri et al., 2000; Colclough et al., 2000). This subordination of females has been consistently documented in the 20th century in the works of Pfann, (1965), Debrunner, (1967), Graham (1971) and McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, (1975).

Many of my participants' comments were informative concerning the ways in which cultural norms contributed to gender disparities and access that affected the representation of females. Three typical perspectives were:

Although undocumented, there are cases where Universities refused to offer appointment to a young prospective female lecturer because she was pregnant at the time of the interview and there are other such examples. (Participant #2)

There is an accepted perception on campus that pregnancy is no disease and therefore women in such state require no special attention and consideration (Participant #5)

They will always make sure there is a male Head Of Department (HOD).” But, the females will be running the errands for them” I will be doing the paper work, be doing the paper work in the office, I will be calling the students for a meeting and recording things and keeping the records but not as... not in control as H.O.D. That actually didn't deter me though cos I was (Participant #1)

The concerns expressed by participants #2, #5 and #1 highlight that the current challenge women face in HE is something that has been intrinsic to Western knowledge and the assumptions that informed their production within higher education institutions. Also, it highlights the ways that HEI's in Ghana continue to reflect male-dominated, patriarchal practices that have their origins in their development within colonial times. The above raises several gendered practices, in which males easily invoked being female to exclude women from the institution, or relegate them to subordinate, often administrative positions. These practices speak to the constraining effects of femaleness within some of the literature (Altbach, 2004; Luke, 2002; Roces & Edwards, 2000). They highlight how traditions of practice within the HEI's introduced gender ideologies, which greatly restrict access and participation for women (Jayaweera, 1997; Luke, 2002). The consistent flattening of the social construction of gender to an essentialised biological difference within HEIs raises fundamental questions about the extent to which HEI's commitments to improve gender equity remain at the level of rhetoric and the institutional will to make shifts in their entrenched patriarchal systems (Luke, 2000).

The observations of Participant #3 confirm these tensions, and suggest that despite gender equality policies, institutional processes remain highly gendered:

as a woman you come into academia, you expect that when I get there am getting all the support, but unfortunately the structure or the structures means... but it isn't, it isn't that encouraging, it is not at all, we want to get there but we are not getting there. I think the structures should be welcoming anytime to women,... they qualify,... when they can do the job, they shouldn't just brush women aside, that is when they always make the mistake....
(Participant # 3)

Unwritten employment codes of gendered practice appear to have been sustained for a long while. In universities in Ghana these practices find mostly females in almost every office working as the secretary and / or being assigned other presumed 'female roles' such as ushering and sometimes serving refreshments at meetings. The University of Education, Winneba Basic Statistics for 2013/14 shows 157 females as typists and secretaries compared to just 67 males as either secretaries or junior clerical staff. Expressing her views on how the colonial vestiges has influenced the positioning of women in HEI, participant #2 said,

....the general attitude of employment in Ghana as gendered, sees more females doing more within a perceived women's role in the formal employment sectors.... careers that exist in secretarial duties are mostly availed to females. A few males in Ghana will be seen grossly involved in employment as secretaries. (Participant #2)

A reciprocal gendered patterning was observed at the higher echelons of educational institutions. This is observed by participant # 5 who explains it in historical terms:

For me the structures in the university are unwelcoming to females. Historically, HEIs have been the preserve of schooled men. It is not surprising that from 1948 till date only three females have had the opportunity to serve in the capacity of Vice Chancellors in all the 14 public HEI in Ghana.... Look around and see how many female drivers are on our campuses, how many

buildings and students' accommodations are even named after female figures. This tells you a lot. (Participant #5)

The effects of the colonial practice of defining schooling in ways that privilege maleness works into a system of statistical invisibility of females at all levels of education. By statistical invisibility, I mean fewer females in a male dominated higher education arena in Ghana. Participant #6 puts this more pointedly in stating that

Because we are not wanted, we are not too many...I was the only female among many males from training college and when I came to the university I was the only female among my colleagues. Now I am the only female Professor in this faculty. (Participant # 6)

Although the numbers of female professors have since increased in recent times, it is far from gender parity at the higher education level (Morley et al., 2010; MOE, 2016). The critical challenge posed by this invisibility is described by Acker (1994) that being the only female faculty in a department in a university makes one paradoxically both invisible and extra visible. I discussed this further in the next chapter (Chapter Six). The effects of a highly gendered institution are multiple and ultimately lead to the absence of senior female academics in the top academic positions. Their isolation brings with it associated disadvantages that include a lack of informal support systems that are important for inducting academics into the reward system, enhancing reputations and status and for career progress. The persistence of the colonial structures and processes in education have been highlighted by other researchers who described them as rather static institutions that remain entrenched in ex-colonies. Also, education ministry officials continue to be resistant to the suggestion of changes that appear to offer anything less rigidly defined (Harber, 2004; London, 2002;

Moletno et al., 2000). According to the research participants it is these conditions that frame the possibilities of their career progress.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have highlighted how senior female academics explain the under-representation of females in Ghanaian public universities. I have elaborated three main contributory concerns that include: 1) early school and home life; 2) adult life; and 3) institutional colonisation. These themes were drawn from my analysis of the data generated from the interviews to highlight the tensions around the gender roles of the female participants in their early life at home and in school. In the discussions, I examined how family practices and heteronormative gender stereotypes affected girls' educational progress. I discussed the constraining effects of how women serve both family and education and how that creates more tensions. One argument that can be made from the analysis in this chapter is that early family life of girls was important in the academic and career pursuits of senior female academics. Also, I argued that combining motherhood with academic life is challenging for females and militates against their career development and progression. I further argued that, academic career is incompatible with motherhood and/or other domestic responsibilities. In order to achieve equity and fair representation, the female must work extra hard to get to become a senior female academic, sometimes at the expense of her family. Finally, I discussed the influence of colonial gender codes in privileging male education and the ways the gendered practices within HEIs produced the reality of under-representation of females. I argued that the persistence of initial colonial frames of

logic, codes of school organization and curriculum organization created spaces of exclusion, marginalization and institutional subordination of females.

The work of this chapter has been to look at the antecedents to the under-representation of females in senior positions in HEIs. It was in an effort to recognize that early experiences and conditions for female in Ghana have a significant influence on their career progression well in advance of entering an HEI. In this way it broadens the focus for action to attend to this fundamental gender inequality. To complement this, in the next chapter, I focus on female career progression in Ghanaian HEI's as I continue to explore the unfavorable gender spaces encountered by the participants and the accounts of their influences on female career progression.

CHAPTER SIX

ACCOUNTING FOR FEMALE CAREER PROGRESSION IN GHANAIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

6.1. Introduction

In chapter 5, I discussed the home and school backgrounds of the participants and the ways they have navigated tensions around heteronormative gender positioning as they entered institutions of higher education. The discussions highlight the beginnings of the processes and conditions of female under representation with significant implications for their career progression. In this chapter, I continue to explore the status of the females as professors within their institutions and compare their different experiences. I focused on the identity tensions in how senior female academics who have reached the peak of their careers maintain their professorial status.

