WOMEN IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT IN MALAYSIA:

AN INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS

AJLAA SHAZWANI MOKHTAR

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the University of the West of England, Bristol for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Bristol Business School, University of the West England, Bristol

June 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

All praise to Allah for giving me this opportunity to complete this work as my PhD journey has been long, challenging, tiring and one of the most difficult journeys that I have undergone in my entire life. There were times when I thought I had neither the strength nor the will to finish it, but I am deeply thankful and appreciative that many people have given me continuous motivation and inspiration through thick and thin.

First and foremost, I would like to express my greatest gratitude to my amazing supervisory team Professor Susan Durbin, Professor Hazel Conley and Professor Harriet Bradley for providing me with the guidance to improve my analytical, theoretical, argumentative and academic writing skills, for giving me tremendous encouragement to complete this thesis, and most importantly for being my great mentors during my ups and downs. It has always been a pleasure to be under their supervision. Their constructive feedback and super-fast response to the submitted work have been greatly appreciated. I must say, having you all as my supervisory team is the greatest thing that happened to me during this PhD journey.

Most importantly, I am grateful to have such an understanding husband, Wan Faizul, who is willing to take over my role of looking after our three beautiful children, Wan Damia Zahraa, Wan Bella Zakiyah and Wan Fatih Zameer. Thank you for helping me to do the house chores and lending me your shoulders for me to cry on. Also, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my lovely parents, Haji Mokhtar and Hajjah Mariam, parents-in-law, Haji Wan Mohd Razali and Hajjah Fauziyah, my brothers Along Mohd Azrul Nazmi and Angah Mohd Azizul Nazim, sisters-in-law Kak Norhaslinda and Kak Nurulzana as well as everyone in my family for believing in whatever paths I have chosen and showing their constant emotional support with no compromise.

Thank you to the government of Malaysia, especially the *Majlis Amanah Rakyat* (MARA) for funding me to undertake this PhD abroad so that one of my life goals has been ticked. I also wholeheartedly thank my research participants for willing to spend their time and share how they managed to succeed in their career experiences with me. This research would be nothing without their involvement as there would be no qualitative data to work with in this study. Thank you to those in the UWE graduate school for their support, particularly Svetlana Cicmil, Helen Frisby and Samantha Watt. Next, many thanks to my PhD colleagues, especially Laura Bentley and Joy Umekwe, friends and followers for helping me throughout the journey. What have I done to deserve these people in my life? Alhamdulillah. I am indeed a lucky woman! May Allah always bless these wonderful people both in this world and the hereafter. In Shaa Allah.

ABSTRACT

Women account for almost 15 million persons in the Malaysian labour force and the labour force participation rate has risen to 68.0 percent in 2017. Although the participation of females in the labour market has increased, women are still facing considerable barriers in gaining management positions and are outnumbered by men where as recently as 2016 for example 79.6 percent of men still dominated organisations. This pioneering study investigates the experiences of women senior managers due to the fact that the literature on Malaysian women senior managers is almost non-existent. This research explores how women from three different ethnic backgrounds: Malay, Chinese and Indian encounter their career challenges and address these problems with their career strategies.

The study covers four important themes ranging from the impact of private patriarchy on women's career choices, the impact of public patriarchy on the careers of senior women, challenges faced and government quotas and career strategies for helping senior women managers in Malaysia progress. These themes are explored through an intersectional approach between gender and ethnicity, given the influence of Malay privilege to the development of women's careers in Malaysia. The methodology of the study employed was qualitative where 31 in-depth interviews with women in senior management roles (26 Malays, 3 Chinese and 2 Indian) were conducted. The qualitative data analysis focused on exploring the differences of managerial experiences based on gender and ethnicity in terms of their family and societal backgrounds, career motivations and the need to have a quota for women to succeed in management. On this ground, the implications of the study are identified, and further recommendations made to individuals, organisations and other relevant bodies of ways in which the potential of Malaysian women managers could be improved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
ADO	Administrative and Diplomatic Officer
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Wor
CEO	Chief of Executive Officer
CFO	Chief of Finance Officer
COO	Chief of Operation Officer
COLA	Cost of Living Allowance
DSG	Deputy Secretary General
EM	Economy Management
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
FR	Financial Resources
FTSE	Financial Times Stock Exchange
GLC	Government Linked Companies
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HROD	Human Resource and Organisational Development
ICAEW	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IR	International Relations
ITCM	Information Technology and Communication Management
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	Malayan Indian Congress
MICPA	Malaysian Institute of Certified Public Accountants
MNC	Multinational Companies
MWFCD	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
MYR	Malaysian Ringgit
NDP	National Development Policy
NEP	National Economic Policy
NPW	National Policy on Women
NSC	National Steering Committee

NSD	National Security of Defense
NTP	National Transformation Policy
NVP	National Vision Policy
OM	Organisational Management
ONS	Office for National Statistics
SG	Secretary General
TPA	Town Planning and Administration
UMNO	United Malayan Nation Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United State
UK	United Kingdom

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The present study on women senior managers is an important step forward for research in Malaysia. It addresses the knowledge gap about Malaysian women in senior management across public and private sectors in general, and Malay and non-Malay women senior managers specifically. Having reviewed the academic literature from the West, this research will be underpinned by three theoretical frameworks; gendered occupational segregation, focusing on private and public patriarchal theory, intersectionality and critical mass in order to explain the under-representation of women in senior management in Malaysia. These theories will also help to explore why the 30 per cent quota introduced was met in the public sector, but not in the private sector. Using an intersectional approach throughout this research, it covers aspects ranging from their socio-economic background to an analysis of their work and family and how this differs from that of Malaysian men in similar job positions. Also, due to Malay privilege endowed to the Malays in Malaysia, the lived experiences of Malay women senior managers could be different from that of non-Malay women's career experiences. A number of findings have emerged through qualitative analysis of the study. It further discusses four important themes: 1) the impact of private patriarchy on women's career choices 2) the impact of public patriarchy on the careers of senior women 3) identification of the 3Cs of career challenges encountered by women senior managers (Career and family commitment, the Conflict of being senior women, and Competitiveness) and 4) investigation on the government quotas and women senior managers' strategies in order to succeed in their career.

1.1 WOMEN IN THE GLOBAL LABOUR MARKET

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken to understand women's management careers (Evetts, 2000; Sullivan and Mainiero, 2008; Tomlinson and Durbin, 2010, 2011, 2015; O'Neil, Hopkins and Sullivan, 2011; Wichert, 2011). Gendered occupational segregation is detrimental to women as it perpetuates gender-based inequalities into future generations (Anker, 1997), which highlights that management is still gendered in various ways. Traditional career models such as the linear model appear to explain careers from men's perspectives rather than fully capturing women's unique lived experiences (Evetts, 2000; Baruch and Reis, 2015). The growth of women in management studies in the West has given a voice to women's experience in the workplace. Feminist researchers have long studied that men managers are more likely to be in more secure employment, to be on higher grades, have more formal power, have access to more role models, to be less stressed and to have not experienced sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the workplace (Calás and Smircich, 2006; Alvesson and Billing, 2009; Sealy and Singh, 2010; ONS, 2017; Catalyst, 2018).

Women's participation in the labour force has increased worldwide over the past decade (ILO, 2017, 2018; ONS, 2017), yet women only comprise 24 per cent of senior management roles with 15 per cent of all board seats being taken up by women predominantly within six industries - financial services; consumer business; technology, media and telecommunications; manufacturing; energy and resources; and life sciences and health care (Grant Thornton, 2018). The hardship experienced by women managers is also caused by the appearance of vertical segregation that places one gender, usually men, at a higher level than others in the same occupational categories (Anker, 1997). Despite women having entered the workforce in more equal numbers than men in the latter part of the twentieth century (World Economic Forum, 2017), women are still not granted similar rights and privileges, which is not sufficiently recounted in the traditional male model of management. Gender stereotyping of the managerial position fosters bias against women in managerial selection, placement, promotion, and training decisions. A worldwide review of the status of women in management speaks of the barriers created by biased attitudes towards women in management (ILO, 2018).

In relation to this research, the business case for gender diversity on boards in Malaysia has four key dimensions: improving performance, accessing the widest talent pool, being more responsive to the market, and achieving better corporate governance (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2013). Malaysia presents an interesting case where the corporate governance practices and societal attitudes are built on a strong patriarchal system (Azhari, 2001; Kaur, Jauhar and Mohaidin, 2017). Women are commonly viewed, first and foremost, as best suited to the role of housewife, and when educated, they should work as teachers, nurses or in similar feminine occupations (Norzareen and Nobaya, 2010). While women are charged with the role of care-givers and service providers for male members of their families, men are responsible for their welfare and protection (Ahmad, 1998; Ministry of Women and Family Development, 2003). A patriarchal social system like in the West, in which the male has authority over the female, has created power differences between women and men, underpinning the notion that men are superior to women (Powell and Graves, 2003). In such instances, women in senior managerial positions remain underrepresented globally and there is the need to have more women in decision-making positions, especially in Malaysia. Moreover, a number of strategies by the governments and women senior managers, alongside the challenges encountered to succeed in their careers, will be further explored in this research.

1.2 WOMEN SENIOR MANAGERS IN MALAYSIA

Malaysian women face not only the biases originating from a universal legacy of secular patriarchy, but also the discrimination that emerges from Muslim patriarchy, which is often gender-biased due to Islamic ideology, laws and rulings (Mohamad, 2010). Women are still severely underrepresented in the highest decision-making positions even though the

percentage of female graduates at about 60 per cent is among the highest in Asia (TalentCorp, 2017). The representation of women on boards in Malaysia is considered low compared to other developed countries which is for example 42 per cent in Norway, 40.8 per cent in France and 33.7 per cent in Finland (Catalyst, 2018). It may well be that the boards in Malaysia are still very much 'old boys' club', thus, breaking their dominance is not an easy task. Years of encouraging employers to promote women managers to top positions has not paid off in the way the Malaysian government would like to see, and it may not be all that easy. The notion that the managerial positions are not suitable for women makes it difficult for them to climb up the corporate ladder. As reflected in the Western literatures, the argument has been made that if a man and a woman were to compete for a management position, with both having the same qualifications, experience and skill sets, the man would still be the chosen one to be promoted to a higher corporate position (Lee, 2005; Cooke, 2010; Billing, 2011).

While women have increased their numbers in paid work as a whole, they remain under-represented at decision-making levels in the Malaysian public and private sectors, which stand at 32.4 per cent and 26.7 per cent, respectively. It should be noted that research on women in senior positions has yet to be conducted in Malaysia, where given the lower percentages, there is a need for improving business performance as well as promoting equal opportunities for women. Equality between men and women has not been fully achieved in Malaysia, despite the introduction of 30 per cent quota in management (see Chapter Two). The question of quotas has been highly debated due to its controversial nature and will be addressed in Chapter Three. Although women have higher educational qualifications and are likely to be in full-time positions, this does not reflect the percentage of women at the higher levels of hierarchy in the workplace in Malaysia. This situation perpetuates the empirical findings of research in the Western and developed world.

In theoretical terms, the thesis is concerned with how to both conceptualise and empirically research women senior managers, in particular to understand, given the institutionalisation of Malay privilege, how gender and ethnicity intersect to shape women's working lives in Malaysia. Heavy male domination in senior management, provides a particular interest for an examination of how the social divisions of gender and ethnicity are intertwined in the workplace experience, as well as addressing the gap in the academic literature. Despite the theoretical interests in concepts of intersectionality, there have been few empirical analyses of working life that put these into practice. Gender and ethnicity in management has been left out of the intersectional approach in Malaysia, thus, the frameworks for research are not well developed. This thesis will explore using the intersectional paradigm grounded in Crenshaw's (1989, 1991) women of colour, McCall's (2005) intercategorical and Collins's (2000) *matrix of domination* approaches that occur within multiple social practices, especially in the Malaysian context.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The goal of this research is to explore why women are under-represented in senior management positions and the impact of government strategies (quotas) to get more women in senior positions within public and private sector organisations in Malaysia. Considering that Malaysia was the first Asian country to introduce quotas, there are no previous studies of senior female managers in the Malaysian context. This thesis is the first to focus upon a group of women who have broken through the glass ceiling into senior positions in public and private sector organisations in Malaysia. Taking a qualitative approach to gain more insight into their experiences, the data analysis of this research will be discussed and explored through an intersectional approach coupled with theories of privilege focusing on Malay, Chinese and Indian senior women managers. The participants in this research have shared inspiring stories about the challenges they faced, strategies they employed, and how they have progressed to be in senior managerial levels. It offers a unique comparison analysis between women working in the public and private sectors as their career experiences differed depending on the sectors in which they were employed.

Therefore, this research will address three specific research questions in order to achieve the research objectives as pointed above. The research questions are as follows:

Research Question 1: Why are women under-represented in senior management in Malaysia?

Research Question 2: What are the challenges that women have encountered in getting to senior positions? Do challenges to reach senior management become more or less prominent when gender and ethnicity intersect in the case of Malay, Chinese and Indian women?

Research Question 3: What are the impacts of the introduction of quotas in Malaysia from the perspective of senior women and labour market composition?

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is organised into nine chapters:

Chapter Two provides background to the research. It details Malaysia's sociocultural, historical, economic, and political environment. In doing so, it outlines the trends of women's employment before and after Malaysia achieved its independence in 1957, as well as the development of careers amongst women senior managers in Malaysia.

Chapter Three sets out the main theoretical framework and literature on women senior managers in Malaysia. It draws upon Western theoretical frameworks as the basis for understanding the lives of women senior managers and considers how far they are relevant in the Malaysian context. The chapter covers the extensive review of the literature on

occupational gender segregation, senior management as a gendered occupation, intersectionality, and critical mass theories.

Chapter Four outlines the rationale for using a qualitative approach in data collection and discusses the methodological framework of the research, including the justification for an interpretivist paradigm as well as philosophical assumptions that underpin the research. It elucidates the methodological considerations, research materials, research process and ethical considerations of the present study. This chapter further explains the analysis of the data for the 31 women managers interviewed comprised of 26 Malay, 3 Chinese and 2 Indian. Chapter Five to Eight give a comprehensive account of the findings of the in-depth interviews using the intersectional approach across chapters.

Chapter Five sets the scene for the finding chapters by considering how private patriarchal relations in the family impact the representation of women in the paid labour market, especially in senior management in Malaysia. It explains how women's career experiences from three different ethnic backgrounds, Malay, Chinese and Indian differ from Western notions of patriarchy.

Chapter Six presents the impact of public patriarchy on the careers of senior women managers in Malaysia. It further explores how the tensions between public and private patriarchy have influenced the development of women's career histories, career planning, and career satisfaction amongst Malay, Chinese and Indian senior women managers. This chapter also aims to answer research question 1: Why women are under-represented in senior management in Malaysia?

Chapter Seven addresses the 3Cs of challenges faced by senior women from both sectors in order to climb up the career ladders: (1) Career and family commitment, (2) the Conflict of being a senior woman, and (3) Competitiveness amongst female employees in the workplace. The findings will help to answer research question 2: What are the challenges that women have encountered in getting to senior positions? Do challenges to reach senior management become more or less prominent when gender and ethnicity intersect in the case of Malay, Chinese and Indian women?

Chapter Eight highlights women senior managers' views on the 30 percent quotas to increase women's representation at senior levels in the public and private sectors. It also explores the strategies such as mentoring and networking adopted by senior women to address the 3Cs challenges alongside the government strategies across sectors. This indirectly will lead the study to answer the third research question: What are the impacts of the introduction of quotas in Malaysia from the perspective of senior women and labour market composition?

Chapter Nine draws together the conclusions from these discussion findings. It argues that the study sheds light on ways in which gender and ethnicity intersect in the construction of

women senior managers in Malaysia. It outlines both theoretical and practical implications from this study and its limitations and points towards areas for further investigation in this research field. While we can learn a great deal of experiences from the women interviewees who have broken into senior management, the final chapter argues the importance of the quotas to increase the numbers of women in senior management, especially in the private sectors in Malaysia.

CHAPTER 2

MALAYSIA IN CONTEXT: GOVERNMENT, POLICY AND WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an explanation of the background in which this research is situated, in relation to the historical, cultural, economic, and political context of the under-representation of senior women managers in Malaysia. The first section begins with a discussion of the background of multiethnic Malaysia, which has led to the construction of three major ethnic groups; Malay, Chinese and Indian, particularly during the era of British colonialism. It also explores the postcolonial political context of Malaysia before turning to postcolonial ethnic relations and how this has given rise to certain privileges for Malay citizens.

The second section sets out the position of women in the labour market including the influences that have contributed towards the employment opportunities for Malaysian women. Although the Malaysian government has promoted gender equality and women's empowerment, the implementation of these aims is still limited due to the impact of differences in ethnicity, gender, culture and religion. This section also will examine the government initiatives to encourage more women into the labour force through various national policies and programmes. These initiatives led to the introduction of quotas to increase the number of women in senior management in the public and private sectors of employment.

2.2 MALAYSIA: A BACKGROUND

Malaysia is among the most developed countries in the developing world and has been one of the most outspoken of Islamic countries. In 1963, the Federation of Malaya, the island of Singapore and the terrains of Sabah and Sarawak, formed Malaysia but then two years later, Singapore left the Federation to become an independent Republic. Malaysia is a country in South-East Asia surrounded by Thailand, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia which comprises of two regions: West Malaysia on the Malay Peninsular and East Malaysia on the island of Borneo. Figure 2.1 shows a map of Malaysia which consists of 11 states in Peninsular Malaysia: Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Perak, Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor and two states located in East Malaysia: Sabah, Sarawak, and also two federal territories of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan in Sabah (Ruslan, Mohamadee and Zaini, 2005; Abdullah, 2010).

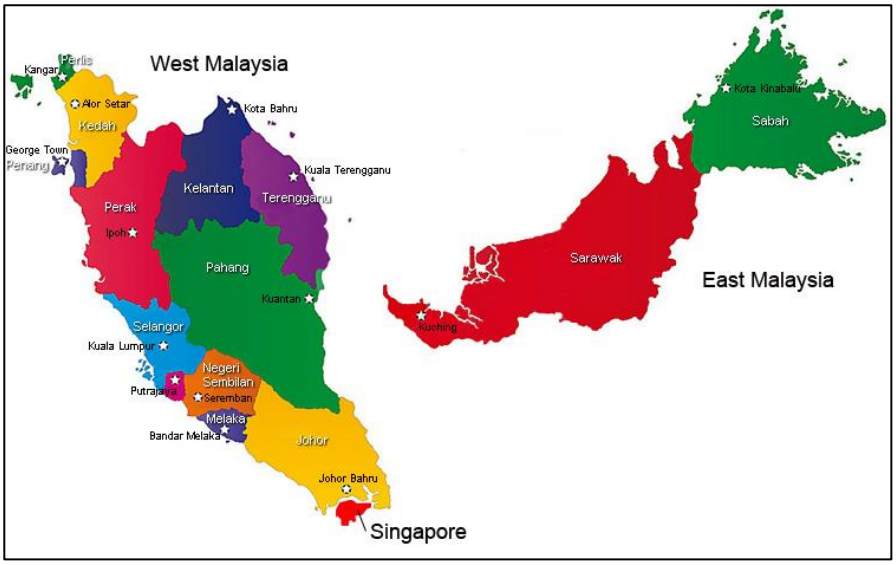


Figure 2.1 Map of Malaysia

In 1963, Kuala Lumpur was declared the capital city of Malaysia, which is located in the central west part of Peninsular Malaysia. It was transformed into a cosmopolitan city where all government offices were scattered around, but it became a challenge for civil servants to maintain connections and networks between different government departments. It was then suggested that the capital should be moved elsewhere as the city could no longer be home to the government and its administrative apparatus (Mohamad, 2011). On 1st February 2001, Tun Dr. Mahathir, who was the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia, then declared Putrajaya as a new Federal government Administrative Centre to replace Kuala Lumpur (see Figure 2.2). Putrajaya was named after the first Malaysian Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra where *Putra* means "Prince" and *Jaya* means "Victory". This is where all of my research participants who worked in the public sector were interviewed.

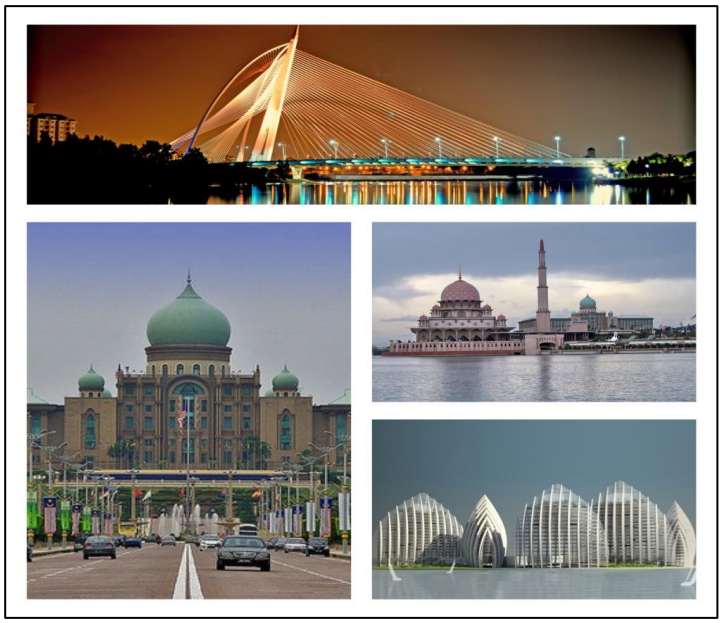


Figure 2.2 The Magnificent Putrajaya

The constitutional monarch for the whole federation is the king or the Supreme Ruler (*Yang Dipertuan Agong*) elected in succession of the nine Malay Sultans every five years (Saw, 2007). However, Sabah, Sarawak, Malacca and Pulau Pinang are excluded from the sovereignty as the states are each governed by the Governor (*Yang Dipertua Negeri*). The Prime Minister is appointed by the King (Y*ang Dipertuan Agong)* – reigning as the Supreme Head of the country, instantaneously assuming the role of the leader of all the political parties in this country (Mutalib, 1993; Mauzy, 2006).