The analysis illustrates that becoming a senior female academic is a constant and on-going process and never a finished business, as I started to argue in Section 5.4. This chapter opens further avenues of struggle that relate to heteronormative gender assumptions within institutional practices and culture. In what follows, I explore how the female participants worked to maintain their professorial status and constantly navigated their position within these institutions.

The chapter presented here is concerned with two main themes. The first relates to the career life of the participants and the identity tensions inherent in the career progression of female academics. The second theme is concerned with the institutional support that female academics receive in their career progression. The discussions in this chapter are presented in three main sections. First, in section 6.1, I

explore the gender identity tensions that the female professors face within institutions of higher education. Second, in Section 6.2, I explore how senior female academics navigate misogyny on boards and committees on which they serve. This is followed by Section 6.3, where I discuss the institutional support available for female professors to enhance their career progression.

6.2. Being a Female Professor

In this section, the discussion is focused on the identity tensions in how senior female academics who have reached the peak of their careers maintain their professorial status. This acknowledges the achievement of becoming a professor but also attends to the identity work of maintaining status within a gendered educational institution. In this discussion, I also highlight how gender positioning within the Ghanaian culture is drawn into experiences with the HEI (Adusah-Karikari, 2008). A specific example is the way the metaphor of motherhood is directly used in forms of address, as participants #3 and #5 illustrate:

My students always call me mum. I always tell the students when they call me mum, please call me prof. Don't call me mum because I am not here in the position of a mother, I am here as a professional. (Participant #3)

I have a senior brother who is a professor, senior to me. My driver calls him Prof. but calls me mum. I told the driver to call me prof. because I also worked hard for my professorship (Participant #5)

The key issue is the identity tensions that female academics encounter in their career progression. Their biological presence (as mothers) overshadows their professional achievements within the institutions. Other female professors shared similar experiences even when they had no children. Clearly whether they have given birth or not, this feminine positioning in the private sphere is adopted in the public sphere of the workplace. As other researchers have suggested, professional females are expected

to demonstrate “motherly” attributes at the work environment, in ways that often undermine their professional authority (Adusah-Karikari, 2008). The research participants’ accounts similarly point to the ways that even when women get into HE institutions, the cultural assumptions used for naming and framing females is extremely strong. The female professors, even at the peak of their professions, are referred to as mothers even when they have no children. Here, we are reminded of the domestic division of labour and how it reinstates a gender hierarchy in which females are subordinated even if they are not mothers. It would appear that once women are present within these institutions, her domesticated feminine body is foregrounded, and she is addressed as ‘mother’ or ‘mum’. Having acquired higher levels of education and career progression within HEI, senior female academics expected that they would be recognized for their achievements in pursuing a career. However, the link between their gender and motherhood follows them into their professional life. This was evident in several of the interviews, for example Participants #9 and #4 further added:

Almost all my students call me mum; even the ones who are much older than me refer to me as mum. Usually when someone refers to me as mother, I would say I have a rank, address me appropriately as you would address a male of same rank (Participant #9)

Another respondent recounting her frustrations said,

I wonder why they don't call the male professors, “Dad” or “Daddy”. They are referred to as Doc. (Doctor) Prof. (Professor) and Sir but when you are a female your ‘Dr.’ title is subdued under you mother title. (Participant #4)

The participants voiced concerns about the lack of recognition for their professional achievements based on a dominating gender stereotyping of female academics as mothers. This stereotyping does not seem to go away even when they have become professors. From the data, I would argue that the constant reference to senior female

academics as mothers reiterates how traditional gender categories are transported or penetrate into their professional lives.

The sustained reference to female professors through a predominantly domestic positioning also implies their invisibility or non-acceptance within the academy (Phakeng, 2015). While this invisibility is attributed to race in South Africa and the USA (Hassim, 2009; Netshitenzhe, 2015) it seems to be located within traditional stereotypes about females in Ghana. When female academics are called “mum”, it is not a simple matter of celebrating motherhood, but rather it has the effect of marginalizing their achievements as senior female academics. Senior male academics do not experience this but are always appropriately acknowledged by their professional titles. The effect, I would argue, is the production of two categories of professors. One category, females recognized by their biology and another, males recognized for their professional career achievements. The rank of professor within the institution is associated with males which combines with a wider social gender stereotypes, to the extent that even when women have risen to occupy these ranks, it has become difficult for them to be accorded equal academic recognition. As participant #4 commented,

“It is time that female academics are accorded the necessary professional respect and recognition”.

The wider implication is that, for female academics, neither the efforts at career progression nor the accomplishment of professorial status have any influence on the traditional normative social positioning of women. The professorial status of males is highly recognized while it tends to be made invisible for females and is replaced by the ascribed familial and domestic status – ‘mum’. Above all, it celebrates the

domestic and the private lives of women. Indeed, as the participants describe, the expectations of female academics are that they do not abandon domestic duties in pursuing their career. This is made overt in the constant reference to the private /domestic sphere for senior women in ways that are not evident with respect to senior males. In a positive gloss, it might be suggested that female academics are celebrated for both domestic and public professional achievements. Participant #4 explains how these expectations impact on her:

As a professor, I am not expected to abandon African motherhood responsibilities of being a proper wife who takes care of the kitchen, performs chores and ensures the home is in order. At the same time, you serve on boards and committees with men who do not combine those roles. In addition, you work within a gendered institution that has its own expectations. How do you operate at the same level with them [men]? (Participant #4)

The difficulties and strains elaborated in the quote above by participant #4 illustrate significant additional demands on females. On the one hand, there are demands associated with notions of “woman’s place is in the kitchen” as delineated in the writings of African feminists including Filomena Steady, (1987), Ifi Amadiume, (1987), Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie, (1994), Amina Mama, (1995), Oyeronke Oyewùmi, (1997), Ayesha Imam, (1997), and A. Diallo, (2004). On the other, there are the demands of career progression in the HEI. The comment from Participant #4 underlines how the academic career progression of women challenges the history and contemporary understandings of femaleness in Africa.

The contemporary African female academic with her level of education and sophistication is still caught in the traditional perspective that firmly locates an African woman engaging in her traditional domestic duties within the private sphere.

As illustrated in the previous chapter, these duties haunt females who as they grow up are expected to perform household chores while going to school at the same time. This experience of combining education and domestic femininity was experienced by all respondents and through this they also experienced their effective subordination to males. In the workplace where they are outnumbered by males and work alongside them, they may be regarded as intruding into male spaces and a challenge to their historic domination. The respondents all described their learning as they navigated their academic position within the male dominated institution.

... when you become a professor, you realize one thing – human society is complicated and the same. In our traditional life, females suffered several disadvantages by performing many responsibilities including cleaning, bathing young ones and cooking. When you get to this level you notice that you had to do more to maintain your status as an academic. Becoming a professor is a battle but maintaining the status of a professor is a different game altogether ... It is a daily struggle (Participant # 5).

In traditional society, there was a preference for boys. In the academic world, there is a preference for male professors. As a woman, you were invited to those programmes that had to do with discussions of gender and status of girls/women or class tensions etc. Those are demeaning to women. We are usually not counted on the basis of our professional achievement. We are rather counted and respected in terms of our significant attainment as women (Participant # 4).

In recounting their experiences, the participants described the ways that as female professors they remain subordinate to male professors and face discrimination based on their biology or heteronormative gender assumptions leaving them feeling that they are not treated as full professors of equal status with males. Participant # 5 above describes a constant struggle with the discrimination of everyday cultural and institutional practice. Participant #9 below provides an illustrative scenario of the ways that the privileges afforded to boys within Ghanaian cultural practices are sustained in the adult life irrespective of the professional public achievements of senior female academics. It is apparent that the priority and privileges accorded to

male children is transferred into a priority for male professors. Similarly, the disadvantage suffered by female children is transferred into a disadvantage suffered by senior female academics.

...visiting home during Christmas, funerals and other occasions, I have often realised that with my current status as a professor, I still voluntarily run the house chores with my sisters for our now grown up brothers and cousins... we cook, serve the food, do dishes, wake up early to sweep the compound... our senior brother will always request for a bucket of water for his bath before retiring to bed from among his sisters... (Participant #9)

The experience narrated by the participant above underlines the ways that social systems prepare certain people, in this case females to internalize and perform certain roles based on a male-female binary and the naturalization of biological categories. Despite their recognition of the institutional challenges, the female professors situate their experiences in traditional gender stratification that constantly defined their career progress.

For the married participants, however, the scenario was more complex as despite the challenges of their working lives they described some positive aspects that challenged the traditional gender responsibilities within the domestic sphere:

...my husband has a relatively normal schedule. He goes home at five...he works as an accountant and his work is closer to home. He stays with the kids more often than I do (Participant #3)

Having a husband who recognises your interest and not selfish is very important. My husband is supportive of me from the very beginning of my career.. and without sacrificing his dignity as a husband. He encourages me to pursue my career aspirations to any level I can accomplish (Participant #4)

While the senior female academics described their career progression as confronting masculine “borders that are regularly challenged and transgressed” (Nayak & Kehily, 2008:119), they specifically ascribed their successes to the support received from their

husbands. As participants #3 and #4 above described, these challenges were also engaged with by their husbands, specifically the support of husbands in challenging cultural normalizations and social stratifications of the roles of males and females. The ascription of their success to the invaluable support received from their husbands epitomizes how the senior female academics have internalized cultural normalization and social stratifications of the roles of males and females.

The academic progression of women cannot be reduced simply to a consequence of the broader gender order identified in earlier studies of the Ghanaian school system (Avortri et al., 2000; Coclough et al., 2003; Dunne et al., 2010). The gender identity tensions that the senior female academics continually experience in university speak of their struggle between career progression and the performance of their traditional cultural gendered positioning as females in a Ghanaian context. They are continually expected to serve as ‘proper’ women and mothers which significantly undermine career progression. In turn, this has influenced the limited provision made in higher education institutions to challenge traditional gender assumptions that place limitations on female career progression.

Overall, it can be argued that the social perceptions of females do not change, significantly, in their career progression. Despite their academic progression, they are considered within the institution as mothers than as professors. They are assigned tasks on the basis of their being female. They serve on committees as a gender requirement of representing females instead of their position as professors. They are treated as ‘female professors’ not professors in equal terms as male professors. This

illustrates how higher education institutions are complicit in the regulation and (re)production of social gender identities (Parkes & Heslop, 2011; Parkes et al., 2013). The implication that can be deduced is that senior female academics expect re-definition of traditional social roles where family life is not situated within a straight jacket of who does what but in terms of who is available at a particular time to do what. Their concerns endorse the crucial role of partner's involvement in career pursuits. In the last extract the participant highly praised her husband's support and framed it as the most crucial element in her career progress and success. This is to be understood in the context of how a change in traditional mindsets can fundamentally transform and enhance situations of career progress and success.

The concerns about combining femaleness and professorship roles echoes how senior female academics have been navigating the complex interplay between tearing the boundaries of social contours as professors and being a 'proper' female within an African context. The interplay between the cultural expectations, career demands and institutional practices and cultures creates even more tension.

For me, therefore, becoming a senior female academic does not resolve issues but rather it opens other chapters of struggle. One of the struggles is that females continue to be defined by their being female despite their career achievements. This is not the same for males. These propositions explain why writers such as Nayak and Kehily (2008:98) view educational institutions "as sites where particular technologies for gender production are in occurrence". This is overtly established in the ways in which the participants discuss how they still yearn for the opportunity to be respected as

thought leaders in their professional fields even though this would inevitably challenge the structure and culture of the academy.

In that sense, the senior female academics see their career progression as an opportunity to challenge what Oyewumi describes as a legacy of colonialism in which “the emergence of women as an identifiable category, is defined by their anatomy and subordinated to men in all situations” (Oyewùní, 1997:123-125). For the study participants, their achievement was an opportunity to challenge traditional inferiorization and gender subordination of women in education and institutional development. However, this does not seem to go away. It seems that they continue to be defined by their anatomy; and their traditional roles as mothers follow them into the public spheres in HEIs even at the peak of their careers. Also, working with men, as a group of equals, is not the experience of a female, but seen as intrusion of male spaces. Thus, being a female academic becomes a new learning field where senior female academics constantly navigate the tensions and intersections between their femaleness and academic position as illustrated variously in the section above.

I continue in the next section to look at how the female participants navigate these challenges so as to survive male dominance within their institutions.

6.3. Surviving Institutional Misogyny

This section continues to explore the participants’ accounts of how they navigated / responded to the normalized practices within institutional life and their struggles to maintain their visibility as senior academics. The accounts of the participants indicated that the presence of senior female academics does not significantly challenge the ways in which the academic institution is organized. In particular, the

senior female academics have limited influence on institutional culture or the masculine gender order of their HEIs. Their accounts strongly suggest that the spaces for them to speak are very limited which required that they adopt specific strategies in order to get their voices heard. In their interviews, participants #4 and #9 indicated:

It's the men's world, it's their terrain, you know, it will take some time to overcome it"...I remember in some of the meetings even when I have raised my hands to make a point, I have to shout, aah I am here or is it because I am woman, call me. (Participant #4)

At meetings we are hardly heard. The females, already in the minority are silenced. You have to be strategic to be able to speak at meetings. I always make sure I find a seat at the front row to make my presence more visible to the chairperson. (Participant #9)

A further observation is made by participant #5 about the silencing of female professors:

if you are a female and you raise your hands and your voice, you may not be taken serious as the men, so you see most of them very quiet, we don't speak our minds (Participant#5)

Their central concern is that an unfavourable gender climate for female academics seems to inhabit HEIs. In their interviews, they describe a patriarchal culture that minimizes the presence of females. There are several dimensions of female invisibility within the institution. The first is the under representation, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 5. Their low numbers results in fewer females on university boards and committees. As they have described this produces a tendency for them to feel excluded, unheard and ignored. This creates a personal struggle for female academics on boards /committees as they strive to be heard or recognized.