2.2.1 Malaysia's Historical and Political Background

Malaysia is a land of widely differing physical characteristics, diverse cultures and multiple ethnic groups with a population of about 32.4 million, representing an increase by 1.3 percent compared to 2017 (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2018). Malaysian citizens constitute the vast majority of the population as well as Bumiputera, with Malays being the largest ethnic group of *Bumiputera (68.6%)*, which literally translates as "the sons of the soil". Of minority groups, the largest are Chinese (23.4%) and Indian (7%) of the total population. Malaysia began with the interpretation of the term Malay as a *bangsa* or ethnicity, however, it continues to emphasise that *Tanah Melayu* or *Malaya* was the "Land for the Malays" (Abdullah, 2010). It is argued that Malaysia belongs to, and was originally populated by, a race called Malay where the word *Melayu* was originally associated with place, and it referred to the Malay Archipelago (Abdullah, 2010). Once Malaysia achieved its independence from the British, the term "race" as signifying *bangsa* established by the British identifying the three main ethnic groups: Malay, Chinese and Indian as the citizens of *Tanah Melayu,* was adopted by the post-colonial government. In fact, the modern name for the country, Malaysia, also clearly maintains this idea of *Melayu* (Wariya, 2010).

The pluralism of ethnicity in Malaysia began when this country was first colonised by the Portuguese in 1511 and later by the Dutch and British (Andaya and Andaya, 2001; Ruslan, Mohamadee and Zaini, 2005; Abdullah, 2010), prior to its attaining independence in 1957. One of the major effects of colonisation in Malaya was the spread of Christianity (Ming Ng, 2012). During this era, trade and religious missionary activities brought Chinese, Indians, Arabs and others to the Malay Peninsula due to its geographically prominent position on the major Asian trading routes. These people gradually intermarried with the Malays who already accepted Islam as their religion, and used the Malay language in communication as the *lingua Franca* in their daily lives (Wariya, 2010; Hatin *et al.*, 2011). Yet, the presence of Portuguese and Dutch in *Malaya* had little impact in comparison with the British colonisation. Of all three colonials, it can be seen that the British left the most significant legacy to the country's history especially with respect to the economy, politics and societal arrangements (Korff, 2001; Brown, 2010) due to the ethnic segregation executed whilst under their ruling.

During the period of British colonial rule, there was a substantial influx of Chinese and Indian immigrants who worked as cheap labourers in the rubber plantations and mining industries and brought their cultures, religions, beliefs and education systems with them (Gomez, 1998; Hutchings, 2000; Raman and Sua, 2010). The divide-and-rule policy has resulted in a society that was very much multilayered, economically and ethnically segregated, with the Chinese at the top, the Indians in the middle and the Malays at the bottom (Drabble, 2000; Jomo, 2004). According to Drabble (2000), both the Indians and the Chinese were wage labourers, where the Chinese lived in urban areas and worked in more economic modern occupations and the Indians lived and worked on palm-oil and rubber estates. This is not the case for the Malays as most of them were encouraged to settle in traditional agriculture and were concentrated in rural areas (Hirschman and Aghajanian, 1980). As a result, a large number of people of Chinese and Indian origins migrated into the land of Malaya (which is now known as Malaysia), seeking business and economic opportunities. They were accepted by the Malays, and integrated into the society.

After the divide-and-rule policy, the introduction of the Malayan Union stimulated the Malays' awareness of their position as indigenous, whilst the other ethnic groups wanted to be part of Malaya as they considered it to be their homeland (Wariya, 2010). Based on the principles of *jus soli*, the British wanted to grant citizenship with equal rights to the Chinese and Indian populations without any discriminations. The British also planned to abolish the power of *Sultan Melayu* (Malay rulers) and to place all Malay states under one central government. The Malays, conversely, were concerned about the loyalty of both Chinese and Indian ethnicities due to the tension and conflict between the Malays and other ethnic groups during the Japanese era, thus, had rejected the British plans that could reduce their right as indigenous people (Zainuddin et al, 2010). This has led to the establishment of the Federation Constitution of Malaya to protect the interests of Malays while not abandoning other ethnic groups.

One of the agreements made by the Constitution of the independent Federation of Malaya was that those Chinese and Indians who were born before and after Independence Day 1957 were accepted as Malayan citizens (Mahdi and Mohd Fauzi, 2001; Baharuddin, 2005; Wariya, 2010; Ramli and Jamaludin, 2011). In return, all ethnic groups must acknowledge and accept the Malay dominance or *ketuanan Melayu* which endowed special rights and entitlement to the privileges embedded in the Malaysian Constitution, under Article 152 and Article 153. The Malays' privileges endow them with special allocations in educations, positions in government services, declares Islam as the official religion, the Malay language as the official language and that all citizens must adhere to the governance of the Malay rulers or *Raja-Raja Melayu* (Abd Rahim *et al.*, 2013). These negotiations were made between the British and the leaders of political parties from three ethnic groups, namely the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), and the Malaysian Indian Congress

(MIC). Although most Malays strongly welcomed such ethnic preferential acts, the non-Malays, however, perceived these policies as discriminatory (Hock Guan, 2002).

According to Shamsul (2001), the increase in the migrant population was regarded as a potential threat to the indigenous people in Peninsular Malaysia. This reflects that the history of the country offers evidence that the social construction in Malaysia was a result of various waves of immigration, not just of historical coincidence. The Malaysian citizens, therefore, are divided into three main categories by the Malaysian government; *Bumiputera*, non-Bumiputeras and Others (Abdullah, 2012). Malays and the small number of aboriginal people in Peninsular Malaysia and the native groups of Malaysia Borneo were grouped together as *Bumiputera*, the Non-Malays are known as non-*Bumiputera*, whilst "Others" consist of people who are not members of *Bumiputera* or non-*Bumiputeras* (Saad, 2012). The term was coined by the first Malaysian Prime Minister to recognise the Malays as indigenous and who are entitled to special rights under Article 153 without neglecting the rights of Chinese and Indians as non-*Bumiputera*.

On the basis of religion, Malaysia is a large Islamic nation because Islam is the official religion of the Federal Constitution. Although there have been conflicting views about whether or not Malaysia is an Islamic state, most scholars have agreed that Malaysia has relied on religion to shape its own idea of modernity (Houben, 2003; Aziz and Shamsul, 2004; Tong and Turner, 2008; Bahfen, 2011). In the study of Aziz and Shamsul (2004), the complex process of Islamisation that involved both the pre-colonial and post-colonial periods, has led many aspects of Islamic practices to be restructured in order to suit the needs of multiethnic society in Malaysia. Having to compare with other Muslim countries, the fourth Prime Minister has been determined to promote Islamic values to make Malaysia known as a "modest Islamic country" because its implementation of Islam is not too rigid (Aziz and Shamsul, 2004; Baharuddin, 2005). This is evident for example by seeing how Malaysia has allowed women to have much more freedom of action than those in strict Muslim countries (Baharuddin, 2005).

In general, Islam is a marker for Malays and all Malays in Malaysia are considered as Muslim, but, to be a Muslim is not necessarily to be a Malay (Shome, 2002; Hassan, 2007; Ali, 2008). There are also some Chinese and Indians who have converted to Islam (Ming Ng, 2012), as demonstrated by one of the Chinese participant's in this research, who converted from Christian to Islam and became a Chinese-Muslim (see Chapter Four). Among non-Malays, there is a tendency to feel worried, especially within their family circles, about losing their own ethnic identity when they convert to Islam. Malaysia also acknowledges and respects that other religious beliefs such as Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism are freely practiced within the Malaysian Federation. Of languages in Malaysia, *Bahasa Melayu* is the official language to use and the mother tongue of the Malays, regardless of different dialects and cultural practices among Malays in different states as they are seen as a homogenous group (Bhopal and

Rowley, 2005). Other languages spoken include Chinese dialects (e.g. Cantonese, Mandarin, Hainan, and Hokkien), and Indians speak Tamil (Mahdi and Mohd Fauzi, 2001; Haque, 2003).

A Malay therefore is defined as a Malaysian citizen on the basis of religion, culture and language, which indicates that these three symbols are actually the central indicators of being Malay. This official definition of Malayness has come to be used together with the term *Bumiputera*, and the position of Malays has been strengthened to support the Malays privileges in favour of the *Bumiputera* in Malaysia (Brown, 2010). Interestingly, despite the fact that *Bahasa Melayu* is the national language, English, however, is formally taught as part of the country's education system (Zaaba *et al.*, 2010) and widely spoken as the main communication medium for business and trade in this country (Kassim and Ali, 2010). This suggests that the legacy of colonialism and the importance of Anglo-American culture in the global marketplace have consequences for both business and education in Malaysia and is proven in the development of this research where the senior female managers both in the public and private sectors were interviewed in English (see Chapter Four).

The history of Malaysia explained above has shown that the construction of Malays' privilege has its own significance in explaining how these too were conferred and contested which has similarities to the concepts of white privilege (McIntosh, 1995, 2012, 2015). As discussed in Chapter Three, white people are likely to receive economic, political and social advantages as compared to the other minority ethnic people in the West. Those individuals brought up in less privileged or more challenging environments benefited from a stronger desire to succeed, which is reflected in the analyses chapters later, where non-Malays appear to be much more competitive in order to succeed in senior managerial positions. However, it should be taken into account that white privilege has no official written policy, and in some cases, seems invisible, as there may be no awareness of it by the white individuals themselves. In contrast, the Malays' rights have been officially embedded in the Malaysian Constitution after the British colonisation a long time ago. The racial riots and bloodshed which occurred on 13th May 1969 due to the economic and political disparities between ethnicities, leading to traumatic episodes in Malaysian history, became an on-going controversy. Following the 13th May blood-spill tragedy, the government introduced a range of policies to ensure that such ethnic conflicts did not happen again in Malaysia (Ramli and Jamaludin, 2011). In spite of such policies, the nation is constantly battling with this confrontation through privileges such as scholarship, employment and other issues that can lead to ethnic conflicts and tensions.

Having addressed various elements of the multi-ethnic society in Malaysia, it is evident that the historical, social and cultural factors of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras, as well as the conflicts and negotiations, have all contributed to the ways in which all three ethnic groups, Malay, Chinese and Indian were incorporated into the constitution of Malaysia. Parallel to the study of Conley and Page (2010) on the role of authority, the Malaysian Federal

Constitution has also played a vital role in terms of securing and maintaining the Malays' privileges, which have been implemented through government policies and acts. In discussing this issue, the importance of Malays' privilege has been interrogated and negotiated within the framework of a country's goals, which will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.2 The Impact of National Economic Policy on Gender and Ethnic Segregation in Women's Employment in Malaysia

Malaysia's aspiration to become a developed country is influenced not only by Western and other East Asian countries, such as Japan and Taiwan, but also by its own political, socio-economic and cultural traditions. Prior to 1970, the Malaysian labour market was characterised by extreme segregation along the categories according to skill, occupation, gender and ethnicity. The government has made several attempts to change this by implementing significant economic policies such as the New Economic Policy (NEP) and National Development Policy (NDP). The Malaysian government introduced its latest economic master plans, the National Vision Policy (NVP) and the National Transformation Policy (NTP) in 2001 and 2011, respectively (Prime Minister's Department, 2016). Within these broad socio-economic policies, successive post-colonial Malaysian government has introduced a series of five-year plans, focusing particularly on the economy, that pursued the aim of becoming a developed and modernised country.

2.2.2.1 The New Economic Policy (NEP), the National Development Policy (NDP), the National Vision Policy (NVP), and the National Transformation Policy (NTP)

Following the tragedy of 13th May 1969 and the growing economic inequalities between the Malays and the non-Malays, the government introduced the NEP in 1971 to restructure society, eradicate poverty, irrespective of ethnicity, and eliminate identification of race with particular economic activity and geographical locations (Haque, 2003; Houben, 2003; Jomo, 2004). It was incorporated into the Second Malaysian Plan (1971 – 1975) and lasted for twenty years, until 1990.

This NEP was necessary because there was a socio-economic imbalance between the Malay community and the Chinese and Indian communities under British rule, since the Malays were mostly clustered in rural agricultural areas and received less opportunity to enhance their socio-economic status. According to Houben (2003, pp 159), the NEP indirectly targeted *"to raise the level of Malay participation in the modern economy"*. It can be seen as a kind of positive affirmative action favouring the Malays so that they were able to compete with the more urban, commercial and professional non-Malays, especially the Chinese (Hock Guan, 2002; Yeoh and Yeoh, 2015). The Malays began to engage in modern-sector activities and are largely segregated in government employment. With the special privileges endowed by the Federal Constitution, the Malays were given extra advantages in employment, university

enrolment and education scholarships (Hock Guan, 2002; Houben, 2003). This policy has benefited predominantly the rural Malay community in plantations and business who have been aided by the government with low-interest loans and other incentives to help them achieve a better quality of life. Arguably, the NEP has not only improved the economic situation of Malays but also produced a new Malay middle class in the country. According to one commentator, "*it has been abused by UMNO to benefit their leaders and to enrich the members of the Malay corporate class"* (Hock Guan, 2002, pp 187-188).

The NDP was then introduced in 1990 to outline the same objectives of the NEP, but foreseeing the private sector as the backbone for economic growth and high-technology industries as the platform to Malaysia's future development (Prime Minister's Department, 1990). The NDP was seen as less ethnically segregated because it focused more on income generation through increased investments within the private sector (Lewison *et al.*, 2016). Though it was designed to encourage the Malays to endeavour into the more competitive private sectors employment, the Chinese business community in particular viewed the NDP with optimism as it could maximise their entrepreneurial opportunities (Jomo, 2004; Yeoh and Yeoh, 2015). This policy, however, has triggered the Malays, who were over reliant on government employment, to feel uncomfortable. Confronted with the highly competitive non-Malays, especially the Chinese, led them to return to the safe haven of the civil service (Jomo, 2004).

The NVP was introduced under the Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001 -2005), guided by the strategic plan of Vision 2020 that launched on 28th February 1991 where Malaysia began to achieve remarkable success in economic growth and national development (Prime Minister's Department, 2000). Vision 2020 envisions Malaysia as a fully developed country alongside dimensions such as economic, political, social, spiritual, psychological and cultural growth by the year 2020. The NVP incorporates the three critical thrusts of both NEP and NDP, which are directly related to the issue of ethnic relations in Malaysia. Moreover, the latest NTP introduced under the Tenth Malaysia Plan maintains the people-centric focus through the New Economic Model, mainly on transforming areas of public service that are of greatest concern to the people of Malaysia (Prime Minister's Department, 2016). Interestingly, both the NVP and the NTP also targeted to develop a knowledge-based economy as a strategic move to optimise the brainpower of the nation, particularly in encouraging Malaysian women to enter the workforce. Pounder and Coleman (2002) assert brainpower was likely to be more valued than muscle power in the economic development, thus, increasing the demand for highly-educated employees. The shift from a manufacturing based to a service-based economy would also promote women's employment in managerial positions.

According to Hock Guan (2002), however, the previous policies have yet to eliminate the inter-ethnic income disparity because the Malays earned more and remained the most advantaged

group economically as compared to their Chinese and Indian counterparts. In order to make sense of multiethnic groups, it is important to understand the role of gender, particularly the position of senior women in the labour force and how the intersection between gender and ethnicity are bound by a strong patriarchal system in Malaysian society. Also, it is necessary to explore how the theoretical connections employed in this research such as gender segregation, intersectionality and privilege have contributed towards increasing the number of women employed at the upper echelons of management. This indirectly may influence the different social upbringings between senior female managers in this research that leads the women's movement from private to public sphere in the Malaysian setting, which will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.2.2 The National Policy for Women (NPW)

After Malaysian independence in 1957, women were recognised as an asset and as crucial contributors to the development of the country, and hence their participation in the public sphere can be easily seen (Mohamad, 2002). The government has shown strong commitments with the establishment of the National Advisory Council on the Integration of Women in Development (NACIWID) in 1976, as the first organisation to be set up by the Malaysian government to establish the universal action plans on women in national development. This was followed by the creation of the Department of Women's Affairs (HAWA) in 1983, a secretariat to NACIWID, which was designed to evaluate the services offered by public and private sector organisations for women's benefits (Ahmad, 1998). Since then, Malaysian women have actively participated in the World Conference on Women and raised consciousness amongst them relating to the issues of women's participation in the labour force, human rights and democracy and sexual harassment (Stivens, 2003; Dannecker and Mirror, 2006).

Recognising that Malaysian women have much potential to excel in management, the economic development plans appear to assist women in enhancing their careers. In 1989, the government had formulated the National Policy on Women (NPW) as an initiative to empower a larger percentage of Malaysian women in the workforce (Prime Minister's Department, 1990). The policy provides long-term sectorial planning to enhance women's quality of life by eradicating poverty and having better careers in the future. According to the Prime Minister's Department (1990), the overall objectives of NPW are to ensure equal opportunities for both genders, to encourage women to participate in social and economic development and to enhance women's contributions to the growth of nation. It also highlights some major issues that may hinder women from entering the paid labour market in Malaysia.

The NPW has led the government to incorporate a chapter named, Women in Development in the Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991 – 1995) that reflected the government's commitment towards women's enlargement in their careers. It is a special fund for women's career development

and became a fundamental step towards empowering women in Malaysia. As more women were expected to enter the labour force, the government continued to entrench the chapters on Women in Development in the following Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996 – 2000), Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001 – 2005), Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006 – 2010), Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011 – 2015) and Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016 – 2020). These chapters are developed based on the policies outlined in the Beijing Platform of Action, which was adopted in 1995 by the Fourth World Conference on Women (see Appendix A). Yet, the prospects on these subsequent chapters are slightly different in comparison to the first chapter of NPW as the government wanted to focus more on women's contribution to national development.

It is clear that each chapter constitutes important mechanisms of the action plan for women's progression in the next chapter. Each chapter in the Malaysia Plan continued to improve the status of women as equal partners in economic development. Women would be equipped with the training skills for the knowledge-based economy for them to be more competitive in coping with the future challenges. Interestingly, during the Ninth Plan period, the government started to review legal and institutional constraints that may impede women's empowerment in economic activity (Malaysian Department of Statistic, 2005). In order to enhance the role of women in society, more educational opportunities and appropriate family-friendly working environments have been provided for them to improve their upward mobility and enable them to contribute more effectively in the labour market (Noor, 2006; Abdullah et al., 2008). More emphasis on gender equality was given by allowing women to get involved actively in policy-making and providing them with greater access to education. Such efforts would enable women to realise their full potential and could develop women's quality in leadership, as per targeted in the Tenth Malaysia Plan. In implementing the overall plan of actions, the government will ensure that the strategies are consistent with the values, religious beliefs and cultural norms in Malaysia (Malaysian Department of Statistic, 2010).

The establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs on 17th January 2001, which is now known as the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, was a remarkable success for the women's movement as it showed that the Government was committed to changing Malaysian women's status by ensuring that their participation in national development would be more effective and systematic (Prime Minister's Department, 1990). The Ministry is responsible for ensuring the process of policy formulation and determining direction to achieve the goals of gender equality, family development and a caring society in Malaysia. This is in line with Malaysia's commitment to the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration 1995 (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2010; United Nations Statistic Division, 2010).

In August 2001, the Ministry made the greatest contribution to women's achievement by amending Article 8.2 of the Malaysia Constitution to prohibit discrimination in any law on the basis of gender. This reflects Malaysia as a modern and progressive country in promoting gender equality. The implementation of NPW provides a number of positive impacts to gender equality such as improving the quality of life, eradicating poverty, especially among the Malays, and many more. Amin (2004) points out that these policies have had many impacts on women's employment across ethnic groups in Malaysia. In terms of working advantages, the formulation of NPW could be assumed as new incentives for Malays as compared to Non-Malays. Although Malaysia has a Malay-led government, the Malays are still lagging behind their non-Malay counterparts in nearly all economic aspects. Since Malays are typically known as economic laggards, the NPW policies reduced the impediments that may hinder Malay women to advance into the business world (Lim, 2001; Amin, 2004). The Malaysian experience of modernisation can be seen as different from that of other Asian countries in particular ways, and Western modernity is not fully intertwined within the local context (Kahn, 2001).

2.2.2.3 Women and Education

During the era of British colonial occupation, the Chinese received a better education than the Malays and Indians due to the Chinese community being segregated in town areas. Drabble (2000) points out that the majority of English school enrolments came from the Chinese population because they could afford high costs of education and benefited better life progression by going to English language schools. Conversely, Malays found themselves disadvantaged because the English language as a medium, run by the British administration in schools, contributed to the low Malay enrolment. As a result, parents sent their children to Islamic religious schools as they also feared the effect Christian influence might have on them (Baharuddin, 2005; Noor, 2006).

Prior to independence in 1957, the level of girl enrolment in schools was only high at primary level as many of them had stopped attending by secondary school age due to the fact that typically parents wanted their daughters to help them at home with domestic chores, there was a lack of interest in them continuing their schooling and in addition the location of secondary schools was normally in urban areas where fewer Malays were situated (Chan, 1964; Raman and Sua, 2010). The small number of girls going to school was found not only in Malay families, but also amongst Chinese and Indian families as many parents used cultural and religious reasons for not allowing their daughters to obtain formal education. Some parents had a negative impression of formal education considering it unimportant and prevented their daughters from pursuing education because they were afraid that they would not find good husbands as a result. (Musa, 2010). This is, however, not the case for the Malay elite families who were aware of the importance of education for girls because they believed that having

educated daughters would maintain the family dignity and status and would consequently secure good husbands (Noor, 2006; Musa, 2010).

Since independence, the country's education system has undergone tremendous development, and the growth of education opportunities for women has been by far the most crucial factor in their greater involvement in employment (Ahmad, 1998; Hassan, 1998). Ahmad (1998) asserts that the number of girls going to school had increased due to parents beginning to be aware that education could improve the standard of living for their children. Nowadays, all parents are responsible for sending their children to three stages of schooling starting with pre-school education to post-secondary education, excluding higher education (Chang-Da Wan, 2018). All Malaysians now have the opportunity to go to school and pursue the highest level of education without gender bias where women have the right to receive an education at all levels as compared with the period before Independence (Abdullah, Noor and Wok, 2008). Also, the need for a larger second income in the family and influence from parents with good educational levels required women to seek higher education and engage int the paid work force (Ahmad, 2009).

Table 2.1: Numbers of Student Enrollment by Level of Studies in HEIs 2017

Level of Studies	**Male**		**Female**	
	2016	**2017**	**2016**	**2017**
PhD	21006	22761	18468	18948
Masters	40133	40234	55744	47620
Postgraduate Diploma	515	470	823	733
Bachelor	292135	285579	404764	367767
Diploma	207415	204434	208949	208342

Source: Ministry of Higher Education (2017)

In addition, the percentage of female students enrolled in tertiary education has been rising since the 1970s where the latest figures in 2017 reported that there were 56 percent of female students in higher education as compared to 44 percent of male students (Ministry of Higher Education, 2017). Table 2.1 shows that access to higher education institutions (HEIs) has recently been dominated by females at all levels of study, except for the doctorate level. Females made up 54 percent of total enrollment in 2017, decreased by 1 percent from the previous year, whereas the percentage for male students increased by 1 percent to 46 percent in 2017. Although the level of percentage for female student enrolment shows a slight decrease, male numbers are consistently lagging behind females and this fact is always questionable. According to Broecke and Hamed (2008), a possible explanation for such a trend

is that females are more likely to do better academically than males. There is a higher proportion of males who stopped education after the primary and secondary levels (Tey, 2006). Thus, females are more likely to stay on in full time education and pursue higher education given the access to HEIs is competitive with a strong emphasis on academic performance.

The NEP and NVP have contributed to Malaysian women being given better work opportunities, as more women are attaining better educational qualifications. This, however, does not mean that women are getting well paid jobs commensurate with their qualifications. It is reported that pay differentials between women and men remains a challenge in Malaysia (Ministry of Women and Family and Community Development, 2014). The efforts made by the government have generated a positive impact on women's education. Under the NEP, education became an important tool for providing social development and a platform to improve quality of lives of Malaysian people. While education is one of the opportunities offered to women in Malaysia, it seems to benefit the Malay women more than the other races due to the Malay privilege policy (Hussin, 2008; Ahmad, 2009). This policy created more opportunities for the Malays, who were, prior to this, educationally disadvantaged in comparison to other ethnic groups, to enroll into higher education through ethnic quotas in admission policy. This shows that there were strategies in place for increasing the involvement of Malay at HEIs and accelerating access in favour of the Malays prior to the NEP.

Bumiputera enrolment in public universities had reached 63.5 percent, Chinese enrollment 30.8 percent and Indian enrollment 5.7 percent (Ministry of Higher Education, 2017). Non-Malays have greater access to higher education through the private education route but are disadvantaged by the higher fees. The less affluent may not be able to pay these fees and are therefore denied the opportunity to obtain higher degrees. Mellstrom (2009), for example, highlights that due to the Malay privilege that has been inscribed in the Malaysian Constitution, the Chinese and Indian students are seen to strive harder in securing admissions into universities and in obtaining scholarships to ensure a better future than that of the Malays. This finding shows that Chinese and Indian women tend to prove to the Malays that they are competitive enough to be successful academically without receiving extensive financial aids from the government.

Despite the considerable progress achieved by Malaysian women in education, gender differences are still visible in the selected courses chosen by the students. For instance, recent studies by Chang-Da Wan (2018) found that women's enrollment in technical and science subjects is still lower than men's due to stereotypes that maintain gender inequality as female students tend to choose the arts and management fields. Some courses seem appropriate for a particular gender because of traditional attitudes. The segregation in education is likely to have an implication for shaping the labour market, thus, some occupations become predominantly male occupations and others are female-dominated, which will be seen in the

next section. Nevertheless, the important success is that the policy has been made to support women's movement in Malaysia despite the usual gender gap. Even in societies that are known to be patriarchal, the rapid growth of the economy and the outstanding progress of Malaysian women in education has created opportunities for them to enter into the labour force. As more women are attaining better educational qualifications, women are also being given better work opportunities.

2.3 WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN MALAYSIA

The launch of NEP has meant Malaysia has experienced considerable socio-economic growth and led to an increase in the paid workforce, the expansion of occupational opportunities and a decrease in poverty (Houben, 2003; Jomo, 2004) which, at the same time, opened up new employment opportunities for women (Chattopadhyay, 1997). This economic climate change not only encouraged people to migrate to urban areas but also encouraged women's participation in employment with an expectation of improving their lives. Malaysia became *"the most affluent nation in Asia"* (Hirschman and Aghajanian, 1980, pp 32) and has been acknowledged as one of the most rapidly developing countries in South East Asia and was declared by the World Bank as an East Asian Miracle (Khoo, 2003). This economic growth has brought the expansion of occupational opportunities for women to participate in the paid labour market.

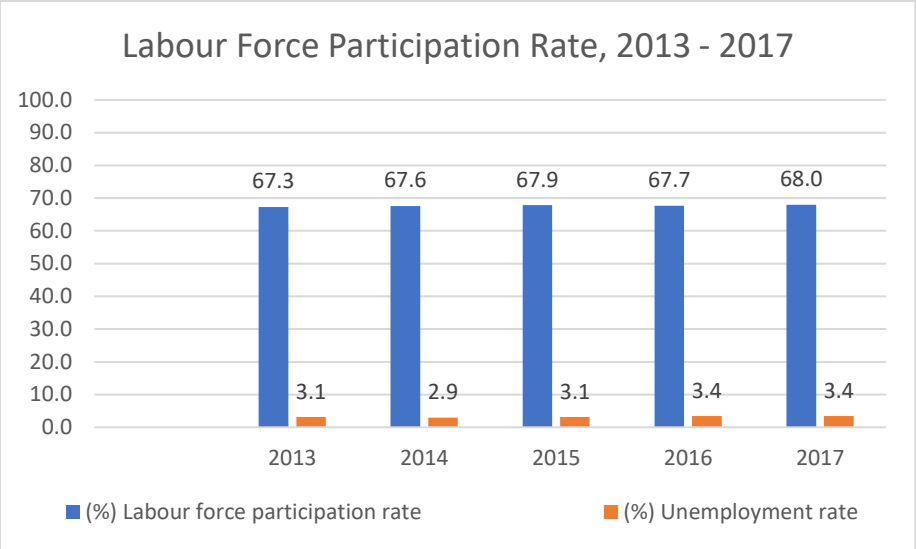
2.3.1 Women and Ethnic Segregation in the Labour Market

Generally, year-on-year evaluation has been conducted by the Department of Statistics to monitor the progress of Labour Force and Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in Malaysia. The statistics recently show that the labour force in Malaysia increased 2.0 percent in 2017 at 15.0 million persons as compared to 14.7 million persons in 2016 and the LFPR in this country as a whole has risen to 68.0 percent in 2017 from 67.7 percent in the previous year (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2017a). Meanwhile, as displayed on Figure 2.3, the unemployment rate during the same period has remained stable since 2016 at 3.4 percent. This, however, does not affect the economic growth in Malaysia as the unemployment rate is still below 4.0 percent, which reflects that the Malaysian economy is still operating in full employment. The remaining 32.0 percent of the working age population not in the labour force are either in full time studies, housework, retirement, disabled or not choosing to work.

Women make up 15.6 million, almost half of the total 32.4 million population in Malaysia (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2018) and they have formed a significant force in the economy since Independence Day in 1957. Employment opportunities, indeed, have changed Malaysian women's role and attitudes towards work. The report revealed that the percentage of women's participation in the workforce marked an increment by 2.3 percent from 52.4

percent in 2013 escalating to 54.7 percent in 2017, putting Malaysia very much on track to achieve the target of 55.0 percent by 2020 (Prime Minister's Department, 2016).

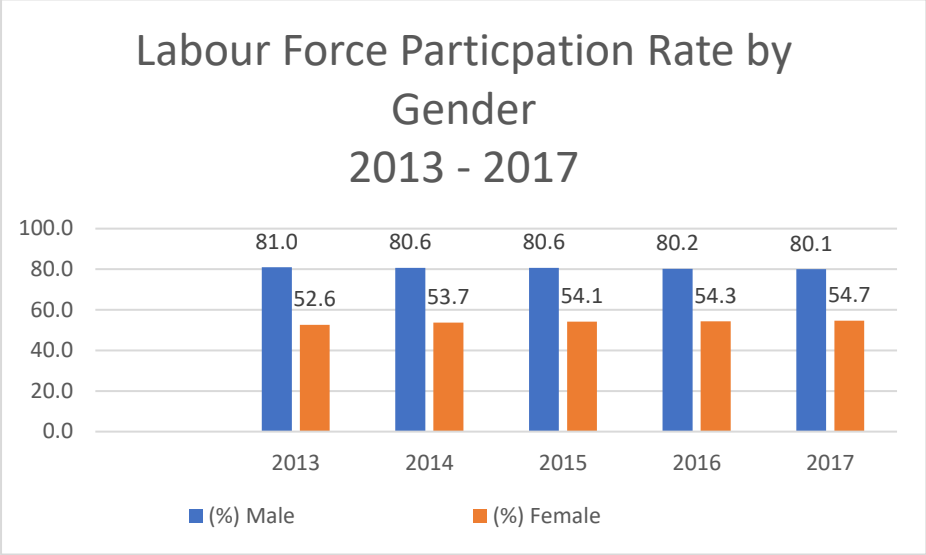
Figure 2.3: Labour Force Participation Rate (%) from 2013 to 2017



Source: Malaysian Department of Statistics (2017)

The participation of females in the labour market for the prime age groups namely 25 – 34 (74.0 percent), 35 – 44 (67.5 percent) and 45-54 (57.1 percent) were higher as compared to the female LFPR at the national level. The male LFPR for the age group 45-54 registered the highest increase of 0.1 percentage points to 94.9 percent (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2017). Overall, though male LFPR was still higher than female for all age groups, the government has long recognised women as one of the primary forces that can be fully-trained and acknowledged their roles in driving forward the future generations and contributing to the economic development agendas. Women in Malaysia have increasingly engaged in the employment sector and this can be seen based on the constant rise in their percentages over the last five years (see Figure 2.4).

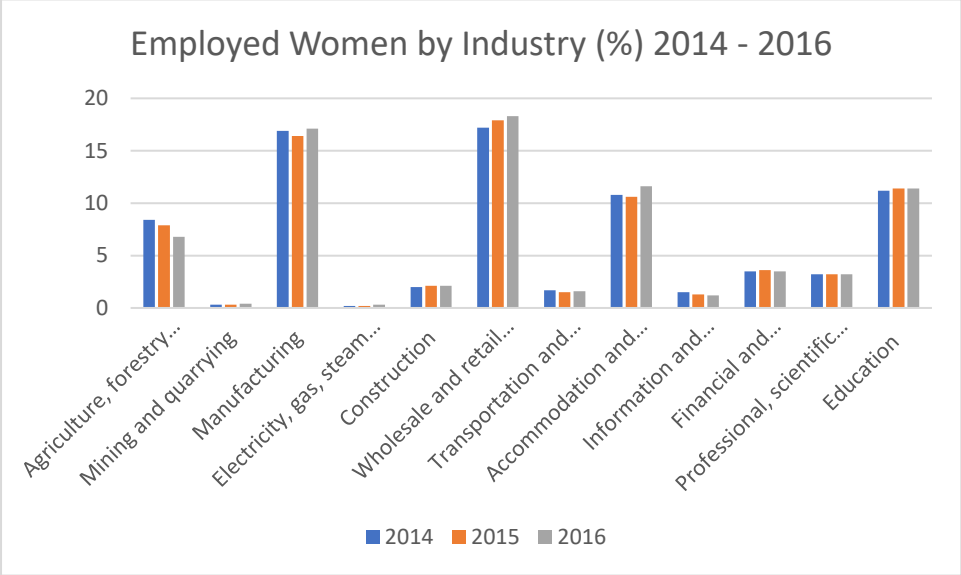
Figure 2.4: Labour Force Participation Rate by Gender (%) from 2013 to 2017



Source: Malaysian Department of Statistics (2017)

The fact that women began making inroads to various industries in the country makes it even more interesting. Figure 2.5 indicates that the labour statistics on the employment distribution by gender within sectors shows that roles of women in business areas are on an upward trend. Women's employment has shifted from wholesale and retail trade to manufacturing to education and accommodation and food and beverage service activities. In 2014 for instance, 17.2 percent of the total female labour force were in wholesale and retail trade, 16.9 percent in manufacturing, 11.2 percent in education and 10.8 percent in accommodation and food and beverage services. By 2016, the proportion of women in these respective industries increased slightly to 18.3 percent, 17.1 percent, 11.4 percent and 11.6 percent, respectively. These are very small increases and perhaps the most interesting trend is the move away from agriculture industry.

Figure 2.5: Employed Women by Industry (%) from 2014 to 2016



Source: Malaysian Department of Statistics (2017)

Although technology advancement has led the global defeminisation of the manufacturing industry from more labour intensive to more capital intensive industries (Ismail and Ibrahim, 2008), women are still overrepresented in the wholesale and retail trade sector. Also, despite the growing process of defeminisation, women in general have been concentrated in those manufacturing jobs which are more labour intensive, such as those in the textile, garments and food processing industries, which are often labelled as “industrial feminisation” and the real industry that encouraged more women to participate in the workforce (Subramaniam, 2011). These industries favoured women as they were the lowest cost and most flexible labour force in the market (Ariffin, 1997; Chattopadhyay, 1997). This suggests the negative impact on the feminisation of the labour market where women were less likely to receive fair pay and working conditions.

In addition, one of the main sources of female employment is in the education sector where women outnumber men. This may be attributed to social assumptions which undervalue the skills required where teaching younger children is considered an extension of women’s traditional and maternal role in the private sphere (Ely and Meyerson, 2000). There are certain occupations in which women are already concentrated which have become even more feminised. In contrast, the data shows that men tend to be overrepresented in the highest paid occupations where male employment is fairly distributed over several industries such as construction, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and transportation and storage. Yet, the construction industry is clearly male-dominated and represents 13.0 percent of male-employment as compared to their female counterparts with 2.1 percent in 2016.

The data presented in Table 2.2 indicates the gender disparities in terms of economic activities. The majority of female occupations are concentrated in occupational categories such as

Clerical Support Workers, and Professionals (teachers, doctors, lawyers, engineers), decreased from 74.2 percent and 55.8 percent in 2014 to 73.4 percent and 55.1 percent in 2016, respectively. The percentage of women in senior official and managerial roles is still relatively low compared with other categories and recorded also a decrease of 1.8 percent over the same period (i.e. 22.2 percent in 2014 to 20.4 percent in 2016). Contrary to the number of employed women in the category of Service and Sale Workers, the percentage increased by 2.3 percent between 2014 and 2016. This suggests that women tend to be concentrated in 'traditional female professions' rather than working in male dominated areas (ILO, 2017). Women appear to believe that there may be barriers to progress in male-dominated fields of work where men are more likely to hold top positions and women are more likely to take on support roles within the company (Budhwar, Saini and Bhatnagar, 2005).

Table 2.2: Employed Women (%) by Occupation, 2014 - 2016

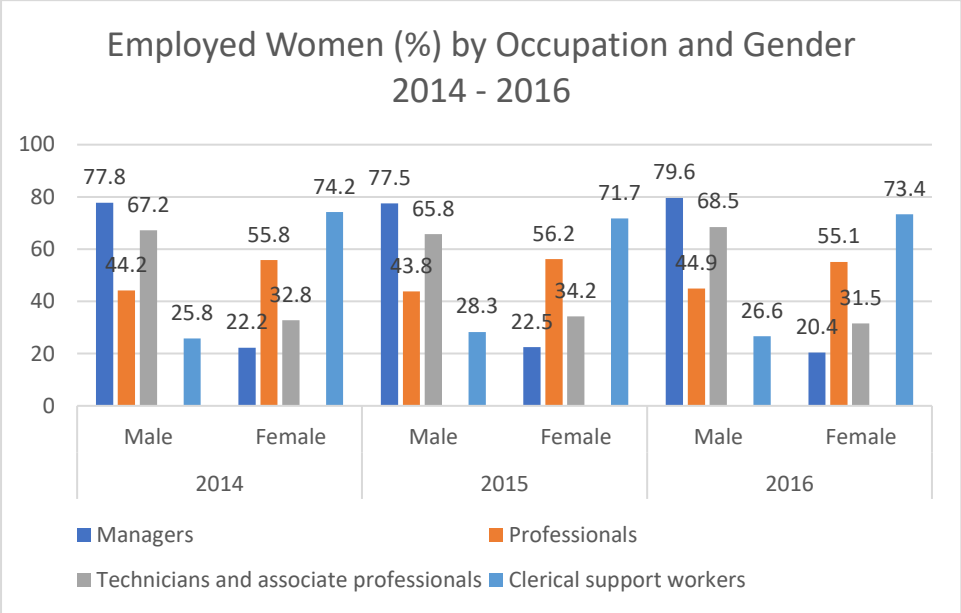
Occupational Category	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
Managers	22.2	22.5	20.4
Professionals	55.8	56.2	55.1
Technicians and associate professionals	32.8	34.2	31.5
Clerical support workers	74.2	71.7	73.4
Service and sale workers	48.3	49.8	50.6
Skilled agriculture, forestry and fishery workers	27.4	24.2	22.6
Craft and related trades workers	16.9	19.2	19.0
Plant and machine-operators and assemblers	20.7	19.4	20.9
Elementary occupations	32.0	30.7	30.9

Source: Malaysian Department of Statistics (2017)

Likewise, Figure 2.6 also shows that women made up a lower percentage, compared with men, when analysed in terms of the percentage of employment by occupation and gender. This is evident in the field of management where more than 70 percent of men were employed in comparison to just 20 percent of women. Despite an ever-growing drive for women to be participating in economic activity, women are still seen to be facing considerable barriers to gaining management positions. It is evident that women are still outnumbered by men in the

year 2016, where 79.6 percent of men are still dominating organisations. Socio-economic factors play an influential role in determining suitable jobs according to gender, age and ethnicity as they are essential to elaborate the prevalence of men over women in the labour force.

Figure 2.6: Employed Women (%) by Occupation and Gender, 2014 - 2016



Source: Malaysian Department of Statistics (2017)

Looking at the trend, the low percentage of women in managerial and certain professional occupations in Malaysia is probably due to the nature of the job itself. Factories and organisations replicate the patriarchal structure of society, where women are likely to be supervised by male managers. It cannot be denied that those involved in managerial and professional roles need to display high commitment and spend long hours in the workplace. Therefore, these fields might be considered less appropriate for women, especially those who are married, because the demands of the job might interfere with their commitment to the family. As indicated by Omar and Davidson (2001), for the majority of working women in Asian societies, the primary responsibilities of caring for the home and children remains, even when they take on domestic helpers.

Other than the economic growth, education has contributed to the significant increase of women in the labour market as revealed in the data. Supported with the research findings, education seems to be one of the main factors that can help women to get hired by an organisation, and consequently to get promoted to top management roles(see Chapter Five). The previous study by Burgess and Tharenou (2002) proves that women with higher qualifications tend to secure a place on the board of directors. Women with higher level of confidence may supersede their male counterparts in top management positions as their

career aspirations appear to motivate them to perform well in organisations (Jogulu and Wood, 2011). Also, being highly educated may have a positive impression on the employer showing them that women can achieve career success and uphold the company's name and reputation at a higher level (Inkson *et al.*, 2012) In the same way as they are able to succeed in higher education.

While they might be enjoying improved educational and employment opportunities, Malaysian women are still required to balance several roles such as wife, mother, daughter and career woman (Omar and Davidson, 2001; Noor, 2006; Subramaniam, 2011). Noor's (2006) study finds that women are greatly affected by the needs to fulfill traditional roles and responsibilities as homemakers. She explains that the patriarchal system runs deep in the Malaysian family structure and while they might be given equal status in the labour market, inequality still exists at home. Besides, women with careers have been affected by issues such as late marriage, divorce and changes in conjugal roles (see Jones, 1981; Ahmad, 1998; Omar and Davidson, 2001; Ministry of Women and Family Development, 2003; Norzareen and Nobaya, 2010; Ghani *et al.*, 2017; Yih *et al.*, 2017). From a cultural context perspective, Omar and Davidson (2001) explain that pressures on women who are not married may be even more intense within Asian societies due to the fact that marriages are social imperatives. The study further asserts that in Malaysia, women are likely to be in arranged marriages where their parents determine their partners.

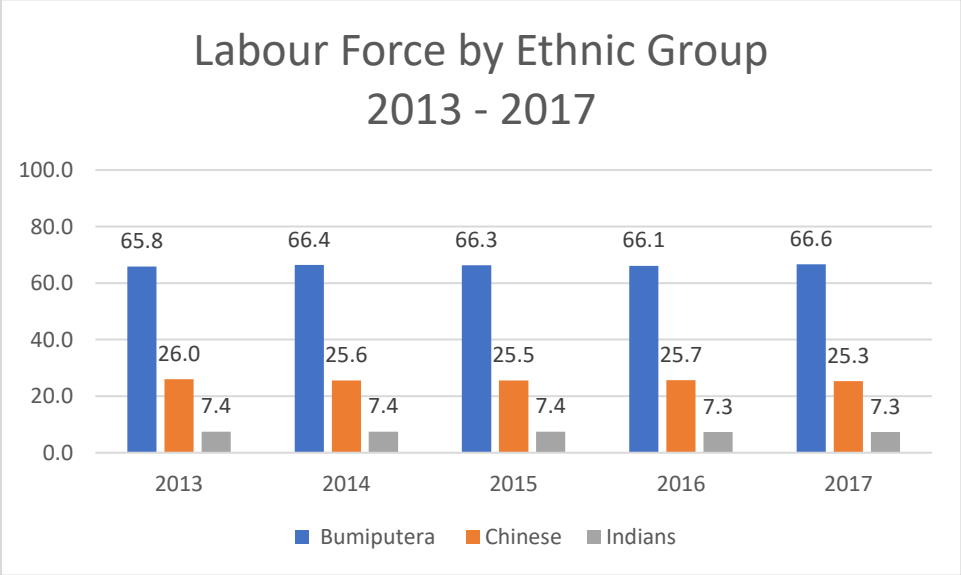
Based on statistics reported under the Marriage and Divorce Reform Act 1974, the divorce rate in Malaysia is increasing every year. The number of Malay divorces recorded in 2018 was 40,269, an increase from 39,709 in 2017 (1.4%). In contrast, non-Malay divorces declined 4.9 percent from 10,605 in 2017 to 10,087 in 2018 (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2019). Interestingly, Yih *et al.* (2017) argue that divorce in marriage is a sensitive issue to discuss in public. One of the obvious reasons for divorces in Malaysia is a lack of understanding where some married couples were too focused on work commitments and put their careers before their families (Ghani *et al.*, 2017). This indirectly suggests that the economic expectations towards dual income marriages has overtaken the cultural and legal expectations, but women are still confined by the societal expectations and private patriarchal system, as discussed in Chapter Five. While the husband might permit his wife to contribute to the family as another income earner, it is still very rare to find a husband who takes on domestic chores and reduces the burden on his wife (Noor, 2006). Data collected in this research offers an interesting opportunity for a more in-depth exploration of how senior women can break through the career barriers and differences across ethnicity.

Omar and Davidson (2004) in their study on women managers in Malaysia have revealed that the norm *"think manager, think Malay male"* is prevalent in Malaysian organisations. More male managers were reported to agree that men were better suited to be managers, especially at

senior levels, and that women lacked effective qualities. In terms of ethnicity, Malay women were described as being too “conservative” to be effective managers. Malaysian male managers believed that Malay women might not be suited to certain jobs or employment areas. The Islamic code of behavior placed Muslim women in disadvantaged positions because they could not entertain clients, mix freely with men or hold senior managerial positions (Omar and Davidson, 2004) in comparison to Chinese and Indian women who may have more freedom to network with men without such religious restrictions.