The second dimension is related to their general under-representation in HEIs which means those female academics on boards are assumed to be representatives of women. Their contributions/opinions on issues are labelled as female opinions. This creates a

scenario where female academics feel that they are treated as representatives rather than expressing opinion as professors in their own rights. This illustrates a significant tension in their struggle for recognition as both professors as well as females. The constant struggle for recognition in a male world and patriarchal institution is illustrated by a participant who noted, *“I have to be aggressive and sometimes I raise my voice which is not necessary”*. She continued explaining one of her own strategies to be heard, commenting *“it is necessary to begin speaking at precisely the moment a previous speaker finishes and before another one begins”* (Participant #2). This is a clear demonstration of how hostile the academic environment is to female academics.

Another participant brings to light how female faculty have to struggle to cope with other demands placed on them by the more dominant male faculty. According to her claim, they sometimes had to struggle to secure taught courses that were in their domain of expertise whereas male colleagues would just ask and were given. This is evidenced in the response given by participant #1. She said:

Sometimes I even have to fight to get my subject area that I am very comfortable in teaching otherwise they will throw any course to me to teach.

The statement confirms the ideas by Adusah-Karikari (2008) who asserts that although women are received in academia as faculty, they are not welcome to share equally in academic spaces occupied by dominant males. This point is made by participant # 2 who stated that;

If you really want to survive this male dominated arena of higher education, you need to just be yourself. You need to be strategic at all times. Your personal quality has to sell. (Participant #2)

This lack of respect for senior female academics has another significant dimension. At the same time as females struggle to teach courses in their areas of expertise, they are often assigned to service functions in the university. These are highly gendered

positions which mimic a domestic division of labour in their homes. It was notable that females were not assigned to chair committees such as the Sports Committee, Development Committee, and Academic Committee. Rather they were assigned to chair the Hospitality Committee, Food Committee and Publicity Committee. Beyond the position of Chair, females tended to be elected as secretaries or as group treasurers rather than being nominated or elected as chair.

Participant #3 shared her experience:

For 4 consecutive years, I have served as the head of the hospitality committee; my previous 2 predecessors were all females. During official ceremonies, you observe that all my colleague professors are seated, and I must ensure that guests including colleague male professors are served. (Participant # 3)

A third dimension of the misogyny suffered by females is related to the demands placed on them by their limited numbers within the institutions. Participant #9 related that;

Currently, I serve on all statutory boards in this university. This is so because I am the only female full professor in active service. ...I am also a member on a number of adhoc committees. (Participant #9)

The key point is that their limited numbers as female professors, places them in a position where they end up serving on many boards and committees. This is so because women are supposed to be represented on these boards and committees to comply with the principle of gender equity in terms of representation. Participant #9 further explained;

We are limited and overworked on committees and Boards. We hardly get time to focus on other career demands. (Participant #9)

The effect is that the female professors become overloaded with work on the different boards/committees on which they serve to the extent that their effectiveness in other aspects of their work, like research, is severely compromised. While mostly excluded

from chairing, they end up serving on more committees than their male colleagues that leaves them with an increased and unequal workload and at the same time they have very little voice in these meetings as described above.

The skewed workload of female academics has several knock-on effects. First, they have difficulties in pursuing their profession as researchers that diminishes their potential to influence scholarship as thought leaders in their fields. Second, it restricts their opportunities to attend research conferences and engage publicly in their field of expertise. Thirdly, it makes it difficult for them to support and mentor junior colleagues in their career progression.

The descriptions of institutional misogyny provided by the respondents suggest the need for institutions of higher learning to intensify their efforts to address the gender inequities in their organization and operation. This resonates with the work of Sawyer (2004), who puts the responsibility for equality on HEIs, suggesting that they ensure that more senior female academics are employed which will reduce the burden on the few senior females in HEIs. In the last section of this chapter, I turn to discuss systems of support that are focused on improved career advancements of females.

6.4. Institutional Support

In this final section of the chapter, I discuss the views of the participants concerning the institutional support available to them in their career progression. As discussed in Chapter three, problems of female under-representation in Ghanaian HEIs have led to the adoption and implementation of several affirmative action interventions (Morley et al., 2010). Given the concerns discussed in the earlier sections, this section specifically explores senior female academics views on institutional support systems

and their value in terms of their career advancement. Such interventions include setting up Gender Centres, offering scholarships/sponsorship to women to pursue higher degrees, and mentorship programmes.

In terms of Gender Centres, the participants' statements included:

We have Gender office here. What they do is to organize gender awareness programmes. They have produced gender policy. The policy doesn't include any special treatment for female academics. ... It does talk about mentorship support to be made available to females. ... the question is who mentors who? A male to mentor the female or our under-represented selves? This is not clear. In sum, the policies and programmes emanating from the Gender office have not been helpful to our career progression in any way, if you ask me. (Participant #9)

Our Gender Centre has developed a gender policy that has nothing to do with supporting your career progression except for mentorship. ... Yes, they have sponsorships for few brilliant but needy first-degree science students. What of those in the Arts? We do not need females in the Arts or humanities? Anyway, there is no support for Masters or PhD ... (Participant #6)

Females here have no special provision from the gender center. Zero support for academic career progression of females. ... We got our professorship as a result of hard work and determination, our toils, our struggles. They organize programmes and we talk to female students about their career issues. It is good they have policies on gender discrimination, harassment etc. Yes, we attend gender seminar here and there. (Participant #1)

The statements by participants #9, #6 and #1 raises serious questions about the work, value and effectiveness of the Gender Centres even though these, like affirmative action policies, have been touted on the assumption that they would increase women's participation in the academy (Morley, 2010; Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza, 2012). The statements of the participants clearly claim that the Gender Centres did not offer any significant support to the career progression of senior female academics. As participant #6 describes, the Gender Centres focused more on supporting a few undergraduates offering sponsorship for natural and physical science programmes.

The following were some typical comments:

There are no sponsorships to support female academics. ... Severally, I went to the University's gender desk officer to seek information on scholarship and other funding assistance for female faculty ... I had to give up because there were none. (Participant # 8)

I went through rigorous selection process for funding to attend international conference. I eventually had to seek for loans on four occasions, so I could attend conferences. You can imagine the situation if it is difficult to get funding to attend conferences, then it is most difficult to secure funding for further studies (Participant #7)

In terms of mentoring, the participants made several observations. A participant stated that:

Initially, there were only three of us in the university. The university organized a series of mentoring programmes for us. We eventually gave up on the mentoring programme. It came as a serious challenge. The programme was done in groups which placed me under a male professor. His discipline was far off from mine. It was a big struggle. There were no mentors in my field of progression. (Participant #5)

Participants #1 and #7 shared their experiences:

Mentors are limited, and the hope is yourself. You need to work with your head, capabilities. You need to be committed to your goal. The publications must come in your name so that the respect is established. You must conduct landmark research. You need to show you have the capacity to operate without leaning on any form of affirmative action for support. (Participant#1)

We are here because we arrived here by our efforts. We published. We did the research. We had the academic record. (Participant #7)

Overall, the respondents claimed that institutional support to senior female academics was almost non-existent. The support that was available did not serve the career progression needs of senior female academics. The participants indicated that their quests to survive in the academy were not based on the institutional support but came through their will to navigate the challenges within a patriarchal institution. The central concern, which I take up in the following paragraphs, was to identify how female academics supported their own career progression.

When female academics were asked how they progressed, two of the participants highlighted collaborations as a major way of surviving within the academe.

Participants #6 and #1 commented:

I worked with willing colleagues. We collaborated on several issues – publications, sharing academic information etc. We took special interest in our academic work and would often search for electronic journals or articles, or some relevant research material related to our field of study. We have pre-meeting conferences where we share ideas on relevant issues so that effectiveness can be achieved. (Participant #6)

...you know, like I said, I had a more international sort of network and that helped because sometimes people invite you to contribute a chapter in a book or make a special contribution of sort to their research. This helped set your own research agenda. Of course, I was much clearer on what to do so that helped me enormously. (Participant #1)

The argument that can be put forward is that these female professors have found other support forms from colleagues that helps them to write papers and to network. They relied on complex institutional networks both academic and non-academic to navigate their way up the academic career ladder. They networked with men and women. The support allowed them to push for innovative policies and then provided the opportunity to break new ground as well as to take up new challenges. Examining the interactions between the support systems and the administrative schedules of the senior female academics, revealed that women needed to have a strong support system from those closest to them (Luke, 2000).

These comments affirm that the senior female academics invested in research and publication as important indices for their career progression (Luke, 2000; Gaskel et al., 2004; Ismail & Rasdi, 2006; Lam, 2006). A close look at the comment showed the participants are suggesting that these are focused on students, not academics, and on only some disciplines too. It seems that the question is not about extending

affirmative action policies to HE faculty. It is about ensuring that the appropriate systems are put in place to ensure favourable conditions exist to mitigate the systems of misogyny that imperil the career progression of females in HEIs.

Important questions can be asked. Do institutional affirmative action policies produce the desired intended results? How can Higher Education environments be constructed to respect femaleness and provide practical support in the career progression of female academics without imposing significant challenges which require mutations from femininities to masculinities? The answer to these questions can be subjects of future research. Overall, the discussions in this section highlights several concerns. Firstly, the majority of respondents are convinced that they got where they are without support and despite the misogynist institution. It seems clear to me that HEIs reward individual research which will in itself explicitly encourage such a position. However some females seemed to see their own research networks and research collaboration as important for their success. This highlights a tension concerning what is rewarded in HEIs and how success tends to be (individually) attributed. The central concern is that initiatives that were meant to address gender inequalities and support career progression of female academics provided little support. Gender Centres meant to support females lacked the functional structures and systems needed to support career progression of female academics. As such, senior female academics constantly seek alternatives to survive, support and maintain their career progression. They mainly engage their private and public networks to continue to publish and impact their field.

6.5 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed how senior female academics explained their own career progression. Their personal narratives illustrated three main contributory sets of

issues. Firstly, I highlight the identity tensions that senior female academics navigate in HEIs. Here, I highlighted how their traditional roles as mothers and wives did not change with their career progression. Secondly, I discussed the ways that the masculine institution positioned senior female academics and their strategies in navigating these within their HEIs. The final section explored the institutional support available to female academics and how they valued it. I illustrated how the widely known affirmative action interventions have not contributed much to the career progression of senior female academics. The central proposition is that senior female academics attained and maintained their positions through hard work, networking, collaborations and transgressions of gender boundaries within institutional contexts in which success tends to be attributed in a highly individualized way.

Overall, this chapter has illustrated that becoming a senior female academic is one achievement while maintaining that status is another. From the analysis, senior female academics have several challenges in being professors. The central challenges were skewed workload and institutional misogyny that female academics have to routinely navigate. Also, the findings in this chapter challenge research that characterized female academics as beneficiaries of affirmative actions and tokenistic policies. I illustrated that the institutional support structures such as the establishment of Gender Centres did not contribute much to address the challenges associated with the career progression of senior female academics. The main source of support to the senior female academics involved in the research was collaborations and networks. In the next chapter, I present the conclusions and policy implications of the study as well as the reflections on the entire research journey.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Introduction

This last chapter draws the findings of the analysis chapters together based on the main research questions. It presents the implications of the research and sums up the theoretical and methodological reflections. It is organised in four main sections. The first presents the conclusions from the research. The second presents the policy implications of the main findings of the research. The third presents the contribution to knowledge. In the final section, I discuss the findings, the theoretical and methodological reflections.

7.2 Key findings

In this section, I summarise the main findings of the research that can inform policy and practice as they contribute significantly to knowledge. I present these findings based on the main questions that informed and guided the research. To recap, the main questions that guided the research were:

1. How do senior female academics explain the under representation of women in Ghanaian public universities?
2. How do the senior female academics account for their career progression within Ghanaian public universities?
3. What are the key challenges in being a senior female academic in Ghanaian public universities?

7.2.1 Factors accounting for under-representation of women in Ghanaian public universities

My first claim in this thesis is that the several factors accounting for the under-representation of women are engrained in the historical origins of the institution, as well as on-going cultural institutional practices. The discussions in chapter five highlight traditional gender practices and persisting colonial vestiges in education as the main processes and conditions accounting for the under-representation of females in Ghanaian public universities.

First, I argued that the influence of colonial gender codes privileging male education is a major factor accounting for the reality of under-representation of females in Ghanaian HEIs. Based on my data analysis, the Ghanaian public universities continue to operate with some institutional cultures that are attributable to the legacies of colonialism. The impacts of colonialism on the gendered nature of universities are visible in the fact that colonialists' conception of education being the preserve of men was handed down and as an inherited institutional culture which ensured that for many decades, women were kept out of the walls of institutions of higher learning. When women were eventually allowed entry as faculty, they were to compete with men for space, recognition and promotion. Thus, the under-representation of females in universities was occasioned by the ways in which colonialism introduced schooling by drawing lines of division between males and females. European colonization in Africa produced gendered spaces: defining schooling in ways that privilege maleness. This subsequently produced a system of statistical invisibility of females at all levels of education.

Second, the Ghanaian public universities operate with some socio-cultural factors peculiar to the African continent. The ways in which females serve both family and education imperils their academic progression and defines the reality of under-representation in Ghanaian HEIs. Culture, family/work tensions, gender role expectations have produced a male-dominated university culture. Institutionalized gender discrimination, lack of female role models and mentors, as well as inability to form women's networks on campuses were major impediments to female academics' rise to the top of their careers in Ghana. I argued that combining motherhood with academic life militates against female participation in education, their academic development and progression. Traditional gender practices require females to be good family cooks, homemakers and mothers more than being academics. The time taken on these duties left them both ineffective in other realms of academic work and unable to support the development of junior colleagues. As such, females who desire higher education, had to work extra hard by combining family roles (as a mother, family cook and a good homemaker) with educational tasks. These factors have contributed to the academic invisibility of females in higher education and produced traditions of practice that were male-dominated. Thus, the arena of HEIs is informed by strong gender ideologies, which greatly restrict addressing gender equity effectively, and limit the opportunities that could enhance the career progression of females in terms of the presence of experienced colleagues who can provide guidance and support.