The development of women’s careers is viewed as dynamic as the diverse cultures in Malaysia. The rapid economic development has prompted many companies to widely open their doors in offering employment opportunities to women. Yet, it should be noted that the workforce in Malaysia is heavily segmented by ethnicity (Lim, 2001; Bhopal and Rowley, 2005) because Malaysian people still place too much emphasis on ethnicity. Though most of the privileges are endowed to the Malays, the result is likely to show that the economy in Malaysia is currently dominated by *non-Bumiputeras*, especially by the Chinese. For instance, in 2017, among major ethnic groups in Malaysia as a whole, the labour force statistics show that the *Bumiputera* remain the highest with 66.6 percent, followed by the Chinese with 25.3 percent and 7.3 percent for Indians (see Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7: Labour Force by Ethnic Group (%) from 2013 to 2017



Source: Malaysian Department of Statistics (2017)

This table suggests that the employment levels for Malays were higher than for Chinese and Indian people, reflecting perhaps the special rights and benefits afforded to the Malays that have been embedded by the government since Independence. Abdullah et al., (2008), for example, suggests that factors such as educational loans, scholarships, training programmes or other development plans provided by the government could accelerate women’s advancement in the workforce. However, one would critic Abdullah et al.'s (2008) suggestion

due to their findings that are drawn from the perspectives of Malay women only that in turn, may not be applicable to the other two ethnic backgrounds as they are not entitled to the same privileges as the *Bumiputeras*/Malays. In this respect, it could be seen that different ethnic groups may exhibit different perceptions on the role of women because they each differ in terms of societal upbringing.

On average, the labour force participation rate amongst women in Malaysia is relatively low as compared to other Asian women such as those in Thailand (Yukongdi, 2005), Singapore (Lee, 2005), Hong Kong (Ng and Chakrabarty, 2005), Korea (Kang and Rowley, 2005) and Taiwan (Chou, Fosh and Foster, 2005). For example, the LFPR for women in the neighbouring countries such as Singapore and Thailand shows comparatively higher levels with 69.0 percent and 70.0 percent, respectively (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2017a). Yet, Malaysian women are still seen as comparable to other Asian countries due to barriers such as lack of equal opportunities, lack of managerial skills, lack of networking, and lack of career strategies (Chou, Fosh and Foster, 2005; Chugh and Sahgal, 2007; Wood, 2008; Rasdi, Garavan and Ismail, 2012), which tend to restrict Asian women from seeking career advancement to the upper echelons of management. Given the case in Malaysia, this could be explained due to the fact that as a Muslim country, the advancement of women in Malaysia may be influenced or restricted by societal factors such as a strong patriarchal system, ethnicity and cultural values as discussed in the previous section.

The last few decades have witnessed a great improvement in gender equality and women's rights, however, it should be noted that some Western human rights ideals are clearly not accepted by the government of Malaysia. Asian societies have sought to retain some traditional values and practices, particularly in relation to gender and modernisation (Xiaolei *et al.*, 2013). In the case of Malaysia, ethnicity, religion and culture remain a crucial element, thus the government had to control these sensitive issues by not violating the sanctity of the Malaysian constitution, ethnicity, cultures, religion and family (Haque, 2003; Saad, 2012). Although women's involvement in the national development agenda should not be secluded to ensure its commitment to achieve gender equality, it is only promoted within certain limits where gender inequalities are still found to exist in socio-economic positions in Malaysia, especially in management.

2.3.2 Women in Management and the Introduction of the 30 percent Quota in Malaysia

Over the years, a number of studies have been conducted on the advancement of Malaysian women in management (Omar and Davidson, 2001; Abdullah et al., 2008; Amin and Alam, 2008; Ismail and Ibrahim, 2008; Arifeen, 2010). Numerous issues on gender equality have been highlighted in their research and have triggered public awareness relating to women's involvement in management. As a result, we have seen the increase in the percentage of women entering into paid employment keeping abreast with the objectives of National Policy

for Women (NPW). Yet, these studies have focused on how far Malaysian women have progressed in management generally, but none of the research highlights how women senior managers from different ethnic backgrounds experience career barriers while climbing to the top, particularly in private sector employment. For example, Selvarajah and Meyer (2008) investigate a comparison of 512 managers' leadership styles from three different ethnic backgrounds; Malay, Chinese and Indian through quantitative study. However, the study does not focus on gender per say, but suggests that understanding the ethnic divisions in Malaysia provides the fundamental leadership understanding in Malaysia where social and cultural factors contribute to the way management is practiced in Malaysia. As such, this research is important to look at how senior female managers in Malaysia succeed in their careers.

In the United Kingdom, the targets set by Lord Davies to have at least a 25 percent representation of women on boards had been achieved (Davies Report, 2014). It should be noted that increasing the numbers of female executive directors is a tougher challenge as compared to increasing the numbers of non-executive directors. Previous research in the West suggests that instead of using the target, the government should reconsider the quotas policy to increase the number of women in senior management (Durbin, 2016; Deloitte, 2017). While the UK government has shown a reluctance to introduce quotas, this has not been the case in Malaysia. The government remains committed towards further enhancing diversity in the public sector in decision making positions.

In line with that, in 2004, the Malaysian government has set a target of 30 percent for the proportion of women at decision-making level in the public sector. This policy seems to have encouraged a greater representation of women in management and professional positions (Abdullah, Noor and Wok, 2008). Women are no longer excluded from being involved at top management, particularly in the public sector, since the government of Malaysia introduced a policy on women at decision making levels. A lot of initiatives on empowering women's employment (i.e. the formulation of NPW and maternity leave) have been proposed to achieve that target. After approval by Cabinet, stakeholders will adopt, implement and monitor the government's commitment to ensure at least 30 percent participation of women in the decision-making processes and structures in the public and private sectors (United Nations Development Programme, 2007). The Plan of Action will allow for the dissemination of policies, structure, processes, time frames and monitoring mechanisms to all stakeholders. As a result, by 2010, women managers at top positions in the civil service had accelerated to 32.4 percent from 6.9 percent in 1995 (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2010), exceeding the 30 percent target set by the state. This encouraging progress is attained through measures undertaken by the government as per highlighted in the earlier plans such as introducing family-friendly workplaces, providing greater access to education, offering managerial skills opportunities and so forth.

Encouraged by the success, in 2011 the Malaysian Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak then extended his target so that by 2016, women must comprise at least 30 percent of top management positions in the corporate sector (Prime Minister's Department, 2010). Efforts will be intensified to increase the number of women in decision-making positions through comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that have been established to track and assess the effectiveness of gender quota initiatives (Prime Minister's Department, 2016). The United Nations focal point has been working closely with the Malaysian government such as the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) of the Prime Minister's Department to monitor progress (United Nations Development Programme, 2007). As part of the monitoring process, a consolidated report of the status of women in decision making positions had to be produced by the consultants to the National Steering Committee (NSC) for approval (Ministry of Women and Family and Community Development, 2014). The NSC will monitor the process through the consultative meetings where the Secretary General of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) will chair the committee. The committee members include the agencies under MWFCD, UNDP Resident Representative, Malaysian Department of Statistics, EPU, representation from gender caucus in Parliament, private sector organisations, civil society organisations including academia, state government and local council representatives which have a direct bearing on the successful implementation of the gender quota policies.

The monitoring processes consist of mapping the past and current status of women in decision-making in the public and private sectors, interviewing key stakeholders on strategies to achieve 30 percent participation of women in decision making, organising various workshops to ensure the successful delivery of the Plan of Action by various stakeholders and also reviewing the existing literature on women and decision-making position (Ministry of Women and Family and Community Development, 2014; Prime Minister's Department, 2016). Ramly *et al.* (2015) mention in their studies that the authority should be responsible for monitoring the extent of gender diversity and board oversight mechanism in corporate boardrooms. In order for the government to effectively act as the driver of transformation in a gender responsive manner, all ministries and local governmental bodies should also be compelled to produce gender disaggregated data related to their policies and activities throughout the year for monitoring and evaluation, aside from informing future programme design (World Bank, 2012). While indeed, there have been many government initiatives already put in place to support more women in senior management, these appear fragmented, with no sanctions for noncompliance to ensure the gender quota policies implemented are obtaining the desired results (Ministry of Women and Family and Community Development, 2014).

The 2012 Malaysian Code on Corporate Governance of the Security Commission requires that company boards should establish a policy formalising their approach to boardroom diversity.

The board committee should take steps to ensure that women candidates are sought as part of its recruitment exercise. The boards are also required to disclose in the annual report its gender diversity policies and targets, and the measures taken to meet those targets. The Prime Minister's decision shows that the Malaysian government keeps encouraging more women to participate in the labour force, at the same time increasing the number of women at all levels, from 'schoolroom to boardroom'. This is considered a major milestone in the corporate governance as Malaysia is the first country in Asia to have introduced such a measure. The Prime Minister believes that the achievements made by Malaysian women prove that when women succeed, a nation will also succeed. Some researchers believe that women tend to manage the organisation more effectively and bring positive elements and outcomes to the firm compared to men (Smith, Smith and Verner, 2006; Cheung and Halpern, 2010). Therefore, the Malaysian Prime Minister might propose that the mission of having a larger pool of talented women in senior management would also strengthen company's structure and heighten job performance in the organisation.

The above situation, however, is not reflected the same in the current Malaysian corporate sector. Though women make up almost 60 percent of the university graduates in this country (McKinsey, 2012), only a small percentage hold senior positions in corporations. The 30 percent target of women at top positions by 2016 appears to be a tall order given that corporates are making slow progress in achieving the national target. According to the recent survey conducted by TalentCorp (2017) as compared to 24 percent in 2013, women account for 26.7 percent of senior management positions in 2016 with only 16.9 percent of women at board level, short by 3.3 percent and 13.2 percent respectively to achieve the quota.. Women only occupy 5.6 percent of C-suite (e.g; CEO, CFO, COO) seats as they are still outperformed by men at this top decision-making level. The report also indicates that 26 percent of the top 100 public listed companies have no women representation at board level, and 14 percent have no women representation in top management positions. There is still doubt over a woman's ability to perform at board level due to women tending to be low-profile, having a lack of self-confidence, low visibility and lack of networking in board circles. Exacerbating this situation is the mindset and perception of associating women with traditional domestic only roles (Abdullah and Ku Ismail, 2013; Abdullah, 2014).

It was also reported that some public-listed companies in Malaysia implement inflexible working arrangements and offer less family friendly facilities such as childcare centres and rooms for breastfeeding mothers, resulting in this low percentage of women senior managers. Thus, the further up the corporate ladder they go, the less visible they become, either because they have decided to leave or because they have become stuck at junior level (Grant Thornton, 2013). Realising the economic potential of women, the Malaysian government has implemented various initiatives and campaigns to encourage the participation of women in the labour market. Through legislation, the government has constituted numerous acts in order to

promote women's careers and provide them with several benefits. Women have been granted with a full pay maternity leave of 300 days throughout the length of their service, with the flexibility to determine the period of maternity leave between 60 to 90 days. A female employee may also choose to use maternity leave earlier than the date of delivery at any time within 14 days of the expected delivery date. With the availability of new opportunities and policies, women are experiencing great changes and many improvements in their lives.

Accordingly, women are charged with the role of care providers and service providers for male members of their families, whilst men are responsible for their welfare and protection. In terms of ethnic diversity, as a multiethnic country, it could be argued that Malaysian organisations should be more diverse in terms of ethnic composition of board directors, however, it seems difficult, given the unequal privilege and cultural policy Malaysia has. It was stipulated that 30 percent of the country's capital should be controlled by the Malays, which translates in this policy that 30 percent of the board members should be *Bumiputeras*, implicitly. In the study of Abdullah and Ku Ismail (2013) on gender, ethnicity and age issues of board diversity, it is shown that the boards of large Malaysian firms are predominantly occupied by the Malay and Chinese males. They further emphasise that by engaging more females on boards, will add value to the decision-making process of an organisation. Boards with three ethnic groups could perform better compared to boards comprised of just one or two ethnic groups. In this respect, the government has enforced all public listed companies to create and disclose in their annual reports the gender and ethnicity composition of the workforce for management. The issues on the impact of ethnicity amongst Malaysian women senior managers becomes vital and critical, thus, it needs an even more thorough analysis to deepen our understanding of such matters. It is important for organisations to embrace workplace diversity because people of different gender and ethnicity bring their unique perspectives and experiences to the table.

The introduction of quotas is a global issue and Malaysia is not the first country that has implemented the quota policy for women at board level. It has been debated in Africa, India, America and across EU countries. Other developed countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States with similar intentions have not achieved the target. Knowing the fact that the government has failed to achieve the 30 percent quota in 2016, reflects that the quota is not easy to achieve, especially in private sector employment. In the case of Malaysia, many private sector companies are not ready for the 30 percent quota, and question whether it is necessary. Although there is a systematic monitoring mechanism provided by the government to measure gender quotas, Ismail et al. (2019) argue that the stakeholders in Malaysia seem not ready for legislative rules, which means no sanctions have been imposed for noncompliance. However, the Malaysian government have not used that as an excuse and continue their efforts by extending the target until 2020 in the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016-2020) to achieve its goal in the next four years (Prime Minister's Department, 2016). The numbers of women in decision-making positions in the public and private sectors

confirm that change is likely to remain slow and it could be a long time of waiting before we see the numbers required to meet Kanter's (1977) 'tilted' group target (detailed discussion on quotas debates in Chapter Three). Also, women themselves must have desire and confidence to improve their capabilities and strive for success.

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented and identified a brief overview of the connections between Malaysia's historical background, and the construction of ethnic backgrounds namely Malay, Chinese and Indian. It then scrutinised the factors contributing to the endowment of special privilege to the Malays by the state, differencing them from non-Malays. This chapter also reviewed the position of women in the Malaysian labour market and existing research clearly indicates the increased participation in paid workforce since Independence. The policies developed by the state such as the NEP, NVP and NPW also improved the perception of women as the new breadwinner in the family, and they are no longer confined to the roles of mother and wife as perceived in the traditional gender ideology. Yet, analysis showed that women are still clustered within certain female traditional occupations such as services and sales positions.

The analysis of the literature has considered some of the debates in relation to potential influences on the proportion of women in senior positions. Evidently, women in Malaysia have made good progress in entering the labour market. It could be seen that a lot of initiatives have been proposed and conducted by the government in helping to achieve the overall diversity of the workforce, in terms of gender and ethnicity. The 30 percent quota of women in decision-making positions both in the public and private sectors have been introduced to promote gender equality. Yet, greater efforts are still needed to enhance women's diversity at top management levels as they are still lagging behind the male workforce. The existing NPW continues to divide the Malaysian society, especially with the restriction of Malay privilege in the Malaysian constitution. It should be noted that ethnicity is an important aspect to look into as Malaysian women from different ethnic backgrounds might have different career experiences.

In general, the evidence suggests little knowledge about the career experiences of women senior managers within three different ethnic backgrounds: Malay, Chinese and Indian. This research has thrown many questions into focus and there is consequently a need to supplement the existing knowledge that has been developed from a Western perspective. If the debate is to be moved forward, a better understanding of the impacts of ethnicity amongst Malaysian women senior managers and how these two social categories intersect. This notion is aligned with the research findings from the Western perspectives by Powell and Graves (2003) who argued that ethnicity does matter where women managers who are from black and ethnic minorities may experience greater hurdles than white female managers. It is not always

sufficiently accounted for within Western theories, especially when this research framed by the intersectionality is used to investigate the lives of women in senior management in Malaysia. Thus, conducting a literature review and contextualising this research to a Malaysia setting would allow the researcher to identify the gap between this research and other studies.

CHAPTER 3

WOMEN'S POSITION IN PAID LABOUR MARKETS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework utilised in this study of the under-representation of women in senior management in Malaysia. It is focused upon a number of key themes, including, occupational gender segregation in labour markets and patriarchal relations in labour markets and the household. This is underpinned by an intersectional analysis of women in senior management, in relation to gender and ethnicity and the privileging of Malay women in relation to their non-Malay female counterparts. The theory of occupational gender segregation aids the exploration of women's employment patterns and how this is impacted by private and public patriarchal relations in the labour market and the home. The application of critical mass helps us to understand how the Malay privilege could be one of the leading factors that hinders women managers to hold senior managerial positions. Privilege theory which explains the dominance of white males in the Global North (McIntosh, 1995), is used in relation to the privileges enjoyed by Malays over those of other ethnic backgrounds. Given the differences in cultural setting between Malaysia and the West, many aspects, including political background and societal expectations, in both contexts, need to be considered. The societal context in Malaysia, as has been described in the previous section, necessitates clarification of the theories in Western literature.

The first section examines horizontal and vertical occupational gender segregation and the situation of senior women managers in the labour market. The theory of patriarchy is central within this discussion because it is argued that Malaysia remains a patriarchal society. This is followed by a discussion of 'critical mass' in the context of a consideration of women's under-representation in senior management and the introduction of quotas.The analysis then turns to a critical discussion of the intersection of gender and ethnicity, which seeks to illuminate and unravel the relative privilege enjoyed by Malay women, in comparison with those from a Chinese and Indian origin. An underpinning argument is that gender and ethnicity intersect to reveal how some women from different ethnic backgrounds become more privileged than others (Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005; Collins, 2015). This is an approach that aids understanding of how the simultaneous intersections of characteristics of difference create new distinct subjectivities that produce unique social positions, which cannot be accounted for by adding together the single categories. Throughout this chapter, some of the discussion will be drawing upon Western literature as there is a lack of research on this in Malaysia. It should also be noted that the majority of the literature presented in this chapter was published prior to 2018. The research had been conducted up to 2018 with a one-year extension spent to complete writing up.

3.2 OCCUPATIONAL GENDER SEGREGRATION

Theories of gender-based occupational segregation in the labour market are important to this study because Malaysia has a strong patriarchal system of male privilege. The Malaysian socio-economic setting is influenced by the historical and political factors where the dominant culture is Malay-Islamic and men are regarded as leaders. Theories of gender segregation help to explain how men and women are horizontally and vertically segregated into different occupations (Hakim, 1979; Anker, 1997; Blackburn *et al.*, 2002; Bradley, 2013). Horizontal segregation explains the appointment of men and women in different managerial areas, women tending to work within traditional female areas such as education, health, administration, finance and banking globally. In terms of the broader labour market, although women have increased their representation in the paid labour force, they are generally segregated into stereotypical female employment; 'the five Cs – cleaning, caring (childcare), clerical (admin), cashiering (retail) and catering (EOC, 2007), which are often low paid, undervalued positions that have very little power and authority globally (O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria, 2007; Wood, 2008; Cabrera, 2009). Vertical segregation, on the other hand, means that men dominate the higher levels of the occupational hierarchy, and commonly represents inequality for women (Hakim, 1979; Bradley, 2013).

Globally, women's labour force participation rate (LFPR) was 48.5 percent in 2018, which is still 26.5 percentage below the rate of their male counterparts (ILO, 2018). In the West, most people work in sectors which are occupied predominantly by their own gender, so that jobs can be categorised according to whether they are male-dominated or female-dominated (Powell and Graves, 2003). Professional occupation is the most common occupational category for men and women, yet gender segregation perpetuates within this category. Although the participation of females in the labour market has increased, horizontal occupation segregation remains strongly evident. Women tend to be concentrated in 'traditional female professions' and the percentage of women in senior managerial roles (vertical gender segregation) is still relatively low compared with other occupational categories (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2017). As indicated by Xiaolei *et al.* (2013), Asian societies tend to hold some traditional values and practices, particularly in relation to gender which had led to more segregation than the West. Socio-economic factors in Asia play an influential role in determining the suitable jobs according to gender, age and ethnicity as they are essential to elaborate the prevalence of men over women in the labour force.

Connecting to the above theoretical framework, this research will be drawing upon Becker's (1964) human capital theory to partially explain occupational gender segregation. This theory explains women's lower levels of human capital in terms of education and work experience. Human capital theory assumes that women do not have the same labour market opportunities as men and are paid less (Cornelius and Skinner, 2008; Sealy and Singh, 2010; Sealy, 2010)

because of lower educational qualifications and the accumulation of less work experience due to domestic issues and childcare responsibilities (Anker, 1997; Mincer and Polachek, 1974). Crompton (1997) describes this as 'gendered niches', where women's association with domestic responsibilities might make them less reliable in employment. Even though the amount of qualifications and number of experiences for both men and women are the same, men are still advantaged to progress in their careers, and women are likely to receive little expectation for promotion (EOC, 2007; Conley, 2008; ONS, 2017). Similarly, Beatrice (2019) argues that women in parts of Asia such as Malaysia, Korea, China, Singapore, Japan, Vietnam, Taiwan and Brunei tend to be left behind where the participation rates in the labour market are consistently lower for women than for men.

Explanations for occupational gender segregation cannot ignore the question of choice in relation to women's employment over how to accommodate work and domestic commitments (Wacjman, 1998; Blackburn *et al.*, 2002). When women make the decision about whether or not to have children, this may be driven by the type of lifestyle women choose or vice versa. Hakim's preference theory is highly contested in explaining women's participation in paid or unpaid and full-time or part-time work (Hakim, 1979, 1995, 2000, 2002, 2006). According to Hakim (2000), women choose three different lifestyles; home-centred, work-centred or adaptive. The home-centred woman applies to women for whom family and children are the main priorities. They prefer to perpetuate their female traditional role as wives and mothers rather than investing in the human capital to the next level. In contrast, the work-centred women are often associated with *"career-oriented women, whose priorities are all focused on the public sphere"* (Blackburn *et al.*, 2002, pp 523). Women in this category appear to be either single or remain childless where their main priority is their career advancement in employment. The third lifestyle, an adaptive, describes women who prefer to combine work and family responsibilities. In relation to my research, all senior women interviewed appeared to be either work-centred or adaptive who choose to work full-time, as will be discussed in Chapter Six. Although most of them have children, a strong support system such as having domestic helpers or supportive husbands has helped these women to succeed in their careers. Given the nature of their roles as senior managers, none of these women categorised themselves as home--centred.

Hakim's work has attracted criticism on many grounds. While she argues that working part-time is a voluntary choice for women, and not influenced by childcare considerations, Ginn *et al.* (1996) argue that the high cost of full-time childcare contributes as a major barrier for women working full-time. Up until now, childcare policies comparative studies have shown that the United Kingdom and the Netherlands run the most expensive childcare market in the West (Yerkes and Javornik, 2019). It is only a practical option for the privileged with high incomes or those with nearby extended family to provide free childcare. My research involves women senior managers who are in full time employment in Malaysia, the theory may or may not fully

explain its application within the Malaysian setting. Women can be perceived as being less committed merely because they have family commitments. The finding chapters of this study will explore whether or not senior women managers in Malaysia choose to be home-centred, work-centred or adaptive while climbing up the career ladders (see Chapter Six).