7.2.2 Factors accounting for the career progression of senior female academics in Ghanaian public universities

My second claim in this thesis is that becoming senior female academic is both constrained and facilitated by several factors. Unlike popular theorisations that characterized female academics as beneficiaries of affirmative actions and tokenistic policies, the career progression of senior female academics was instead attributed to hard work, networking, collaborations and transgressions of gender boundaries. Their progression is severely constrained by an institutional misogyny coupled with a lack of support structures. The central concern is that initiatives that were meant to address gender inequalities and support career progression of female academics provided little support. Gender Centres meant to support females lacked the functional structures and systems needed to support their career progression. As such, senior female academics mainly engaged their private and public networks to continue to publish and impact their field.

7.2.3 Key challenges in being a senior female academic in Ghanaian public universities

This thesis proposed that being a senior female academic is a persistent struggle. From the analysis, there are several challenges in being a senior female academic in Ghanaian universities.

My analysis shows that promotion to professor introduces senior female academics into other chapters of struggle in which they had to navigate a complex interplay between cultural expectations, career demands and institutional practices and cultures that create even more gender tensions. Their biological presence overshadows their

professional achievements when they are referred to as ‘mum’ or as ‘female professors’ through a predominant domestic positioning that infers their invisibility within the academy (Phakeng, 2015). Their treatment as ‘female professors’ meant they are recognized by their biology to the extent that the rank of professor within the institution is associated with males. This epitomizes the (re)production of social gender identities where senior female academics were not accorded equal academic recognition. Thus, being a female academic becomes a new learning field where they constantly have to navigate the tensions and intersections between their femaleness and their academic position.

From the analysis, institutional invisibility constituted a major challenge to being a senior female academic in Ghanaian public universities. First, due to their restricted numbers and gender representation requirements, the senior female academics served on multiple committees. This increases their workload such that female professors become unable to mentor and support colleagues to attain professorships. The few females on the Boards and Committees tend to be labelled as representatives of women. Their contributions/opinions on issues are subsequently labelled as female opinions than of professors in their own right.

Also, it appears the link between their gender and motherhood follows them into their professional life. The key issue is the identity tensions that bespeak their struggle between career progression and the performance of their traditional cultural gendered positioning as females in a Ghanaian context. They are continually expected to serve as ‘proper’ women and mothers. The institutional culture is patriarchal and supports

misogyny by minimizing the presence of females. Their low numbers meant fewer females on boards and committees. From the discussions in chapter six, senior female academics see their career progression as an opportunity to challenge the marginalization of women but end up being defined by their anatomy; and their traditional roles as mothers follow them into the public spheres in HEIs even at the peak of their careers.

7.3. Implications of the findings

As indicated in chapter one and above, the focus of this study was the career progression experiences of senior female academics in Ghanaian Public HEI's. From the key findings presented in section 7.2, there are several issues that require attention of policy and practice. In this section, I present some policy implications of these findings. The findings speak to the imperative of reviewing Gender sensitive policies within Ghanaian HEIs. One paramount step is to examine the Gender Centers. These steps should help in comprehensive understanding of how to improve conditions for females within Ghanaian HEI's. The review of the role of the Gender Centers should include support that it provides to senior female academics to be more effective. The review should explore the ways in which gender-based activities of Gender Centers can be adapted to and informed by the needs of female academics and their experiences within the system. Therefore, any support or initiative to improve the situation of females in HEI's should be led by senior female academics and informed by their experiences. As such, HEIs in Ghana ought to examine ways by which the institutional culture can be reformed to support female academic progression and professional development.

Further, neither the efforts at career progression nor the accomplishment of professorial status have significant influence on the traditional normative social positioning of women within HEIs. As such, it is evident that national policy and institutional practices need to consider how they might accommodate and promote females within the University system. They should explore the specific ways in which normative social values exclude women. It raises questions about how institutions might develop policy frameworks and strategies to support the career progression of females. In this respect, the experiences of senior female academics explored in this thesis can offer valuable insights.

Misogyny has to be challenged. There should be a gender and diversity training for university staff. This training should be framed in ways that address cultural notions about being female. It should expose the dangers of such notions and how their maintenance within HEIs affects the quality and standing of the institution. This is fundamental in shaping attitudes and conceptions that relegate the views and presence of females to the background in terms of decision making.

These findings speak to the imperatives of institutional reform. There is need for conscious efforts to promote gender-sensitive policies that places explicit demands on recruitment of females into the Ghanaian higher education system as academics. This requires practical steps such as identification and development of females through staff development programmes. Universities should be required to recruit a certain percentage of females as lecturers in each department. Such practical steps are

fundamental to increasing the numbers of female academics that can develop to become senior female academics.

The thesis generated knowledge that is fundamental to higher education management and administration. It highlights the policy deficits and cultural factors affecting female academics in Ghanaian public higher education institutions. In doing so, it highlights the gaps that need addressing so that higher education managers and governors can develop systems that can fill the gaps. It shows that Gender Centres are ineffective and need fundamental reconstitution to provide any meaningful support to female academics. As such this thesis offers a critical space to discuss deficits in both higher education policy and practice in this context.

7.4 Contribution to knowledge

This thesis adds significantly to the existing body of knowledge about women in HEI and their successful career progression. Primarily, it generated knowledge on factors that contribute to the under-representation of senior female academics in HEIs and their experiences of career progression. The central proposition is that traditional gender practices and persisting colonial vestiges in education are the main determinants of female under-representation and career progression. As the discussion chapters showed, institutional colonialism and the traditional role of females as homemakers is reflected in their institutional positioning and constrains their academic career progression. However, the experiences of the senior female academics involved in this study showed there are tensions between marginalisation and success. The discussions contradict the depiction of successful female academics as beneficiaries of tokenistic affirmative action programmes. This research showed

how becoming a senior female academic is a personal struggle. As Luke (2002) would argue, they attained their positions through hard work. The discussions showed the resilience of some females in disrupting traditional gender norms within the heteronormative understandings of family life and patriarchal culture in Ghanaian traditional society and the associated misogyny (Morley, 2006; Ngulube, 2018).

The results from the discussions did not affirm that affirmative action policies would increase women's participation in the academy both as staff and students (Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza, 2012). Contrary to the hopes in the establishment of Gender Centers in Ghanaian public Universities and elsewhere, as illustrated in the works of Adusah-Karikari (2008), the experiences of the senior female academics analysed in this research showed that the centers did not provide any professional support for female academics. Also, the discussions showed that, becoming a senior female academic is constrained by both traditional gender norms and institutional misogyny. The lessons from this research are contrary to the literature by Mama (2004) and Morley et al. (2010) among others that females are unable to progress due to the limitations placed on them by traditional social norms and the privileging of opportunities for males. The lessons from this research showed examples of how the senior female academics have progressed, despite the limitations placed on them within the heteronormative families that favoured the education of males to the consistent disadvantage of females.