Men's participation in the domestic sphere is still lower as compared to women (Gregory and Milner, 2009; Tomlinson and Durbin, 2010). Women managers with young children may find difficulties in managing time to handle their childcare responsibilities and may devote less time to organisations (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). Therefore, family-friendly workplace policies are designed to minimise the impact of work on family life which include a variety of leave for maternity and paternity, sickness, career breaks, extended leave, and flexible working hours (Drew and Murtagh, 2005; Lewis et al., 2007). The work-life balance framework is highly gendered as the term itself is associated with the competing devotions of motherhood and careers in managing home and work obligations (Lewis, Gambles a nd Rapoport, 2007; Durbin and Tomlinson, 2014). Singh, Vinnicombe and Kumra (2006) demonstrate that the balance between professional and private life is a very challenging factor given the fact that projects or unpredictable work based on clients' demands often involve tight deadlines and long working hours. There are times when senior managers need to work unsocial hours or weekends and leave work at night after children are in bed (Neale and Özkanlı, 2010; Durbin, 2016). Such situations reflect that working time arrangements are challenging for women with childcare responsibilities and given these working patterns, women find it difficult to be available to work at any time in the day or commit some time outside the normal work hours (Amos-Wilson, 1999). Moreover, in all companies, even those with strong equality programmes, the ability and willingness to work long hours is necessary for career advancement and promotions into senior positions. Thus, this discourages women who are unable to work for long hours from pursuing promotion possibilities (Marshall, 1995).

Human capital theory tries to explain women's lack of advancement to the highest ranks of hierarchies by claiming they possess fewer educational qualifications, lack necessary skills, and gain less of the right kind of work experience for senior manager roles (Becker, 1964). Again, this theory may not explain why occupations are segmented by gender and is unlikely to convince employers to recruit a more diverse workforce. Anker (1997) suggests that economists may not understand the non-economic variables in explaining occupational gender segregation or explain why women enter the paid workforce with inadequate experience and qualifications, why women are largely charged with doing the house chores, why gender segregation persists despite having more or less the same capabilities between men and women, and why gender stereotyping is reflected consistently in male and female-dominated occupations. Even if Hakim's (2000) arguments were accurate for women as a whole, in relation to my research, preference theory is unlikely to be relevant to women who have already reached the upper echelons of management. They probably have made choices about

their preferences and their work life balance to have risen to the level they already hold. Preference theory is less likely to clarify why a smaller proportion of women in senior management progress to board level roles compared to their male counterparts.

Gender equality legislation and its impact on the division of labour may vary in different context settings (Conley and Page, 2010; Durbin and Conley, 2010; Bradley, 2013). These differences are based on organisational and political factors rather than employees' different human capital endowments. Gendered occupational segregation is disadvantageous to women as it promotes negative effects on how men view women and how women view themselves in the workplace. Cultural and social attitudes could be some of the reasons for the segregation of male or female jobs. Occupational segregation has become the critical explanation for gender inequality in paid employment and feminist scholars would agree that gender segregation is pervasive and persistent in most labour markets, yet, they may disagree on the causes of gender inequality in the workplace (Walby, 1990; Bradley, 2013). Walby's (1990) theory of patriarchy may contribute a valuable explanation about how societal norms are constructed through the interaction and influence on people's behavior towards gender discrimination against women. My research, therefore, employs patriarchal theory to explain a situation where men oppress women and continue to dominate decision making positions in organisations (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003; Wang and Kelan, 2013; Durbin, 2016). Women's disadvantaged position in the labour market is a reflection of patriarchy where women remain subordinate in many societies. This will be explained in detail in the next section.

3.2.1 The Theory of Patriarchy

The notion of patriarchy has been very important in explaining the persistence of male dominance in all public and private spheres, including paid work and the home. Walby is a leading expert on theories of patriarchy (1986; 1990; 1997), which is defined as *"a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women"* (Walby, 1990, pp 20). Patriarchy has been the central focus of radical feminist thought and considered as the root cause behind the subjugation of women around the globe. It creates patterns of labour market segmentation where women who are engaged in paid employment do so at the lowest levels of the occupational hierarchy and are concentrated in women's work that reflects feminine aspects rather than male-dominated professions (Blackburn *et al.*, 2002). Yet, this may not apply in all circumstances given that patriarchy is also controversial and rejected by many feminists on the grounds that it is applied too universally. We should note that it is more evident in some cultures than others.

Four out of six structures of patriarchy identified by Walby, based around male power, may be useful to discuss the under-representation of women in senior management in Malaysia: 1) *Paid Employment* in which the labour market either restricts women's access to paid work or discriminates against them in terms of equal pay and job segregation; 2) *Household Production*

where men directly exploit women at home in the form of unpaid domestic labour; 3) *Culture* which may hold different notions of femininities and masculinities, unequal access to cultural resources, language, and other cultural ideals supporting unequal gender relations; and 4) *State* which sometimes promotes patriarchy through legislation and public policy, and provides few initiatives to end gender discrimination or to protect women from patriarchal control of men (Walby, 1990).

Without women challenging patriarchal power within organisations, men's position will continue to be privileged. Although Walby (1990) posits a historical shift from private to public patriarchy with women's increased access to the public sphere, patriarchy persists where women are no longer excluded from the labour market but they are segregated when they enter it. Private patriarchy centres on women's exclusion from the public and confinement to the domestic sphere of the family household. In contrast, public patriarchy means there has been a shift from private to public arenas. While some women may have escaped some restrictions of family life, they still encounter segregation and discrimination in the public sphere (Walby, 1990; Bradley, 2013) and remain disadvantaged, marginalised and exploited within paid employment in a range of ways. *"Women are no longer restricted to the domestic hearth, but have the whole society in which to roam and be exploited"* (Walby, 1990, pp 201). Nevertheless, some would argue that there has been a compromise between public and private patriarchy, in which both can benefit from women's labour.

Radical feminists believe that patriarchy is the leading cause of gender inequality (Riley, 1989; Clifford, 2001), where the male-driven authority and power structures are responsible for oppression and inequality (Clifford, 2001). Women appear to be marginalised by their actual roles in society as they are responsible for performing both child-rearing and formal employment roles. In this sense, radical feminists note that patriarchy perpetuates male dominance in employment and limits females' potential to enter the paid workforce, creating obstacles to female advancement and emphasising how women encounter horizontal and vertical segregation (Walby, 1990; Acker, 2006). Barriers to women in management, especially the senior roles, become apparent and the higher the organisational level, the more obvious the gender gap. This, however, only applies in terms of vertical segregation where in horizontal segregation, there can be marked pay gaps at lower levels.

The introduction of quotas in Malaysia (see Chapter Two) appears to be more aligned to the radical approach to get more women in senior management and progress on equal opportunities policies. Thus, this thesis is informed by patriarchal theory which is more aligned with radical feminism. The assumption of radical feminist theory seems to fit more into this research even though it is originated from the West and viewed as a Western ideology, it is still prevalent in Malaysia. In Malaysia, there has been less of a shift from private to public patriarchy because the household remains important for women, in terms of caring

responsibilities and looking after the family. This is more complex than in the West as gender norms and expectations in Malaysia are such that women make choices but within the confines of the family. While some women in the West may choose to be single, Chapter Five presents more details on how marriage and family remains a normative expectation in Malaysia. It seeks to understand the factors contributing to female under-representation in senior management as quotas are seen to be a radical step that can change the status quo. The next section will explain how the system of patriarchy operates in the Malaysian context.

3.2.2 Patriarchy in a Malaysian Context

Walby's (1986, 1990, 2002) theoretical framework appears relevant to the present research, considering the structures of private and public patriarchy are still prevailing in Malaysian society. Her interpretation suggests that patriarchy changes its forms due to changes in socio-economic and socio-political structures of society. Although Walby's (1986, 1990, 2002) theory is primarily located in modern Europe, the structural social differences between modern Europe and Malaysian society makes her theory partially applicable and also has the potential to explain the scarcity of women senior managers within both public and private sector organisations. In Chapter Two, the contextual material considered the degree and form of patriarchy that Malaysian women experience in their access to the public worlds of work, the state and civil society, which portrays a change in the form of patriarchy. In applying the theory of patriarchy to the Malaysian context, it would be helpful to point out some mismatches between Walby's (1990) theory and the current social structure of Malaysian society.

The most important difference in terms of Walby's (1990) theory, is that the shift from private patriarchy to public patriarchy may not yet be fully visible in Malaysia or may have a different form than that visible in the West. Walby (1990) asserts that in today's Britain, paid work is more important than family and household, which has decreased in its importance in determining the lives of career women. This case is almost opposite to where the form of patriarchy is in Malaysia. Private patriarchy remains powerful in the context of Malaysian society given the first lessons of patriarchy are learnt in the family where the head of the family is a man as a father (Ariffin, 1997; Ahmad, 1998; Mashral and Ahmad, 2010). This shows that men are still dominant, and men's involvement in domestic chores is still much lower than that of women due to the patriarchal system (see Ariffin, 1997; Abdullah, Noor and Wok, 2008; Abu Bakar, 2014). The household production plays a more important role in gender relations than paid employment, with men's position as primary breadwinner giving them greater decision-making power in their family.

The traditional gendered division of domestic chores makes it difficult for women to combine motherhood and a career as women carry out the majority of household chores and childcare, while men retain the rice-winner role (Ahmad, 1998; Abdullah Yusof, 2015). The distribution of tasks reflects how women have been socialised for their roles and responsibilities in the family,

with a focus on the domestic chores, whilst men are responsible for social activities outside the private arenas (Ong, 1990; Raja Mamat, 1991). The secondary status of women is affected by men's perceptions, which are drawn from traditional and societal expectations that have prevented them from assisting their wives because they might receive negative impressions from their relatives and friends (Abdullah, 1987). The society will also look down on any man who disregards or fails to fulfil his responsibilities as the head of the family (Ariffin, 1997; Ahmad, 1998; Mashral and Ahmad, 2010), which explicates that the patriarchal issue not only arises at the family level but also at the society level as a whole in Malaysia.

Moreover, gender inequalities are often derived within the social domain and women's daily activities are still constrained by cultural and religious values (Healy, Bradley and Forson, 2011). Men and women need to ensure that wives are not dominant over their husbands as this is still not accepted amongst the Malaysian society (Abdul Malik and Ismail, 1996; Harun, 1993). As a multiethnic country, it should be highlighted that the ways in which Malays practice their religiosity are distinctive when compared to other ethnicities, such as Chinese and Indians (Fenton, 1999; Fontaine and Richardson, 2005; Amin and Alam, 2008). For instance, Amin and Alam (2008) mention that when Malay women act according to Islamic teachings and please their husbands and children, they will gain the blessings of Allah (God). They believe that a woman will not be a good mother and wife if she abandons her primary responsibilities in the family. Although women have made some accommodations between their position and religious beliefs, they still hold strongly to their roles in the family and possess particular qualities to be obedient wives and good mothers. This perception remains strong especially among Malay women even though their status and position have changed in terms of public patriarchy (Hassan, 1998; Ghani *et al.*, 2017)(Ghani *et al.*, 2017). Women's roles as mothers and wives are still maintained and they are often portrayed as secondary to and standing behind their husbands (Wei, 2011; Cooke, 2010). Husbands have more say when it comes to a major family decision and wives would often become followers.

Several studies in both the West and Malaysia have found that men's participation in domestic chores reduces their wives' burden to some extent and helps them to enhance their career development to the senior levels (e.g. Hashim and Omar, 2004; Ezzedeen and Ritchey, 2008; Beutell and Greenhaus, 1983; Ruderman et al., 2002; Komarraju, 2006; Marcinkus et al., 2007; Bures et al., 2011; Juhari et al., 2012). For instance, Ezzedeen and Ritchey, (2008) assert that that husbands' support is the most cited reason why executive women succeed. Sullivan (2006) asserts that the amount of men's involvement in the private sphere in Britain has increased steadily between the 1960s and the 1990s. Men whose wives earn their own income have made greater adjustments in their attitudes at home and become involved in household tasks because their wives contribute to the family income (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1976; Gilbert, 1994; Brewater and Padavic, 2000; Sullivan, 2006; Cha and Thebaud, 2009). It seems

that there is a negotiation between husband and wife about their roles to conform with their lifestyle, but commitments to the family continue to be under women's accountability alone.

The universal theory of patriarchy has certain limitations related to the inability to provide an appropriate explanation of the differential experiences of diverse groups of women around the world, particularly women from different ethnic groups, the latter being missing from Walby's (1990) work. Malay women are likely to have more children than Chinese or Indian women (see Hirschman and Aghajanian, 1980; Abdullah Yusof, 2015; Chua, Mathews and Loh, 2016; Tan and Tey, 1994). Given that support from their spouses is limited, in order to care for their small children and focus on the family, many women in Malaysia tend to sacrifice their careers by limiting their career goals and opting flexible working arrangements because they want to spend more time with the families (Hutchings, 2000; Subramaniam et al., 2010). Some Chinese working women become full-time housewives to fulfil their domestic responsibilities, particularly childcare, and thus they are still seen as more responsible for their domestic sphere than Chinese men (Abdullah Yusof, 2015). Haque (2003) asserts that the Indian women's obligation and priority must be given to the husband, just like the Malay and Chinese women. Although Haque's (2003) research findings are based on the experiences of women in India, it could be assumed that these understandings are comparable to Indian women's situation in Malaysia. Also, it is argued that many of the domestic or home values among the Malays have similarities with the Indians' (Selvarajah and Meyer, 2008). This problem, indirectly, shows that the investigation on career experiences of Indian women in Malaysia is quite limited. Nevertheless, research on women managers in Malaysia conducted by Omar and Davidson (2004) reveals that remaining single or being married but childless are options that many Malaysian women may not be willing to take. In this sense, patriarchy does not provide a full description of the intersecting oppressions that occur across gender especially regarding some of the ethnic differences that seem to be widening among women as well as between women and men.

Gender discrimination is often camouflaged by the rules and regulations directing society, which have their roots in the traditional male-dominant society that underlies social structures (Walby, 2009). This means that gendered assumptions about appropriate work for men and women, and the impact of women's domestic responsibilities, continue to shape the gendered division of professional work (Mohamad, 2010). It should be highlighted that women's subordination, which has direct roots in traditional societal settings and attitudes, has been perpetuated by the laws that have been incorporated in the societal system. This is identified as the main force that needed change in the patterns of patriarchal societal settings, leading to equal opportunity policies within the Malaysian labour market. This change seems relevant in one of Walby's (1990) pillars: the State. Thus, in Malaysia, the empowerment projects of women are initiated by the governmental commitments to improve the status of women in the labour force. Yet, some aspects of the Malaysian situation are not covered in her analysis such

as extended family dimension, the recruitment of domestic help and women's experience from different ethnic backgrounds.

3.2.3 Senior Management as a Gendered Occupation

A review of the theory of private and public patriarchy leads into a discussion of how senior management became a gendered occupation. Wacjman (1998) argues that management has been socially constructed by men, where men have been responsible for playing a major role in 'doing masculinity'. The concepts of feminine or masculine are seen as oppositional and hierarchical, mirroring the way male and female managers are measured (Alvesson and Billing, 2009). The organisations prefer to have male managers on boards as they tend to be more aggressive, competitive, and career-oriented compared to female managers who are often associated with being empathetic, supportive, and caring (Mclay and Brown, 2000; Glass and Cook, 2016).

Management has traditionally been constructed in male terms leading to the legendary claim the 'think manager think male' circa 1970 (Schein, 1973; Schein and Davidson, 1993; Schein *et al.*, 1996). Marshall (1995) found that many women managers felt marginalised in the workplace and were treated in negative terms as being inadequate, deficient, and incompetent. Yet, they may also be disadvantaged if they act too much like women or too much like men as they will be evaluated as less effective for behaving in the same manner as men (Kanter, 1977). Mavin *et al.*, (2015) argues that such attitudes appear to legitimise and reinforce men's positions at the upper echelons of managerial hierarchy and ensure social attitudes conform to the dominant male model of working. Nevertheless, networking may be considered as a career strategy for senior women to succeed in male-dominated areas and this will be explained in the section below.

3.2.3.1 Networking

According to Linehan and Scullion (2008, pp 34) networking is described as *"usually involve contacts with a variety of colleagues for the purpose of mutual work benefits"*. It is *"the building and nurturing of personal and professional relationships to create a system of information, contact and support"* (Huang and Aaltio, 2014, pp 26). Networking can provide multiple advantages including visibility, collaboration, professional support, and information exchange and can be either formal or informal. A formal network *is "composed of a set of formally specified relationships between superiors and subordinates and among representatives of functionally differentiated groups who must interact to accomplish an organizationally defined task"* (Ibarra, 1993, pp 58). In contrast, informal networks tend to be much broader than formal networks as they involve *"more discretionary patterns of interaction where the content of relationships may be work related, social, or a combination of both"* (Ibarra, 1993, pp 58). In

relation to management, networking is considered as an informal channel and a crucial ingredient for career success, especially to women managers (Durbin, 2011).

Women generally have limited or no access to formal networks, which may hinder the advancement of women into leadership and managerial roles (Kanter, 1977; Ibarra, 1992, 1993; Travers, Pemberton and Stevens, 1997; Linehan and Scullion, 2008; Davidson and Burke, 2011; Durbin, 2011, 2016). Women draw on different networking strategies from those of men, which has resulted in different career outcomes as a result of networking (Davidson and Cooper, 1992). The power of networking is meant to be visible to senior and board level personnel, enabling the acquisition of social capital that is important for career development (Terjesen, Sealy and Singh, 2009). However, as information equates to power, Davidson and Cooper (1992) argue that politics and networking systems are bound up with authority: without access to people with power, which is held predominantly by men, women's opportunities in organisations may be severely limited. Unfortunately, informal networks such as playing golf and having a meeting outside office hours, (or sometimes formal networks) are not easily accessed by women managers (Davidson and Cooper, 1992; Ibarra, 1993), so women's exclusion from these networks can result in them being disadvantaged in the workplace and being unable to compete on a level playing field.

The 'old boys' network has been identified as a barrier to women (Kanter, 1977; Ibarra, 1992, 1993; Marshall, 1995; Wacjman, 1998; Singh, Vinnicombe and Kumra, 2006; Klerk and Verreynne, 2017). As Durbin (2016, pp 133) points out, *"Male networks are by definition* homophilous*, informal, private and formed by those who occupy 'powerful' positions, at or near the top of organisations"*. The informal network relationships at managerial levels tend to be more natural where men just want to come together and exclude women. Women at senior levels tend to network with others who are of a similar or higher seniority and to network informally and form 'homophilous' networks at managerial levels (Ibarra, 1992, 1993; Marshall, 1995). Men are more likely to behave in exclusionary ways with the tendency to share information predominantly with other men, recruit in their own physical appearance, discriminate and undermine women, and enjoy forms of interaction with which they feel comfortable in the male dominated hierarchy (Wacjman, 1998). Davidson and Cooper (1992) acknowledge that women managers are faced with the difficult task of having to break into the 'old boys' network and as a consequence, they are denied social support, contacts, and access to policy information given that men's old boys' networks are most often informal and closed to women. The old boys' networks mirror the patriarchal system in organisations that could contribute to the difficulties women face in gaining access to senior positions.

Although junior women managers are seen as highly competent, confident and assertive (Kelan, 2012), their exclusion from the networks resulted in them feeling isolated, undervalued and stressed. Women managers tend to learn new skills, competencies, and hobbies to create

associations with the men and activities such as golf, after-work drinks, watching football leagues, and discussing cars have been socially developed in all-male settings. These activities really demonstrate good evidence that networks have the potential to be a critical vehicle for career progression, and exclusion from these networks has affected gendered vertical segregation (Omar and Davidson, 2004). Women managers, therefore, seem to force themselves to penetrate the old boys' networks, knowing that these are where many professional links and decisions are made (Linehan and Scullion, 2008). However, women's intention to blend in with the 'good guys' only serves to further increase the level of discomfort amongst the 'bad guys', leading to reduced productivity and motivation in the workplace.

A lack of access to formal networks is increasingly an impediment for women to reach the top and many companies are starting to support corporate networks for women, comprising women at different levels (Davidson and Cooper, 1992; Ibarra, 1993; Linehan and Scullion, 2008). Durbin (2016) highlights that these female networks are set up across industries as an initiative to provide a space for women's voices and to counterbalance the marginalisation they feel from the powerful male dominated networks. Women's networks provide more benefits for women managers, who are often trying to break into male-dominated clubs (Durbin, 2016). Women's networks can be a professional platform to support women who wish to share their career experiences and to progress in employment along with other female colleagues who are needed. According to Travers, Pemberton and Stevens (1997), three different types of women's networks have evolved: professional and occupational networks that bring together women who have similar professional qualifications; in-company networks which divides into formal or informal female groupings in a certain organisation, some of which are open to women at a certain level of career progression; and training networks with a specific professional training focus. All categories of women's networks may be relevant to this research, yet, those types of women's networks will not be the main focus of discussion in Chapter Eight.

Female networks have been criticised for being discriminatory, lacking power, championing feminism agendas to go against the male norms and having no access to the internal politics and information system of the organisation. Women's networks *"are not the panacea for developing leaders"* (Durbin, 2016, pp 133), instead a better understanding of what women want to gain from networks is needed so that women can integrate well into male networks and vice versa, enhancing the progression to the upper echelons of management. Also, the generalisability of networking found that Western research may offer different perspectives in a cultural context that is multiethnic with a complex combination of patriarchy, and intersectionality. This research focuses upon the combination of both formal and informal networking amongst female senior managers in Malaysia, which will offer valuable insights into the importance of networking by drawing out the similarities and the differences between public and private sector women senior managers (see Chapter Eight). Yet, being excluded from the

informal networks, women often experience difficulty in attracting the attention of powerful senior players who could act as mentors. The section below discusses why mentoring is seen as a strategy for women to succeed in their careers.

3.2.3.2 Mentoring

In order to climb the career ladder, mentoring relationships offer an additional help and support with the more powerful mentors where women can tap into extended networks. A mentor is considered as someone who has relevant knowledge and experience, and works with a mentee to give guidance and support throughout the mentee's career development (Eby *et al.*, 2000). Empirical research has shown that there are numerous benefits of mentoring not only for individuals but also for organisations and that these far outweigh any disadvantages experienced (Kram, 1985; Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003; Duehr and Bono, 2006; Linehan and Scullion, 2008; Shore *et al.*, 2009; Melero, 2011). Mentorship is another form of relationship between superiors and junior employees who have different sets of skills and experiences, which explains why mentors are likely to be more senior than their mentees (Ramaswami et al., 2014). They provide promotion opportunities (Durbin and Tomlinson, 2014), encourage mentees to take risks and demonstrate skills (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003a), offer guidance on difficult decisions and give useful career advice to mentees (Kanter, 1977). Likewise, individuals who receive mentoring are inclined to have more positional power, promotions and compensation than individuals without mentoring relationships (Singh, Bains and Vinnicombe, 2002).