Therefore, becoming a senior female academic involves a resilient and persistent interruption of both traditional and institutional gender based barriers. Whereas this is not easy, the experiences of the senior female academics showed that it is both

attainable and rewarding. Thus, the knowledge generated by this research showed how it is important to acknowledge that senior female academics attained their positions through hard work, not through affirmative action and privileges accorded them by institutions and gender centers as it is usually read. This would mean a re-interrogation of the contributions that Ghana's National Gender Policy (2015) can make in alleviating the challenges placed on the academic progression of females at the tertiary level, the effectiveness of Gender Centers as well as the traditional institutional misogyny that female academics encounter in their career progression.

Another lesson from this research is that senior female academics are both invisible and burdened, contrary to the emancipatory views (Pillay, 2009) about higher educational progress and academic achievement. The discussions raise concerns that require further research into understanding what lived experiences arising from being under-represented might mean in terms of our understanding of higher education and career progression as emancipatory. From this research, the under-representation of females creates a system of invisibility that is self-reinforcing. First, academic invisibility of females in higher education produced traditions of practice that promoted misogyny. Second, the institutional invisibility of senior female academics meant fewer female representations on boards and committees. Senior female academics on the Boards and Committees are positioned as representatives of women instead of being recognized for professional achievement. In terms of burdens, serving on many boards and committees within the institution increases the workload of senior female academics and subsequently affects their career progression. This has several consequences. At a broader level, representation on many boards/committees impairs effectiveness, as the senior female academics juggle to be represented and

make important inputs into the work of committees. Coupled with routine professional teaching, administrative responsibilities and other social commitments, including community services such as invited speeches and family responsibilities within the heterosocial cultural milieu in Ghana, under-representation and related workload impairs the capacity and availability of senior female academics to mentor and support junior colleagues. Also, it affects the career progression of senior female academics in terms of how they are able to continue research activities that establish and affirm their place as senior academics. In this sense, increased number of females will reduce the burden, promote their visibility and promote their potential to support the development of junior colleagues. This means that, arguments for increasing the participation of females in higher education (Morley et al., 2010) must be accompanied by arguments to support the recruitment of more females into academic roles (Britwum et al. 2008).

Within the context of this research's findings, Ghanaian public universities need to make conscious efforts to produce more senior female academics. Increasing the number of senior female academics has two important utilitarian values. First, it will reduce the burden on the few existing senior female academics that are currently in the higher education system. Second, it will help challenge the persistent institutional misogyny. Unless this is done, being a senior female academic appears burdensome and the responsibilities placed on females is lopsided. From a socio-cultural lens, increasing the number of senior female academics does not mean lowering promotion or admission standards for female academics. It means conscious and qualitative investment in recruiting and supporting the development of female academics by

acknowledging, challenging and removing the institutionalised cultural barriers to their academic enlistment and career progression. This should be done by understanding the benefits the institution gets from having more effective females on boards/committees and the institutions role in challenging and disrupting long-held inhibiting and misogynistic social norms. From a post-colonial theory perspective, increasing the numbers of senior female academics will be emancipatory both in decolonizing the academic and social spaces, and in validating the status of universities as knowledge generating centres where stereotypes are challenged, and normalcy is reconstructed.

7.5. Post Research Reflections

The research process has been a journey. The journey has been complex, and the road was never straight. I navigated several curves that were winding and risky. Sometimes I thought of giving up. There were several iterations between me and my supervisors. We have been back and forth many times. The topic changed several times and the focus has been revised, severally. It was a learning process replete with several methodological and theoretical complexities.

A major consideration fundamental to my qualitative research approach was reflexivity and its requirements. Reflexivity in research has been an issue of particular importance for feminist scholars. The notion of reflexivity refers to the position and role of the researcher both with reference to the definition and formulation of the research topic and with regard to the research process and participants. As pointed out in Banister et al (1994, p.150) “the research topic, design and process, together with

the experience of doing research are reflected upon and critically evaluated throughout”.

I approached this research project conscious of my identities as an academic, administrator, a woman and a wife, daughter, sister, mother and aunt. I made time to write this thesis, amidst my tight professional commitments as well as doing domestic chores. I apportioned time adequately for the home, academic work and my professional schedules, although there were some overlapping, which worked positively to enhance this work. I had the opportunity to present my work in progress at the 1st ICERDA conference at the University of Ghana, Legon which aided in shaping the structure.

In general, I found the research process enjoyable and rewarding though it did not come without challenges. Reflexivity according to Dunne et al (2005) allows the researcher to make informed interpretations of what she/he experiences, feel and observes. Reflecting on the research process, in particular the interviews, I observed that my knowledge and skills as a journalist/ an academic aided and facilitated the interviewing process, even though I had to rely on video tutorials such that I was able to steer the interviews and sustain the conversation even when some respondents were reticent.

An observation I made throughout the study was the willingness of the respondents to share their experiences with me. The participants appreciated the fact that I had chosen to research a topic critical to gender inequality in academia, which they believed also affected them and therefore spoke passionately and freely about the topic. They felt that it was an opportunity to open up to the issues to deepen

awareness on the challenges female academics face. Amidst the busy schedules of the participants, I managed to schedule appointments with all of them for the interviews. However, some kept postponing appointments due to busy schedules and travel commitments. This prolonged the estimated period designed for data collection.

Almost all the interview sessions were interesting, relaxed and conversational. In some cases, during the interviews, it was difficult to steer the interview effectively to keep the respondents to the point whilst not wishing to interrupt when they were speaking. It seemed that they might have experienced situations of unfair treatment regarding their promotions and the interview gave them the platform to express their positions on the subject. It was however, necessary to listen to them. This however, generated a lot of data to be coded and analyzed.

Again, I observed during the interviews that three of the female participants gave very brief answers to my questions and it was difficult to encourage them to say more and explore the issues further. Their reticence seemed as if the topic was too sensitive and seemed not too comfortable to comment in detail. I must say that though I had assured the participants of confidentiality and anonymity, these three, were afraid of the consequence of hitting hard at the system. However, though reluctant, an observation I made through their non-verbal cues and gestures pointed to the fact that they had issues with the promotion processes and procedures in their university but preferred to keep silent.

There were challenges I faced during the research process that helped me to appreciate some of the stories that I heard from the interviews. One challenge I am still grappling with are some important requests from participants. Some requests

seem difficult while others are quite easy to honour. A typical request was that I send them copies of my work after the research is complete. However, this request has a difficult side where I have to supply printed copies of the final work to each participant. It is also difficult because the participants are themselves difficult to meet and to engage with. This made me to understand that qualitative research is not something that ends, the research process actually continues, and iterations continue between the researcher and the researched over a long time or space.