In relation to women's career advancement, women have little chance of being chosen as protegees because they are often excluded from informal networking and tokenism (Davidson and Burke, 2011). This emotional support is particularly important to motivate women who feel isolated amongst their male-dominated colleagues. Vinnicombe, Doldor and Sealy (2018) provide a clear justification that women who advance to senior management are likely to have mentors and this suggests that women managers may need mentors even more than men due to the discrimination and obstacles they encounter in attaining top managerial positions in the workplace. In other words, senior mentors can sponsor their female protégées into senior management circles and gain access to inside information that is usually obtained via the old boys' networks (Durbin, 2016). Nevertheless, it is highly likely for senior women to be mentored by people who are also holding senior roles.

Kram (1985) identifies that mentoring encompasses two primary functions; *career development* such as sponsorship, coaching, protection, providing challenging assignments and exposure; and *psychosocial support* such as acceptance and confirmation, counselling, friendship and role modelling. Both career and psychosocial functions play an interactive relationship and may be detected either during the formal or informal mentoring. For instance, Parise and Forret (2008) assert that formal mentoring schemes could promote diversity

initiatives, role modelling, counselling and focus on mentees achieving job targets, rather than personal life issues. The work of Allen and Eby (2008) indicates that mentors in their study offer great support to ensure their mentees have good career trajectories. The protegees, on the other hand, regard this scheme as a forced relationship for having to prove their mentees commitments by writing a career progression report to their formal mentors. Such situations reflect the downside of formal mentorships in the workplace.

Although organisations may offer formal mentoring schemes, informal mentoring appears to provide successful outcomes as there is little involvement by the organisations where mentees can identify, approach, and choose their own potential senior managers to be their mentors (Singh, Bains and Vinnicombe, 2002; Durbin and Tomlinson, 2014). Durbin (2016) suggests that mentees with informal mentoring relationships appear to advance faster than those with formal mentors as they could convince their senior managers to informally mentor them. Durbin (2016) further argues that some formal mentoring schemes have been poorly designed and perceived as being forced by simply allocating their mentors to the wrong targeted protegees. This reflects the potentially darker side of mentoring in the workplace. There is a tendency to have a mismatch between mentor and mentee backgrounds, attitudes, beliefs and values, mentor self-absorption, manipulative behaviours by the mentor, poor interpersonal and competency skills, and mentor neglect of the mentee (Eby *et al.*, 2000, 2010). Yet, getting the right mentors with the relevant experience at senior management levels outside the employer-formal scheme is not easy. As women progress to higher managerial ranks, they are more likely to be without female mentors (Broadbridge, 1999; Powell and Graves, 2003).

In the study of female managers in the IT industry in Ireland, Cross and Linehan (2006) emphasise that mentoring policies can have a negative impact on women's career advancement. Women in their studies believe that having a powerful mentor at work is a vital route to being promoted to senior roles, useful for building women's self-confidence and providing the necessary psychological support. In contrast, a lack of access to mentors is seen as a greater barrier to women' s career progression for being denied access to important information (Singh, Bains and Vinnicombe, 2002; Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003; Durbin, 2016). Although mentoring may help junior managers to break down the barriers, Kelan (2012) argues that it seems difficult for junior female managers to have senior mentors. Women are less likely than men to be mentors given the shortage of women senior managers in the workplace who can support women to bridge the gap between senior and junior levels (Marshall, 1995; Ehrich, 2008). Female mentors tend to provide emotional support whereas male mentors have the inclination to guide from an instrumental perspective (Feeney and Bozeman, 2008). Interestingly, men are more likely to have same-gender mentoring relationships than women (Ehrich, 2008), which reflects the low numbers of women in senior roles.

Women who prefer to work with male mentors may be associated with male networks (Bevelander and Page, 2011) given the fact that women-to-women mentoring relationships can be unsatisfying (Parker and Kram, 1993). These notions may reflect that as long as the executive suite is still largely populated by men, male mentors will be in a better position to provide access to advancement opportunities than female mentors. The cross-gender mentoring, however, is more difficult to manage than same-gender relationships because of sexual issues, jealousy of spouses and negative reactions from other co-workers distractions that could lead to marital disruption and damaging gossip (Kram, 1985; Broadbridge, 1999; Powell and Graves, 2003; Ehrich, 2008). The cross-gender mentoring relationships are less likely to provide psychosocial and role-modelling functions than same-gender relationships (Ehrich, 2008). Applying Kram's (1985) concepts to Ehrich's (2008) results, therefore, it seems that men gain more instrumental help from their mentoring arrangements than women do. Male mentors are likely to introduce their mentees to powerful networks. When men mentor women, they may not understand women's feelings as they have not been in their shoes. Yet, when women mentor men, they may be unable to act and manage as men do as they are still struggling to blend in with the masculine characters in the male-dominated organisations (Broadbridge, 1999).

In terms of ethnicity perspective, Showunmi, Atewologun and Bebbington (2016) in their study of British black and ethnic minority female managers, has shown that these managers are less likely to be in mentoring relationships compared to their white female counterparts. White male and female colleagues who engage in mentoring have benefited more, which has led to the frustration of BAME female managers as they require greater guidance and support to progress in their careers. This reflects that gender and ethnic differences could significantly hamper feelings of closeness between black and white people, and that the psychosocial support received from cross-ethnic mentoring would be significantly less than same-race mentoring. However, this research does not fully explain the different kind of support women from minority ethnic backgrounds are likely to receive but rather it focuses on how mentoring schemes are run in public and private organisations. Having explained the importance of mentoring for women (Kram, 1985), same-gender versus cross-gender mentoring relationship (Ehrich, 2008) as well as formal versus informal mentoring (Durbin, 2016), in general, a focus of this thesis will be to investigate whether or not these Western empirical findings on mentoring may be applicable to the public and private senior female managers as a key ingredient for them to reach the upper levels of management in a Malaysian context, which will be discussed later in Chapter Eight.

3.3 THE UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT: TOKENISM, CRITICAL MASS AND QUOTAS

3.3.1 Senior Women, Tokens and Minorities

The concept of tokenism has been used to explain many of the difficulties that women encounter when they are in the minority in male-dominated environments. According to Kanter (1977), if women comprise less than 15 of a total category in any organisation, they can be labeled as 'tokens', as they are viewed by the dominant group as symbols of their group rather than as individuals, and thus as minorities (Ibarra, 1992, 1993). Only if the group tilts to around 30 – 35 of women, do they cease to be tokens and the culture and behaviour of the group may begin to change. Kanter (1977) further argues that as tokens, women are subject to three perceptual tendencies: visibility, contrast and assimilation. Because of their rarity, tokens become highly visible and are judged by their gender, rather than for their skills and achievements. The smaller the number of tokens, the more visibility they gain.

Also, being different to others may put pressure on token women. The negative images about their gender and ethnicity make women choose to either remain isolated or try to gain acceptance by becoming similar to the dominant group. However, by establishing themselves in the male-dominated groups, token women often use dominant group norms to exclude other women from membership. This suggests that tokenism could create a pattern of behaviour called the 'queen bee syndrome', which ironically refers to a woman who can be described as a dominating, successful, bossy senior female executive and is likely to be unhelpful to other women (Mavin, 2008; Staines, Travis and Jayerante, 1974), partly because of her desire to remain unique and her fear of competition. This is explored in the discussion chapter where senior women share their experiences of dealing with the queen bees in the workplace.

In contrast, Huse and Solberg (2006) argue that tokenism may allow women to have the opportunity to improve their status and to represent the diversity of board members. It highlights that a radical approach such as gender quotas with the purpose of increasing the representation of women on boards may add burdens to the equality of women relative to men. If women directors are regarded as tokens, using quotas may exacerbate existing stereotypes and prejudices, and as a consequence women as a group may be regarded as less valuable board members. The theory of tokenism underpins the concept of critical mass. Scholars argue that the numerical proportion of female directors has to be significant enough to allow the female voice to be heard and truly valued. This is of particular relevance in Asia as the participation of women in senior corporate positions remains low (Low, Roberts and Whiting, 2015). As Terjesen, Sealy and Singh (2009) argue that social structures of individual countries determine the number of women on boards, the degree of tokenism and hence the ability of

women to perform at work should vary from culture to culture. The following section touches upon the critical mass and gender quotas debate.

3.3.2 From Tokenism to Critical Mass

The question of 'how many women does it take'? to achieve a critical mass of women, is one taken up by Kanter (1977) who argues that the *tilted* groups (at a ratio of 65:35, male:female) and *balanced* groups (60:40 to 50:50) are where we begin to see a difference in women's representation. It seems that the *balanced* groups are likely to achieve equality between men and women with the characteristics of individual women becoming dominant where the group dynamics depend on external factors such as the state role and structural organisations (Krook and Norris, 2014; Parker, 2017). In contrast, Kanter (1977) believes that women have to be in the *tilted* group with a ratio of around 65:35 men to women to begin to make a difference. Women in *tilted* groups are able to avoid performance pressures and token isolation, which has previously prevented them from forming coalitions with other women and escaping role entrapment to allow them to pursue interests that may not conform with female stereotypes.

While Kanter's (1977) study is central to the concept of critical mass, her group proportions have rarely been questioned. Yet, Dahlerup (1988) critiqued Kanter (1977) arguing that a smaller number of women (critical actors) may make more of a difference than a balanced number of women. The critical mass argument is primarily applied to situations where women have not reached 30 in decision-making positions. It seems unrealistic to expect major changes until women's representation has reached a critical mass because a small number of women tend to be tokens (Dahlerup, 1988). By analogy, it has been proposed that three or more women can make the experience qualitatively different among women themselves and the board as a whole when they exceed a proportion of 30 in organisations. However, the interviews with corporate directors conducted by Broome et al., (2010), have failed to demonstrate that the theory of critical mass can provide different boardroom outcomes. They claim that having to deal with being the first female in the boardroom, women tend to feel discomfort and stress that could decrease the level of job performance. The movement to a more equal allocation has been slower than expected and white men continue to dominate senior management positions.

The theory of critical mass has proven useful in making concrete improvements in the real working life as it insists that a few token individuals are not sufficient for provoking policy changes controlled by men (Torchia, Calabrò and Huse, 2011; Durbin, 2016). Hence, the percentages count for a number of reasons especially for women to express their views and raise awareness around women's issues, that eventually complement Kanter's (1977) findings. Women are able to work more effectively together as their numbers grow and appear to make a difference either to provoke a backlash among male counterparts or inspire other women to achieve their career goals. Yet, if there are simply not enough of them to make a difference

there is a need for measures to achieve a critical mass. Over the course of time, the allocation of power in organisations would change to reflect more gender equality (Seierstad, 2016). Women have to be represented in specific proportions in order to make a difference.

Nevertheless, the application of Kanter's (1977) theory is limited for this study in several ways. First, Kanter investigates the experiences of token women in corporations, not women as minorities in senior management. Her empirical evidence derives from a case where the ratio of men to women is *skewed* in men's favour given her main objective is to discover what happens to token women in male-dominated organisations. In these *skewed* groups, the male dominants may control the group and its culture whereas the numerically few who happened to be women, will be known as tokens due to their minority status. Also, she examines how proportions affect tokens' abilities to fulfil their roles as employees, where their job performances are assessed by male superiors in the job hierarchy. In fact, Kurebwa and Ndlovu (2017) argue that Kanter's (1977) research does not speak to the question of whether or not female board directors will seek to act for critical actors.

Secondly, although Kanter (1977) does give a justice explanation about sloping points when groups move from *skewed* to *tilted* to *balanced*, her ratio differences are large and percentage points of up to 85:15, or 65:35 and 60:40 down to 50:50 demonstrate qualitative distinctions among groups. For instance, groups with proportions like 80:20 and 75:25 should be categorised as *skewed*, since no change can occur until the ratio is 65:35, while it suggests that such groups are on their way to being *tilted* as they are moving along its continuum. This uncertainty could generate opposite predictions regarding the interaction between the gap, that requires continuous research by feminist scholars until the issue of discrimination towards women has been diminished, which will not be happening in the near future.

Finally, Kanter (1977) has explicitly removed gender from her analysis by ignoring the importance of women given that her studied corporations are mostly populated by men. Also, she underplays the role of men without exploring how men could learn to interact with a woman who is not their wife and avoid the potential of backlashing against women in a male-dominated world. Since Kanter (1977) focused on the *skewed* groups, she simply does not have the empirical material to theorise how men and women senior managers will improve the transition from *skewed* to *tilted* groups. Moreover, findings need to be expanded to seek the applicability of critical mass theory within developing countries where multiple social categories appear to intersect in different forms of oppression. As explained in Chapter Two, Malaysia was the first Asian country to introduce gender quotas for women to be in decision-making positions. Therefore, this study seeks to understand whether the role of critical mass that has been introduced from Western perspectives, may provide positive or negative impacts for women to achieve gender equality in senior management, particularly in a patriarchal country like

Malaysia. The following section focuses on the quotas debates worldwide and its relation to the critical mass theory in this study.

3.3.3 Critical Mass and the Quotas Debate

The contribution of radical feminists is central to the debate on gender quotas to have more women in senior management (Riley, 1989; Clifford, 2001). Although the introduction of gender quotas can be a means of remedying women's numerical under-representation, its implementation remains controversial. Quotas for women in decision-making positions entails women constituting a certain percentage of the members in senior management for example at least 30. Yet, it seems that women are a long way from achieving those required percentages (Durbin, 2016). Linking back to critical mass theory (Kanter, 1977) from the previous section, gender quotas require the government to set a minimum percentage for women's representation on corporate boards, often between 20-40 , sometimes 50 , or they may set the maximum or minimum representation for either gender (Seierstad, 2016; Terjesen and Sealy, 2016). Quotas do not only serve as reminders about the political need for women's inclusion in decision-making, but also provide proportional representation in senior hierarchies (Broome, Conley and Krawiec, 2010).

It is interesting to note that various scholars have argued that quotas for women are important and seen as an open door to a male-dominated arena (Kanter, 1977; Dahlerup, 1988; Durbin, 2016; Terjesen and Sealy, 2016). As pointed out by Terjesen et al., (2014), institutional factors play a major role to legislate the quotas for boards of directors, bringing in diverse women with different skills and perspectives into management. For some, the introduction of quotas is the way forward as this would reduce structural discrimination for women in the workplace (Idea, 2003; Squires, 2003; Suisse, 2012). Also, the representation of women in senior roles and at board level may give positive impact on the performance and reputation of companies as a whole (Adams and Ferreira, 2009; Liao, Loureiro and Taboada, 2019). According to Squires (2003), quotas can be regarded as a fast-track to gender equality, otherwise, progress will be too slow because women still simply never get a level playing field to make it into leadership.

Moreover, quotas are generally seen as a positive action of the law to assist in the promotion of gender balance in decision-making positions. Most of the European countries that have achieved significant increases in women's representation have done so through the use of quotas. Linehan (2019) argues that gender quotas are necessary because women constitute the majority of the population in most countries, yet their voices are routinely discounted, submerged or undervalued in male-dominated arenas. In December 2003, Norway was the first country to adopt obligatory quotas to contain a representation of 40 women, first in public and later in private sector listed companies by 2006. As a consequence, women now make up 42 of board members in Norwegian companies (European Parliament, 2013; ILO, 2018). Although this introduction has been successful in increasing women's presence in the

boardroom, Norway's legislation for gender quotas on corporate boards also raised worldwide debates about whether it should be implemented in other countries. So far, following Norway, some countries have introduced quotas for women on corporate boards of directors such as Belgium, Germany, France, Spain, Iceland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Argentina, Italy, and Mexico (Baldez, 2004; Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008; Rickne, 2015; Weeks and Baldez, 2015).

The idea of a gender quota is rejected by some countries, such as the UK (Davies Report, 2014) with a preference for voluntary targets. However, the percentage of female Executive Directors on FTSE boards is only 6.9 (Davies Report, 2014). Quotas can also have negative effects on attitudes if shareholders are restrained in their choice of board members and are forced to choose women on a board against their will (Pande and Ford, 2011). There is also another argument against quota law in that it challenges the companies' autonomy and the right of employers to select their own board members based upon their own criteria, at a time when there is a lack of qualified senior women to be brought on board (Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2010; Wang and Kelan, 2013). In addition, most companies around the globe have a dearth of black and minority ethnic women on their boards (Parker, 2017). The BAME representation on UK FTSE 100 boards is currently at around 5, which is much lower than the expectation if based on the population of this country.

This section has reviewed both the positive and negative sides of quotas where both sides present challenges and opportunities faced by countries considering adopting quotas. More and more countries are taking up gender quotas in order to increase the representation of women on boards and the evidence above points to a development of quotas possibly becoming the norm (Liao, Loureiro and Taboada, 2019). Although Malaysia was the first Asian country to adopt the mandatory quotas for women in decision making positions, the target was not reached in the private sector (Ismail et al., 2019; Izharuddin, 2019; Lim *et al.*, 2019). The empirical results of this study show that the gender quota has had a positive impact on the number of female senior managers within public and private organisations in Malaysia. Yet, the quota policies may only help women in the majority group i.e. the Malays and not the minority women as the latter are more likely to work in the private sector. The State can exert more influence to achieve its policy on quotas in the public sector than the private sector. Parallel to Parker's (2017) report, these are powerful reasons for being concerned about positive action measures and analyses the impact of the quota on differences of social category such as gender and ethnicity due to the fact that Malaysia is a multi-racial country with a strong patriarchal system.

An important point to make is that the relationship between gender quotas and intersectionality has remained under investigated (the Parker review is an exception), the focus so far being on increasing the numbers of women on boards. The labour market is an effective platform for

investigating intersectionality (Durbin and Conley, 2010; Healy et al., 2011; Holvino, 2008; McBride et al., 2015; McCall, 2005) as it enables researchers to bring to light inequalities among multiple social groups empirically where gender discriminations and other forms of discrimination are evident in occupational gender segregation (Durbin and Conley, 2010). Approaching gender quotas from an intersectional perspective that recognises the intersection of gender and ethnicity raises concerns about managerial representation for under-represented minority women. For example, Browne and Misra (2003) conducted a study to demonstrate how race and gender intersect in the US labour market, which revealed that gender and race are mutually constructed as well as serving to restrict some people while privileging others.

The next section explains the concept of intersectionality and presents a critical review of literature examining how gender and ethnicity intersects in the lives of some senior female managers in Malaysia.

3.4 WOMEN IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT: AN INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

3.4.1 What is Intersectionality?

Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) first articulated intersectionality as a theoretical framework in a legal studies context to address the complicated nature of oppression rooted in race and gender. She aimed to show there is no language to express how the experiences and struggles of women of colour could be explained by feminist or by anti-racist theories on their own. Over the following twenty years, intersectionality has become a central tenet of black feminist theory in the field of women's studies. The evolution of intersectionality as a theoretical framework has drawn black feminist responses to the recognition that the intersections of gender with other dimensions of social identity are the starting point of theory (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991).

Although the concept of intersectionality has strong roots in legal studies, it has become a new paradigm in gender studies and the need for an intersectional analysis has been widely accepted among feminist scholars in the fields of women studies and feminist theory (Davis, 2008; Hancock, 2007; McBride et al., 2015; Weber, 2001; Yuval-Davis, 2006). As proposed by Crenshaw (1991), intersectionality rejects the single-axis framework and analyses how other social identities such as gender, class, ethnicity and race may intersect to shape the multiple dimensions of black women's lived experiences. Yuval-Davis (2006) explains it in terms of the imagery of crossroads and traffic, *"Intersectionality is what occurs when a woman from a minority group … tried to navigate the main crossing in the city … The main highway is 'racism road'. One cross street can be Colonialism, then Patriarchy Street …. She has to deal not only with one form of oppression but with all forms, those named as road signs, which link together to make a double, a triple, a multiple, a many layered blanket of oppression"* (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p 196). Thus, the uniqueness of intersectionality lies in *"the ways in which it*

conceptualizes the constitution of, relationship between, and multi-level analysis of categories of difference" (Hancock, 2007, p 71). The strengths of intersectionality are it focuses and strives to avoid fixed assumptions of identities.

Using the actual experience of domestic violence, rape and remedial reform amongst black women in the United States, Crenshaw (1991) identified three types of intersectionality – structural intersectionality, political intersectionality and representational intersectionality. Structural intersectionality refers to how social systems (e.g. patriarchy, capitalism, heteronormativity) and structures (e.g. laws, policies, cultures) in society that allocate resources according to the standards in maintaining privileges of white people by oppressing the rights of others, could affect individuals and groups differently. Political intersectionality on the other hand highlights how the traditional feminist and antiracist politics have contributed to the marginalisation of ethnic minority women who are often disempowered as a result of being situated within at least two subordinated groups; gender and race, neither of which alone may adequately address the needs of black women themselves. Representational intersectionality refers to how race, class, gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity may influence in shaping cultural constructions of women of colour (Crenshaw, 1991). Crenshaw's explanation of intersectionality is central to understanding the complexity of lived experiences for being women with multiple differences, in particular minority ethnic women.

The crossroad metaphor has been used to represent the clashing intersection of inequalities where two marginalising characteristics that produce various forms of disadvantages cannot be accounted for by adding together the single categories (Crenshaw, 1991). The experiences of a black woman are different from her white female or black male counterparts. Theoretically, intersectionality posits that identities, especially marginalised and oppressed identities, do not stand alone and are not simply additive. Instead of being additive, King (1988) argues that social identities are multiplicative and overlap simultaneously to determine multifaceted social discriminations. As a result, women of colour continue to qualitatively face different barriers in the workplace due to multiplicative disadvantage for being females and minority ethnic (Choo and Ferree, 2010).

Hancock (2007) asserts that intersectionality can be widely applied to explore the multifaceted relationships between social groups and structures, in varied contexts, beyond the limits of women of colour. In relation to this research, an additive approach may fail to capture the complex associations between multiplicative social disadvantage which seeks to explain how these intersections might arise and why Malaysian women of different ethnicities are under-represented in senior management. The multiplicative approach, multiplies the discriminations and produces a special algorithm (Hancock, 2007). Intersectionality is not just about race plus gender or race plus disability, it creates a new form of disadvantage. Hancock (2007) further highlights on the individual-level approaches by emphasising individual experiences and

within-group differences, which are central to this study. For instance, senior women in Malaysia who are Chinese and Indian, do not just experience being the women plus being of Chinese or Indian origin, but the fact that they are Chinese or Indian women, is a very specific category that could lead to a particular kind of disadvantage as non-Malays.

Intersectionality elaborates that socioeconomic and political conditions are not shaped by one axis of social division, but rather by intersecting multiple axes of differences. The list of differences, however, appears to be indefinite and that could lead to a weak point of intersectionality theory. For instance, the overlapping social categories and diverse complexity could be one of the challenges of doing intersectionality studies. It can be overcome to some extent through the use of categorical approaches (McCall, 2005). McCall (2005) conceptualised a continuum of three different approaches to study intersectionality – anticategorical complexity, intracategorical complexity, and intercategorical complexity.

First, anticategorical complexity offers a deconstruction and rejection of social categories such as gender and racial/ethnicity. It focuses on how concepts, terms and categories are constructed. Second, intracategorical complexity focuses on *"particular social groups at neglected points of intersection"* (McCall, 2005, pp 1774) and enables an understanding to differentiate within different identity groups. Intracategorical complexity seeks to highlight the diversity of women's experiences, even amongst women who share similar gender and nationality but experience different facets of suppressions such as age, sexual orientations, racial, ethnicity, privilege and class. Intracategorical complexity looks at various identity categories and at the neglected points of intersection *"in order to reveal the complexity of lived experience within such groups"* (McCall, 2005, pp 1774). This approach falls in-between the anticategorical and intercategorical. It is typically associated with qualitative rather than quantitative methods in the social sciences. This enlightens us that intersectionality perspectives may not be entirely compatible with quantitative methods because quantitative data requires clear categories. Finally, similar to Hancock's (2007) focus on individual-level analyses within group differences, intercategorical complexity which is the approach favoured by McCall (2005) requires multi-group studies to address the links between inequalities and the categories within society.

McCall (2005) suggests that the strength of this intercategorical approach provides insights into the complexity and diversity of the experiences of social relations within the social groups. It also strategically maintains a critical stance towards a comparison of analytical categories which are selected in advance and most likely involve quantitative study. My study, however, is based on qualitative research from an intercategorical perspective with Malay, Chinese and Indian women. This enables an understanding of how these multiplicative disadvantages are theoretically framed within everyday social constructions. This attention to the intersection of dynamic processes of how gender intersects with other axes such as ethnicity is relevant with

the perspectives of this thesis which theorises how women's privilege and oppression is produced and experienced differently within different ethnic backgrounds in the same geographical location (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

While the intersectionality term has gained the most currency in academic writing, to some extent, many theorists would have raised questions whether it is a theory, methodology, or research paradigm (Rodriguez, Holvino, Fletcher, and Nkomo, 2016). Davis (2008, p 68) noted that *"controversies have emerged about whether intersectionality should be conceptualized as a crossroad (Crenshaw, 1991), as 'axes' of difference* (Yuval-Davis, 2006) *or as a dynamic process (Staunæs, 2003)"*. For example, according to Ferguson (1998), intersectionality has focused on marginalised subjects instead of generalising the theory of identity. Nash (2008) critiques intersectionality for being ambiguous in its definition and questionable in its empirical validity on making use of black women's lived experiences rather than other ethnic minority women as the main focus of subjects. *"This unresolved theoretical dispute makes it unclear whether intersectionality is a theory of marginalized subjectivity or a generalized theory of identity"* (Nash, 2008, p 10). She further argues that intersectionality should be used to explore privilege and penalty, which will be addressed later in this study. This suggests that other axes of identity appear to have the possibility to intersect at multiple levels, contributing to social injustice and inequality regimes (Acker, 2006; Healy, Bradley, and Forson, 2011).

Research into inequality, dominance and oppression must take into account the intersections of, at least, gender and ethnicity. For instance, the work of Collins (2000) helps to contextualise how identities such as race, gender and class are mutually constructing systems of power. It demonstrates how social constructions can be used to theorise a concept called the *matrix of domination* within the macro level of oppressions which allows us to see that both disadvantage and privilege are used to describe various social analytical categories attached to the system of power. Collins (2000) argues that a different marginalisation perspective produces valuable knowledge as it may vary from one research context to another. It allows us to take account of multiple social categories rather than focusing on one dimension of social difference. In relation to this research, the way in which the social world is experienced will differ for men and women according to their ethnic group, and within ethnic groups according to their gender (Cooper, 2002; Healy, Bradley and Forson, 2011). The purpose of my research is to demonstrate how this unfolds in the specific context of Malaysia.

Having explored the arguments, the analysis of the intersectional paradigm has captured three comparable purposes. Firstly, it is grounded in women's activism as women of colour (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). Secondly, it highlights the need amongst feminist scholars to pay attention to the different but also overlapping social categories (McCall, 2005). Thirdly, it has encouraged researchers to examine the fluidity and variability of a *matrix of domination* that occur within multiple social practices (Collins, 2000). The data collected for this thesis presents

the experiences of being oppressed as women and struggling to succeed in a multicultural country with a strong patriarchal system (see Chapter Five to Eight).

My research employs a combination of Crenshaw's (1991) structural intersectionality and patriarchy, McCall's (2005) intercategorical complexity and *matrix of domination* within the macro level (Collins, 2000). This frames the research focus on how gender and ethnicity meet at a crossroad of women's careers in senior management. This theoretical framework ensured that data collection and analysis was conducted in ways that highlighted the range of experiences within different social categories amongst senior women managers. The section below provides a critical review of extant research on gender and ethnicity to justify the contribution of these two social categories to the intersectional lens and explore career experiences of Malay, Chinese and Indian senior female managers in Malaysia.

3.4.2 The Intersection of Gender and Ethnicity in the Workplace

Women's experiences in the workplace have been critically shaped by gender, race and class as has been shown by a number of authors (e.g. Acker, 2006; Mavin, 2008; Conley and Page, 2010; Durbin, 2016). Acker (2006) posits that the structures of organisations themselves are gendered and reproduce gendered inequalities which suggests that gender appears to function as a key form of discrimination through the unequal distribution of power, privilege and resources. Consistent with Crenshaw's (1991) structural intersectionality, Acker (2006) provides how structural arrangements create the intersectional process that could frame behavior at work including occupational segregation, hierarchical positions, wage determination, and distribution of decision-making. The intersectional processes can be different according to the social settings and levels of power in different countries, which is particularly relevant for this research context.

Acker's (2006) perspective is fundamental to the theoretical framing of my research as it assumes women's ability may be devalued and placed as subordinate to males, particularly in the work context. It leads to the under-representation of women at senior levels in management because organisations have been inherently conceptualised and controlled by men's authority (Davidson and Burke, 2000; Terjesen, Sealy, and Singh, 2009). As a result, women tend to feel silenced and demotivated working in male-dominated organisations. The experiences of women in the workplace are qualitatively different from those of men (Powell and Graves, 2003). Interestingly, Acker's (1998, 2006, 2012) framework clearly positions gender as a social construction. She states that the analysis of what she names 'inequality regimes' is a way of tackling the methodological problems of exploring intersectionality. She argues how the class processes and hierarchies are always gendered and racialised and that they should be examined as a separate entity in inequality regimes. This will be explored through the experiences of senior female managers working in Malaysia's public and private sector employment. The investigation on privilege, contained below, is highly politicised constituted

by social practice which serves primarily to frame the constructions of gender and ethnicity. A different set of privileges due to unequal national cultural policy has been reflected in the construction of the research participants in this thesis where ethnicity intersects the more prominent category of gender.

In relation to women's employment, Bradley and Healy (2008) indicates that labour markets remain clearly segmented by the hierarchies of gender and ethnicity where the Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) women are less likely to hold managerial positions, particularly at the top of management, and confined to lower skill jobs in comparison to white women, in the same way as women and men are differently positioned. In the US, Hispanic and Latina women are at the most disadvantaged by the processes of gender and ethnic segregation (Hite, 2007). This therefore, explains how occupational segregation is not solely *'gendered'* but *'ethnicised'* (Bradley and Healy, 2008, pp 40), reinforced between majority and minority ethnic groups in the workplace. Challenges faced by ethnic women and their intersectional identities are likely to be ignored and erased if ethnicity is separated from gender in theorising experiences at work. Unlike individuals with the highest social ranking (e.g. white individuals / majority ethnic), individuals in the lowest social ranking (e.g. non-white individuals / minority ethnic) appear to experience multiple jeopardy for having the fewest privileges, low social class rank and less power and opportunities in society. This understanding is consistent in acknowledging the unequal distribution of privilege in the context of senior female managers in Malaysia (see Chapter Two).

Using the intersectional lens, the distinction between the black women's experiences and the white women's experiences has been one of central focus on the research of women's employment amongst feminist scholars. Nonetheless, the analysis of intersections between gender and ethnicity is still underdeveloped despite the awareness from previous scholars that ethnic exclusion is visible in unequal access to opportunities (McBride et al., 2015). There is little evidence, especially at management levels, on the importance of the intersections between gender and ethnicity acknowledged in the field of women in senior management (Atewologun and Sealy, 2014; Belkhir, 2001; Browne and Misra, 2003; Meisenhelder, 2000). It needs to be explored thoroughly within women's employment studies since it allows looking at inequality among multiple social groups (e.g. gender, ethnicity, privilege) empirically, which will be informed later in this study.

Social inequalities based on gender and ethnicity intersect and create differential experiences between people. Non-white individuals often face additional barriers at work that could have blocked their career progression, resulting in women being placed at lower levels of management in organisations. For instance, Atewologun and Sealy (2014) indicated how ethnicity, privilege, seniority, being middle-class and from educated backgrounds could help women to be promoted as senior managers. Their study also provides a useful example of

how the explanatory potential of an intersectional approach in examining women's senior managerial experiences in the UK may be appropriate for the research context of this thesis. It is evident that the disadvantaged position of women compared to men is increased where women from minority ethnic groups may encounter double jeopardy (does not imply the additive approach) in the workplace, particularly at the upper echelons of management.

In the East, conversely, women are likely to differ due to their exposure to various socioeconomic, political, language, religion and cultural characteristics. Kim's (2004) work on female Chinese accountants in New Zealand, has demonstrated that ethnic minorities women, Asian women in particular, are still experiencing discrimination for being non-white individuals, regardless of the title and status they hold in the workplace. Rana, Kagan, Lewis and Rout (1998, pp 229) claimed that British South Asian women *"are subjected to a triple form of discrimination on the basis of their race, gender, and social status"* for not being detached with the *Asianness* trait that could jeopardise their managerial skills and professionalism in the workplace. Along with the Indians, the Chinese are taken to be the most successful ethnic minority group, but the nature of Chinese success is very different from Indian (Heath and Cheung, 2006). Heath and Cheung (2006), however, explain in their studies on Chinese indigenous groups that, other than driven by gender occupational segregation, Asian employees are also being discriminated due to ethnic penalties in the workplace. Equally important, little research has been conducted on the Indian community and it is difficult to make a direct comparison with Malaysia as the social categories used are different as are the cultural and political context.

The contribution of ethnicity to an intersectional lens has been reviewed based on the relevant theoretical constructions of gender and ethnicity from feminist theorising the role of state (Conley and Page, 2010) drawing from Bradley and Healy (2008) and Acker (1998, 2006, 2012). Many of the problems in the workplace experienced by women with intersecting disadvantage stem from the way the state treats them. As a theoretical framework for this thesis, the above explanation on gender and ethnic definitions show that both are socially constructed. In the context of intersectionality, it unveils the experiences of senior female managers which may or may not be silenced due to their position at the relationship of gender and ethnic status. Women go through different experiences and are not a homogenous group, hence, it is inaccurate to say that any form of stratification overrides the other. Besides, there has not been enough work done that examines how social inequalities intersect to shape women's experiences in the developing countries. For that reason, the following section extends the examination of intersectionality to frame its focus on women's lived experiences and demonstrate its dynamic in the context of Eastern societies such as Malaysia.

3.4.3 Gender and Ethnicity in Asian Societies

Although gender and ethnicity stratification may be related, Walby (2009, pp 260) contested that *"different countries may have different gender regimes"* as it is experienced differently based on gender and ethnicity as an individual. The form of gender regime varies not only between countries but between different ethnic, racial and national groups within a country (Walby, 2009). Different countries have different laws and regulations and apply different approaches to equality. According to Tatli and Ozbilgin (2012, pp 250), *"the context within which inequalities are constructed has to be the key to the analysis of discrimination and oppression rather than cumulative formulations of intersecting inequalities. Furthermore, multiplicity of identities and forms of disadvantage in each setting introduce complexity and contextual depth into the analysis of inequality if we are to understand the interplay between different forms of disadvantage"*. Thus, an intersectional examination of women in the global labour force may or may not be equally as applicable to the experience of women in non-Western developing countries.

A number of the current intersectional research papers available are based on results about white and black men and women with little attention given to ethnic groups within those broad racial categories (Fearfull and Kamenou, 2006; Kamenou, Netto and Fearfull, 2013; Atewologun and Sealy, 2014). It is argued that research on race or ethnicity has primarily focused on the differences between black (colonised) versus white (coloniser) which has influenced the construction of intersectional lenses (Atewologun and Sealy, 2014). Although intersectionality began to be analysed, debated and accepted in the West, it is however a different case in the East. To put it another way, the relationship between Britain and its colonies provides a different setting for ethnic or race relations, compared to the US history of slavery and immigration (Bradley and Healy, 2008). This common black and white contradiction contributes little justification to articulate the political situations of other types of British colonialism in the East. The influence of colonisation and the establishment of privilege is likely to give institutional impacts taken by former colonies such as Malaysia. The discrimination that these women experience at work stems from past histories of colonisation by the British and other dominant states. It also emerges from the current failure of those states to legislate to reverse historical discrimination.

The combination of Western and Eastern theoretical knowledge frameworks would be an excellent opportunity for this research to draw in-depth on the intersectionality arguments connected to senior women's careers from a global perspective. Women were oppressed in varying ways and not all oppression stems from colonisation. It depends on the dominant culture, that is always masculine. According to Bhopal (1997), South Asian women's experiences may be different from their Western counterparts due to patriarchal systems strongly embedded in Eastern culture. It is argued that gender differences are socially

constructed and get legitimated in a patriarchal society. These characteristics create a unique context that prompts differential work experiences for them, hence it is necessary to portray women in the East as a distinctive group from Westerners.

When the research setting takes place in the East, countries such as China, Japan, Taiwan and India are often explored (Yuki, 2003; Ng, 2005; Mao, Peng and Wong, 2012; Lotter, 2017). The fact that these studies are from Asian cultural contexts, for example, the uniqueness of *"guanxi, mianzi, renqing, ganqing, lun, and yin-yang"* concepts in China (Mao, Peng and Wong, 2012), the identification of social identity theory among Japanese (Yuki, 2003) and the patriarchal system hampered women elites in India (Lotter, 2017) may or may not be applicable for and transferrable to Southeastern Asian settings. Thus, my thesis offers a promising analysis direction to capture insights into how gender and ethnicity is experienced by the research participants and shapes the lived experiences of women in senior management in the Malaysian context.

The limited number of studies that have considered the intersection of gender and ethnicity in the Malaysian context have not explicitly adopted an intersectional framework but have focused predominantly on the dimensions of gender and ethnicity (Lim, 2001; Bhopal and Rowley, 2005; Fontaine and Richardson, 2005; Ramasamy *et al.*, 2007). Their findings highlight and conclude that gender is almost completely integrated with ethnicity in many organisations in Malaysia. The ethnic privilege seems to apply more to Malay men rather than Malay women due to the strong patriarchal system in this country. Privilege is a concept, originally from the US, which identifies those who have an advantaged position compared with those who do not (McIntosh, 1995, 2012, 2015). Fontaine and Richardson (2005) in their research, generally, compare the outcomes of shared values among Malay, Chinese and Indian in Malaysia where the only significant difference is their perception towards religion. Bhopal and Rowley (2005) affirm that ethnicity does divide the Malaysian labour market but is often neglected at the organisational management levels due to its political issue sensitivity. Yet, it should be noted that the intersectionality terminology has not been applied in those studies as it is still considered as a 'new hot topic' to be discussed openly in the Western country.

The above circumstances reflect why there is lack of evidence on intersectionality research from another side of the world, particularly in the Malaysian context. Despite the difficulties in applying it as a pioneer, intersectionality makes its contribution on a sufficient basis for this thesis as a critique for social science investigation within Malaysian context. It is pertinent that empirical studies are conducted in order to shed light on the dynamics of intersectionality in organisations in Malaysia. Privilege has a crucial role here too where, contrary to Chua, Mathews and Loh's (2016) studies on Chinese privilege in Singapore, the Malays are benefited through the '*Malay Privilege'* system in Malaysia. In the context of social hierarchies, privilege

is distributed and contributes to the oppressive character of categories such as gender and ethnicity (McIntosh, 1995). Yet, privilege theory could not demonstrate the dynamic social system towards the Malay privilege in Malaysian political setting. It does not travel outside of Malaysia unlike Western white privilege. Unlike Chinese and Indian, Malay women are less likely to feel discriminated or disadvantaged as a result of their ethnicity. What is of particular significance in this study is understanding the intersection of privileged Malay senior women subject positions with non-Malay senior women positionality in understanding the experiences of the participants in the specific research setting in this investigation.

My research locates itself within these current debates which aim to explore the understanding that being a woman, be her Western or Asian, has political and historical consequences in the world we live in; that there can be unjust and unfair effects on women depending on privilege regimes. It is not a primary aim of this research to interrogate, but privilege may contribute a broad understanding in exploring complexities in women's lives in Malaysia through the intersectionality lens. The unequal distribution of power and privilege is apparent on a social institutional level as ethnic subjugation can be seen rooted in the very structural foundations of society. Parallel to the participants' experiences in the discussion chapters, a key feature of hierarchies of social power is that those in positions of social privilege often fail to recognise that their dominance brings advantage that is unfortunately associated with others' subordination (McIntosh, 1995). The study of McIntosh (1995, 2012, 2015) does acknowledge that privilege is truly a social collective, not only featured but also affects the lived experiences of research participants and their relevant positioning within these discourses. The arguments forward have shown how advantaged and disadvantaged people are judged through the lens of intersectionality, which will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Five, Six, Seven, and Eight.

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has drawn upon four major theoretical concepts – occupational gender segregation, patriarchy, critical mass, and intersectionality to understand the position of women in senior management in Malaysia. The various theories discussed help to explain the different facets of gender inequality in society. The occupational gender segregation and theories of patriarchy are utilised to argue that there are differences in the way men and women enter into paid employment. While the concept of patriarchy has been criticised for being too essentialist and blind to historical changes and differences between women, it has been utilised here to be more relevant to the multiethnic context of Malaysian society. Intersectionality theory helps in filling this gap in Walby's (1990) theory and also broadens the scope of the theoretical framework.

The patriarchy section clearly indicates that women's position in regard to domestic chores and care for the family has not really changed even though their economic positions have improved. This is still happening because men avoid sharing domestic chores and they always assume that women's primary responsibilities are connected with childcare and domestic duties. Whether women do the housework alone, share it or transfer it to other people (Omar and Davidson, 2004; Lewis and Simpson, 2017), it could be concluded that household tasks are still under women's supervision and that women are still seen as primary caregivers for their families, and this is ongoing, although family arrangements have changed.

The debate on critical mass is explored in relation to the arguments for and against the introduction of mandatory quotas to increase the representation of women at senior management levels. The assumption that mere numbers of women, no matter what ethnicity they are, will affect the decision in the boardroom is challenged. Feminists' theories of patriarchy have identified men's presence and dominance as a major obstacle to women's equality. If women and men have different policy preferences, quotas can help to give women's policy interests a stronger voice (Pande and Ford, 2011). Gender quotas are positive and special measures that aim to rectify the underrepresentation of women. Senior women managers will serve as role models to other younger and older women, encouraging them to participate in the paid labour force (Durbin, 2016). It is also about a matter of justice that women be included as they constitute more than 50 of the population and should not be absent from spheres of power (Dahlerup, 1988). Senior women managers will bring women's interests to the table and discuss it as the agenda to empower more women in the boardroom (Terjesen and Sealy, 2016). The adequate representation of women in the boardroom will demonstrate a positive image towards diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Critical mass theory could be applied to unleash the quotas debate amongst the interviewees in my research about their perceptions on the introduction of the 30 quota in Malaysia.

Last but not least, no discussion of inequality is complete without taking into consideration the increasingly important concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005; Collins, 2015). The theory of intersectionality suggests that various biological, social and cultural categories interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to systematic injustice and social inequality. McCall (2005) argues that there was little research that addressed specifically the experiences of people who are subjected to multiple forms of subordination within society. Given that gender and its intersection with ethnicity (among others) are simultaneously subjective and structural (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991), studying these intersections allows a more complex and dynamic understanding than a focus on gender alone. This could be linked to the experience of Malay and non-Malay women participants in this study, which will be analysed in my discussion chapters.

In a nutshell, the theoretical insights discussed in this chapter will be combined to underpin the analysis of data in this research. These theories are needed for a full explanation of Malaysian women's career experiences. Chapter Four will discuss the research design and methodology employed for this research. It also presents the rationale behind the choice of methods and ethical considerations. The following chapter will elucidate how I conducted my research and I shall introduce the high-profile women whom I interviewed both in public and private sector employments in Malaysia.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodology and methods used to conduct this research investigation into the intersection of gender and ethnicity in the construction of privilege amongst women senior managers in Malaysia. The chapter begins by detailing the philosophical assumptions at the centre of the methodology. This includes a justification of the social and individual constructivist epistemology that underpins the interpretive paradigm and feminist standpoint that has shaped my research. The next part of the chapter discusses the research method. Here I outline the research design, the research sample, the semi structured interview technique adopted, and research ethics. This section is followed by an outline of my personal reflection on the ways in which my own values, interests and experiences have shaped the research process. The final section presents my data analysis and an illustration of the coding steps used in the thematic data analysis.

4.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

The research process of this study is guided by Crotty's (1998) framework where four fundamental aspects are recognised, namely: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods. It summarises the research approach in order to gather and analyse data on how senior women managers from three different ethnic backgrounds climb to the upper echelons of management in Malaysia. As suggested by Crotty (1998), epistemology concerns how the researchers generate, understand and use knowledge in their study. Methodology informs how the combinations of research philosophy (e.g. epistemology and theoretical perspectives) with the chosen methods are decided upon and executed to answer the research questions. Methods involve the techniques and procedures for gathering and analysing data based on the formulated research questions. The epistemological stances underpinning this study are both the interpretive and feminist epistemologies, where using feminist methodological standpoint has allowed the researcher to understand the lived experiences and perceptions of Malay, Chinese and Indian senior women managers in Malaysia.