Another challenge was that soon after data collection, I got pregnant and encountered some health challenges. This significantly delayed my work. During those moments I came to appreciate how the processes of being a mother were responsible for my inability to progress professionally. This was helpful to understanding some of the critical issues that the participants highlighted as fundamental to the delays in their academic career progression

7.5.1 Theoretical reflections

The theoretical journey behind this research has been complicated. I started the entire thesis journey as a gender person (interested in working on gender issues in higher education). Since then I have dangled between several theoretical perspectives. The theoretical approach to this research was grounded in postcolonial understandings of females and their agency. In that consistency, I selected successful female academics and explored their agential practices that supported their career progression despite the limitations on their early and adult lives and institutional culture and practices.

Although I situated the work within a postcolonial theoretical orientation (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001; Mignolo, 2007), I was overtly aware that there are aspects in my research that are related to social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1990) and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1993; Giroux, 2004). These theories have important applications in the ways in which I reflected on the experiences of the senior female academics involved in the research. I needed to shift the research from discussing the unequal power relations between men and women in society, and to focus on the under representation of women in HEIs. It is a theoretical complexity that has not been simple.

In discussing the under-representation of senior female academics, I have navigated between several understandings of the issue. I explored the early family life of the participants and sought to relate that to their institutional experiences. The theoretical journey radically changed me from simplistic understandings of gender that equate it to 'sex', to thinking about gender through more critical perspectives. From my own research experience, I became attached to the view that traces how colonial absences are fundamental to understanding the cultural and institutional regimes of Ghanaian HEIs. As the analysis chapters suggested, colonial influences and absences are integral to the early life experiences of senior female academics.

From the analysis in chapter six, in particular, I found that the effects of the colonial influences on formal education did not end with the formal overthrow of the colonial order. I learnt, from the theoretical practices and the manifest views expressed by the participants that colonialism is not a finished business. However, I learnt through the application of post-colonialism that the effects are experienced differently by various people in the same category. Thus, post-colonialism provided a space to re-examine

beneath the surface of gendered practices in a way that does not consider gender production as fixed.

I experienced how the different participants drew on their agency to confront the issues in their unique ways. Although I acknowledge that, there exists disproportionate concentration of power in institutional hierarchies, my focus was on how institutional configurations (both structural and cultural) maintained gender relations that contributed to the under-representation of women.

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Appendix 1

Draft Interview Schedule

1. A brief about your life, growing up
2. Formation of an ambition to pursue an academic career
3. Family attitudes towards career goals
4. What has been the trajectory of your career development?
5. Personal life in relation to academic life
6. Nature of the relationship with women colleagues
7. Do women have access to an environment (mentoring and access to information) that is conducive to their progression?
8. How do you see career for women in higher education
9. What is your opinion on the mode and criteria for promotion in your institution?
10. Are you familiar with the institutional policies on equality, diversity and gender
11. What is it about promotion in your institution that could be problematic for women?
12. Share your experience with promotion from lecture to professor
13. What are the obstacles and challenges hindering women's progression in HE?
14. Are women faculty attracted to leadership positions, as currently designed?

Appendix 2

Fieldwork permission request

June 10, 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

Request for Assistance

I am currently a doctoral student at the University of Sussex, Brighton. As part of my doctoral requirement, I am expected to undertake a research project. I have chosen to research on the topic: "Career progression amongst female academics in Higher Education in Ghana".

My overall research objective is to find out how female professors navigate their career paths in academic institutions in Ghana through narratives. I am interested in gathering information about the experiences of female professors and what they think contributes to the underrepresentation of women as professors in Institutions of Higher Education.

I write to humbly request for your assistance in facilitating my contact with three female professors in your university who will be interested in participating in my study.

I would be very grateful for your assistance.

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully,

Obaapanin Adu Oforiwaa

Appendix 3

Excerpts from the coding of Interview Transcripts

Transcript	Codes	Research question- Underepresentation
<p>Obaa: Please tell me about yourself</p> <p>And so that's sort of my family background, and am one of four children, am the second born, that's too girls two boys, so we were nicely split and erm, there was absolutely no difference in privileges for male and female, especially in terms of educational opportunity. So we all intended to go to the same primary school we all went to the same secondary school because that was my father's secondary school which was Achimota,</p> <p>Obaa: prof how do you see erm women's life in higher education institution?</p> <p>Yaa: Its hard erm its hard because intellectual work, academic work requires you dedicating time to reading to creating, to researching to writing you see, and so its really gets hard for women in particular because we were not expected to include ourselves. You have strong roles as wives, mothers and you have to play those roles, you may have support from them but it would be a strange woman who can go away for weeks and leave their child at home to their dad at home and go and ride. And so sometimes I think it may be-I don't know, I</p>	<p>Family status</p> <p>Early schooling</p> <p>Family</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>

<p>wander if its not- it was a little easier for me because I didn't have a husband to worry about and I could make my own arrangement and I have my own accommodating family,</p> <p>verses a husbands needs that I had to meet because that's also important, so typically I can work aaah till</p>		
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Colour Notes

Yellow - early upbringing

Green - career life of the participants

Red - the Adult life

Red text in yellow- career challenges

Appendix 4

Research Template used for the analysis of data

Question	Participant	Code	Typical Comment	Theme
<u>Research question One</u> How do senior female academics explain the under representation of women in Ghanaian public universities?	P1			
	P2			
	P3			
	P4			
	P5			
	P5			
	P6			
	P7			
	P8			
	P9			

Question	Participant	Typical Comment
<u>Research question Two</u> How do the senior female academics account for their career progression within Ghanaian	P1	
	P2	
	P3	
	P4	

public universities?	P5	
	P5	
	P6	
	P7	
	P8	
	P9	

Question	Participant	Typical Comment
<u>Research question three</u> What are the key challenges in being a senior female academic in Ghanaian public universities?	P1	
	P2	
	P3	
	P4	
	P5	
	P5	
	P6	
	P7	
	P8	
	P9	



University of Sussex

Certificate of Approval

Reference Number:	ER/OA94/4
Title Of Project:	Career Progression amongst Female Academics in Higher Education in Ghana
Principal Investigator (PI):	Obaapanin Oforiwaa Adu
Student:	Obaapanin Oforiwaa Adu
Collaborators:	
Duration Of Approval:	n/a
Expected Start Date:	25-Mar-2015
Date Of Approval:	15-Jun-2015
Approval Expiry Date:	26-Sep-2015
Approved By:	Jayne Paulin
Name of Authorised Signatory:	Janert Boddy
Date:	15-Jun-2015

*NB. If the actual project start date is delayed beyond 12 months of the expected start date, this Certificate of Approval will lapse and the project will need to be reviewed again to take account of changed circumstances such as legislation, sponsor requirements and University procedures.

Please note and follow the requirements for approved submissions:

Amendments to protocol

- * Any changes or amendments to approved protocols must be submitted to the C-REC for authorisation prior to implementation.

Feedback regarding the status and conduct of approved projects

- * Any incidents with ethical implications that occur during the implementation of the project must be reported immediately to the Chair of the C-REC.

Feedback regarding any adverse and unexpected events

- * Any adverse (undesirable and unintended) and unexpected events that occur during the implementation of the project must be reported to the Chair of the Social Sciences C-REC. In the event of a serious adverse event, research must be stopped immediately and the Chair alerted within 24 hours of the occurrence.