4.2.1 Epistemological – Social Constructionism and Individual Constructivism

In this thesis, the epistemological stance is underpinned by (individual) constructivism, which falls within the domain of (social) constructionism. Several authors acknowledge the ambiguities in the literature on constructionism and constructivism (Crotty, 1998; Young and Collin, 2004). Constructionism is *"the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contigent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction*

between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 1998, pp 42). One can believe that concepts are constructed rather than discovered yet maintain that they correspond to something real in the world. Crotty (1998) further suggests that constructionism focuses on collective generation and transmission of meaning, while constructivism focuses on individual meaning-making. The constructivist pays attention on how individuals engage in knowledge constructions. It is claimed by the social constructionist that knowledge and meaning are socially constructed through interactions in historical and cultural contexts. Social constructionism assumes that knowledge is socially and culturally mediated through language (Schwandt, 2003), where the researcher and researched are jointly represented in knowledge creation, engaging in intersubjective meaning-making (Young and Collin, 2004).

Contrasted with positivism, the emphasis is that the world cannot be known directly, but through the construction imposed on the world through the mind that contructs reality (Young and Collin, 2004). Constructivism is considered a particularly relevant perspective for this research, as it focuses on the interaction of self and social experiences from the perspective of the individual, with a particular focus on the construction of meaning (Young and Collin, 2004). Constructivism embraces a relativist ontological stance that recognises knowledge is not value-free and that there are multiple constructed and varying interpretations of realities (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Both approaches, however, recognise the interplay of society, politics and history in how we interpret reality. This research recognises no single truth, accepting that the experiences of particular individuals (e.g senior women) can serve as one source of knowledge regarding their challenges to climb up the career ladder in the workplace. Part of my research examines the individual experience of women from the three main ethnic groups in the context of the social construction of Malay privilege. In this perspective, knowledge is gathered not by generalisations, but through indirect experiences (Guba and Lincoln, 2000), such as extending the intersectionality literature by examining how privilege could interact with the intersections of gender and ethnic status in Malaysia. Knowledge is created in a dialogue during the interaction among researchers and participants (Creswell, 2009) and attention is given to the social context in which entrenched principles of management practices are constructed. It allows the researcher like me to understand the career experiences of senior women in the public and private sectors while analysing the structures of the labour market in Malaysia.

4.2.2 An Analytical Perspective - Interpretivism

Having explained social constructionism and individual constructivism as the epistemological stances, this research employs interpretivism as a suitable analytical perspective to investigate the study of women senior managers in Malaysia. Interpretivism is always associated with constructionism and constructivism because interpretivists believe that social reality is

constructed by social actors and they rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied. Ontologically, they are known as relativists, who assume that multiple social realities may change as the researchers become more informed by the respondents (Guba and Lincoln, 2000).

Interestingly, interpretivists reject the assumptions made by positivists regarding the nature of human beings and ways of knowing about social phenomena. Positivism is likely to use a highly structured methodology in order to facilitate replication and is independent of and neither affects nor is affected by the subject of the research (Greener, 2008). Greener (2008) further argues that positivists are subject to criticism because facts do not always explain themselves and interpretation is required to play an essential part in explaining how social actors construct and experience this reality in their daily lives. In relation to this research, using an interpretive approach helps to interpret participants' views based on their own backgrounds and experiences which explains how meanings are constructed between researchers and respondents as they both engage together in the world they live and work in (Greener, 2008; Creswell, 2009).

In this research, I discuss how patriarchy, intersectionality and critical mass are applied as theoretical and methodological lenses for understanding how women's career experiences are shaped by the intersections between gender and ethnicity in the context of institutional privilege (see Chapter Three). In theorising gender and ethnicity, it is important to recognise that these are socially constructed terms. The analysis in this study reflects my attempt to interpret the research participants' interview data by seeking how gender and ethnicity, within the context of higher managerial positions, intersect in the construction of the privilege amongst senior women managers in Malaysia. An interpretivist paradigm allowed me to tap into participants' subjective experiences rather than framing the participants' perspective within the conceptual lenses of dominant Western literatures. In this way, unexpected insights may be discovered that will shed new light on how women senior managers experience and communicate the intersections of their gender and ethnicity.

Adopting an interpretivist paradigm within a social constructionist epistemology acknowledges that findings are based on participants' construction of past events in their discussions with me. Individual constructivism privileges the individual's mental representation of his/her experiences. In doing so, I acknowledge that I am privileging the individual in this study as someone who is bounded by the social construction of Malay. This informs why researchers' interpretations play a key role in this kind of study, bringing such subjectivity to the forefront, backed by qualitative arguments rather than statistical exactness (Creswell, 2009).

4.2.3 Methodology – Qualitative Analysis using Feminist Standpoint

This research has employed qualitative techniques located within a feminist methodological standpoint (Harding, 1989; Westmarland, 2001; Holliday, 2007; Yin, 2011). Unlike positivism that commonly approaches the fieldwork with hypotheses testing and deduction, inductive research generates meaning from the data collected in the social settings of the participants (Creswell, 2009). Also, according to Yin (2011), qualitative methodology allows the researcher to interpret the voice of women in relation to the broader social context that and thus prioritises on women's lived experiences.

Feminist researchers are more likely to use qualitative methodology than quantitative where gathering the data personally and the more open-ended questioning, provides richer information. However, when considering adopting a feminist research methodology, I was sensitive to the fact that feminist literature, in general, has ignored minority ethnic women's experiences in Malaysia. As a researcher studying how Malay, Chinese and Indian senior women managers have attained their current top managerial positions, I needed to take into account the significant backgrounds, educational attainment, and professional experiences those women carry to such positions. Thus, I consider the value of an intersectional feminist standpoint approach as a way of focusing on diverse women's daily lives.

Reinharz (1992) and Maynard (1998) assert that feminism is a perspective guided by feminist theory, not a research method and there is no one correct feminist method. They further contend that feminism is primarily a tool for social change to find out not only what needs to be changed, but also how it can be changed. Though a feminist standpoint has been criticised for prioritising woman over other social categories (Hekman, 1997), I believe this approach is valuable for my research in several ways. Women's lives need to be addressed in their own terms rather than based on male-defined theories derived from male experiences. An intersectional feminist methodological stance assists me to delve deeper than the surface to interpret social constructions and women's variable positions in Malaysia. It raises important questions about how knowledge is produced such as by whom, for whom and about whom. Standpoint theory claims that the knowledge drawn from women's lives can produce better accounts of society. Furthermore, a feminist standpoint methodology can be compatible with intersectionality that explores the interactions between different forms of subjugations, in the case of this study, gender and ethnicity (Collins, 2000).

Interestingly, Westmarland (2001) suggests that the usefulness of both qualitative and quantitative methods in feminist methodology should not be debated as both have their own strenghts and can generate data when connected with epistemology and analytical elements. For instance, a survey can tell that women are likely to get paid less than men (see Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003; Yukongdi, 2005; Woodhams, Lupton and Cowling, 2015), but that does not explain how this makes women feel and how it affects their lives as a whole. It should be noted

that some feminist researchers argue that the aim of feminist research is to capture an in-depth knowledge on women's experiences (Landman 2006; Mackinnon 1982; Ropers-Huilman and Winters 2011). When feminists strive to represent gender diversity, they can attempt to create social change because, even when they are from different social and cultural backgrounds, they can develop special relationships with the people being studied. Therefore, adopting an intersectional feminist standpoint allows me to understand how Malay, Chinese and Indian senior women experience their unequal social position. This implies that knowledge is generated based on the understanding on diverse women's experiences rather than from men's. I believe, with an intersectional feminist standpoint, my research speaks on behalf of senior women who live in a patriarchal world that is structured by the privilege system. The following section details the specific steps taken in data collection and analysis.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODS

This section discusses the methods that I adopted to fit with the philosophical assumptions described earlier in the chapter. To gather data for the study, this research has built upon secondary quantitative sources such as statistical evidence from the Malaysian Department of Statistics and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development to analyse the government policies designed to promote women's empowerment in Malaysia. To expand upon this contextual data, the research aims and questions centre on the experiences of senior female managers in Malaysia and thus require a qualitative approach in order to understand the complexities of their own interpretations, meanings and feelings (Harding, 1989, 1997). Therefore, though I have drawn on government statistical figures for secondary data, my fieldwork was purely based on qualitative interviews gathering data through semi-structured interviews with senior female managers who worked in the public and private sectors of employment in Malaysia.

4.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

To build the conversation, interviewing is the best way to comprehend the lived experiences of women where unstructured and semi-structured interviews are methods widely used within a feminist research framework (Westmarland, 2001; Bryman, 2008). The strength of the interview lies in the question and answer process between the interviewer and interviewee. The value of in-depth interviewing for women's careers studies derives from the ability to gain rich qualitative data about particular processes from the selected individuals which allows the researcher to uncover the hidden information (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Interviews could allow me to delve deeper and more fully explain issues related to the intersections of gender and ethnicity in the workplace. Although a survey may be the best way to discover the primacy of problems, interviews are needed to fully understand women's experiences and theorise these experiences with a view towards societal expectations.

There are three reasons why I have adopted a qualitative semi-structured interview to gather primary data. Firstly, a semi-structured qualitative interview offers flexibility and autonomy. For instance, I can probe new questions with my respondents in order to gain a more detailed explanation and information during the interview session so that it can cover all the issues related to my research topic, unlike survey methods, which usually contain fixed-choice questions (Creswell, 2009). Secondly, this method allows the interviewees to have freedom to answer the interview questions using their own words through a two-way conversation that I could not obtain from a questionnaire (Lewis, Saunders and Thornhill, 2007; Greener, 2008). Thirdly, it is difficult for a quantitative project to deal with a small number of respondents often encountered when doing intersectional research and therefore qualitative research is very well suited to my research that focuses on a small intersectional sample.

Small samples are the norm in qualitative research in order to achieve an in-depth understanding of respondents' stories (Yin, 2011) and in-depth interviews are considered as the most appropriate methodology to allow women's voices to be heard to present their personal and professional accounts of their lived experiences in the public and private spheres (Harding, 1989; Westmarland, 2001). Since there is limited information on senior female managers in Malaysia, interviews are used to generate perspectives on women's careers advancement. Questions were open-ended to make the process become more conversational to provide in-depth information on the issues under investigation (Cassell and Symon 2004). The interviews conducted in the present study are found to be effective in encouraging responses from the participants about their career challenges as Malay, Chinese and Indian senior women in order to succeed in senior managerial positions.

4.3.2 Research Access and Selection of Participants

The initial negotiations for access started in July 2015 where relevant Government Ministry officials as well as private senior women were contacted through email from the UK with the aim of explaining the research objectives and arranging scheduled appointments before travelling back to Malaysia in January 2016. After gaining some potential respondents, I sought access by emailing a formal letter of 'Invitation for Interview' to the senior women managers as recommended by contacts. I gave priority to ethical issues by following the ethical approval guidelines of the University of the West of England (UWE) which will be explained in the Section 4.4. The interviewees were happy to contribute to research on gender and ethnicity issues. Senior women in both the public sector and private sector organisations were identified. Data was collected from fourteen organisations in total (four public and ten private). A comparison of gender occupational segregation in these two sectors was developed in the dissertation. It also explores varying women's career advancement and attempts to understand how privilege could influence the gendered employment of Malays and non-Malays.

Moreover, various routes were used to reach interview participants, including a combination of professional networks, personal contacts and snowballing techniques. The types of routes used to access research participants inevitably have benefits and drawbacks in relation to the sample obtained, and the methods I used meant that a fairly high proportion were either members of networks or professional acquaintances aiming to offer support to women's empowerment in Malaysia. While this is likely to make the sample unrepresentative of senior women in both sectors overall, it does permit a discussion of the use of female networks especially on the impact of 30 percent quotas to have women in decision-making positions in Malaysia (see Chapter Eight).

In order to identify potential respondents for the study, I used purposive sampling which is a technique to select participants who fulfill criteria relevant to the research questions (Bryman, 2004). Three selection criteria have been chosen where the target participants of this study must be 1) women in senior management positions – head of department, director, vice president, president, chief of executive committees or any positions equal to those senior level positions 2) working in the public or private sectors of employment 3) drawn from three main ethnic groups; Malay, Chinese and Indian. This research also aimed to explore their tips on how to climb up the corporate ladder and whether they have encountered multiple career challenges in the organisation. The participants were chosen against these criteria for several reasons. Firstly, one basic criterion used is that these women must have a direct knowledge and expertise in managerial work. Secondly, to understand the influence of intersections between gender, ethnicity and the segregation of women's employment in the labour market. Thirdly, to research the impact of the introduction of quotas for women in the decision-making positions, particularly to the non-Malay senior women in the context of ethnic privilege in Malaysia. As explained in Chapter Two, the predominance of Malay senior women in public sector organisations has contributed to the reasons why the gender quota was successfully achieved within the five years' timeframe. Therefore, it would be appropriate to include the non-Malay participants in order to investigate why the private sectors still face difficulties in reaching the 30 percent target in senior managerial positions.

To enlarge my group of respondents, the snowballing technique (Yin, 2011) was employed to recruit individuals who fit the parameters of the study from participants who passed details of the research to their contacts. Snowballing strategy is a method where the researcher will make initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these connections to establish contacts with other participants (Lewis, Saunders and Thornhill, 2007; Greener, 2008). It is a non-probability sampling method used for accessing hard to reach groups and therefore useful in completing intersectional research where there may be few available participants. Once the original volunteers were interviewed, they were asked to pass information to their friends or colleagues about the study, and from these initial volunteers, the snowballing process began (Lewis, Saunders and Thornhill, 2007).

This word of mouth approach proved to be an effective way of recruiting participants to the study as potential interviewees who were referred by someone who had already been interviewed were less anxious about being interviewed themselves.

It should be noted that conducting research that involves high-profile senior women in Malaysia is easier said than done without having a professional network in the first place. However, the fact that I conducted my data collection within three weeks demonstrated that I was lucky to have valuable contacts through my networks. I have four years' corporate work experience as an Executive of Corporate Affairs in one of the largest conglomerate companies in Malaysia before I pursued my PhD in the UK. I managed to gain access through my personal contact who happened to be the former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in the previous company that I worked for. She then introduced me to her acquaintances from other giant companies who hold similar positions to her which helped me to build my professional networks indirectly.

I also asked people in my friendship networks, including my non-Malay friends, whether they knew or could find any other people who were eligible, suitable and willing to contribute to the research. I provided the information for those who agreed to circulate the research details to the potential respondents who might match the sampling requirements of this study. This yielded a useful number of replies and subsequent interviews. Notwithstanding, as much as they were keen to support my research on women's empowerment in Malaysia, it was impossible to incorporate all of the parameters into a small study of this scale due to the low numbers of minority ethnic people at the very top positions in management regardless of their gender. I experienced difficulties in reaching as many Chinese and Indian senior female managers to take part in interviews as I would have liked to include in the research, particularly those who work in the government. As discussed in Chapter Two, the Malaysian workforce is heavily segmented by ethnicity with most Malay working in the government due to the Malay privilege (Lim, 2001; Bhopal and Rowley, 2005). This indirectly has affected the overall non-Malay sample size in this study and it was not possible to locate more than a handful of minority ethnic senior women in total from both sectors (Table 4.1). However, as the Malays are the largest ethnicity in Malaysia, I believe that the sample obtained provides an adequate basis for the analysis of my research questions. Although imperfect with small samples, the snowballing technique has at least allowed me to conduct this research based on trust through professional networks and contacts. It also indirectly represents diversity from various ethnic backgrounds, ministries and different ages, which is linked to Malaysian context.

Table 4.1 Number of Interviews by Organisation

	Public Sector	Private Sector	Total
Participants	14	17	31
Ethnicity	13 Malays 0 Chinese 1 Indian	12 Malays 4 Chinese 1 Indian	25 4 2

The fieldwork was done in my home country, Malaysia and thirty-one of the face-to-face interviews were undertaken in three areas of Peninsular Malaysia - the territory of Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and the state of Selangor. When I chose these locations, I considered economic structures, the majority populations, occupational and educational opportunities, big cities and differences in social subjugation (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2018). These three urban areas not only represent the most modern and metropolitan cities, but also contain many public and private organisations that have all ethnic groups, particularly professional women working in them. All senior women interviewed in the study held full time senior managerial positions in their organisations.

4.3.3 Designing the Interview Schedule

The interview schedule was designed to obtain in-depth information of direct relevance to the aims of the study and it focused on how the respondents have managed to be in a senior position so that their past and current experiences could be inspirations to other career women out there. Before I started my fieldwork in January 2016, a flexible interview schedule was designed with identified core themes (see Appendix B for the full interview schedule and probes). It covered three themes: 1) demographic information such as childhood, family and educational backgrounds 2) career in senior management, including working history prior to being promoted to a senior role, current organisational background, present job and managerial skills 3) motivation, including career challenges and future career aspirations. This was adapted for each interview to suit the research questions represented by the interviewee.

As a warm up for the interviews, I explored respondents' demographic information by asking about their personal, family and job backgrounds such as marital status, age, educational attainment and career history. Due to different family socio-economic status and ethnic backgrounds, this section sought to establish the links between childhood experiences and professional developments of senior female managers in Malaysia. It was observed that these questions succeeded in alleviating any anxieties participants may have and helped the interviewer to have a good starting point for the establishment of trust. Demographic questions

also increased participants' confidence to answer when potentially sensitive questions were put forward.

The second part of the interview focused on respondents' career profiles. This section served as a platform to identify if there were any differences in career development of Malay and non-Malay senior female managers in the public and private sector organisations. In this study, the respondents were asked how and why they chose to be in their respective career fields, who influenced their career decisions and what challenges they encountered in their senior managerial positions. It also sought to explain whether or not ethnic privilege was an important determinant in their career choices, and how satisfied they were with their career trajectories. The participants were also asked what roles they assumed at home and how their commitment in the workplace could affect the balance between career and family.

The final part of the interview schedule was designed to uncover their opinions on the impact of the policies provided by the government as well as employers in order to have more women in decision-making positions. Questions in this section also invited the participants to describe their work relationship with the opposite sex and people from other ethnic backgrounds. Such sensitive questions were meant to be addressed at the later stage of the interviews after the establishment of good rapport between myself and the respondents. Finally, the senior female managers were also asked to identify the sources of career aspiration that influenced them to succeed in the workplace.

4.3.4 The Interviewing Process

In total, thirty-one semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face with senior women over a 3 week period between January and February 2016. One of the objectives of this research was to develop working profiles of the Malaysian senior women managers. A full break down of senior female interviewees both in the public and private organisations (i.e. job title, age, ethnic background) is included in Appendix D. The real names of the interviewees were given pseudonyms to protect the feelings and interests of the individuals as well as any political repercussions.

Before I started the interview, I introduced myself, the research and the commitment required to individuals. I also allayed any fears and reiterated confidentiality. I spoke to thirty-one respondents, reiterating that the research concerned ongoing, daily activities around meaning-making, focusing on career experiences. I also requested their permission to record the conversation to ensure that nothing was missed during the interview session. I explained that the reason for recording was because it was impossible for me to capture and memorise everything during the interviews. After briefing, all respondents were happy to participate, some were intrigued by the study, and some a little skeptical about the long-term individual repercussions as they felt worried if their names would be reported anywhere, which could

jeopardise their careers. However, after I reiterated and assured them that their names would not be disclosed and would be replaced with pseudonyms, they started to talk freely about their stories, expectations, opinions and feelings.

The interviews were carried out in my respondents' workplaces either in their own office or in a meeting room where it was convenient for them to be interviewed. I gave priority for my participants to choose their own space because I wanted them to feel in control and comfortable without being distracted during the interview process. Besides, the interview location was not too difficult for me to reach because I am familiar with such places. I interviewed the respondents during office hours, which were between 9.00 am until 5.00 pm. Although the nature of their timetables extended after normal working hours, I ensured that the interviews were finished before 5.00 pm to show my respect for their busy schedules. as senior managers in the workplace.

As noted above, the interview method is familiar, flexible and ideally suited for exploring complex issues such as gender and ethnicity (Collins, 2000). It also encourages openness and sharing, especially as many people enjoy talking about their privilege or lack of privilege, but often do not have the opportunity to do so with other outsiders. I also tried to minimise the interruptions while the respondents were talking, and I presented myself as an interested interviewer to show my respect for them. I expected that this would be particularly welcoming for respondents as ethnicity is a socially-salient phenomenon, but often considered as a sensitive topic for workplace conversation. Mostly, I found participants spoke extremely openly about their experiences of majority ethnicity. This was likely a consequence of me being a Malay researcher which will be discussed later in this chapter (see Section 4.5). Thus, I also prepared for any changes in the topic that might be sparked by their answers during the interview process. As a researcher, it was important for me to have some control over the answers given by the participants in order to avoid having any unnecessary conversations.

The interview schedule was followed, with additional probing where necessary. I used probes such as "do you agree or disagree?" to the "why do you agree? Can you expand a little on this?". I tried to adapt to the situation whenever some respondents did not spontaneously share emotions for example regarding the challenges of being married career women. I also did not always pose the questions in the same order and re-arranged the order of interview schedule according to my respondents' answers as I wanted the conversation to flow naturally. I needed to explain my social inquiry in layman's terms when some of my participants had difficulty articulating their gendered, ethnicity and cultural values, particularly on gender segregation and intersectionality concepts, as they were not used to reflecting on these matters in a formal way. Thus, I carefully explained what we might understand such values to refer to and involve and invited them to respond and elaborate their own thinking. As a result, my participants were able to engage actively in meaning-making in the interview process (Young and Collin, 2004).

They also shared some information regarding their reactions to challenges that had happened that raised the salience of their privilege as Malay senior women or non-Malay senior women.

The interviews lasted about 60 minutes to two hours, and one took more than three hours when the respondent started to share her bitter experiences while climbing to the top ladder. The interview questions were drafted in the English language and approved by my supervision team in order to avoid misinterpretation, enabling me to conduct the interviews in English. I conducted the interviews in English instead of using our mother tongue. These participants were professional women with international track records in their career experiences which made them comfortable to speak in the English language. Also, having four years of corporate work experience at one of the corporate companies in Malaysia, I had no problem in blending in with this kind of business-conversation situation. I found it easy to establish a good rapport with the participants in this study.

As identified in Table 4.1, more Malay senior women in this study worked with the government, while there were more non-Malay senior women in the private sector. Apart from the Malay privilege issue, Chinese and Indian people are more likely to be involved in the modern sectors of the Malaysian economy that many private organisations could offer. Perhaps Malay senior women prefer to work in the government because for them this may be considered as the safe haven.

Age-wise, the findings revealed a slight mismatch in terms of average ages of senior women in the public and private spheres. Three women stated their ages between 31 – 35 years and 36 – 40 years; seven women between 41 – 45 years and 51 – 55 years; nine women between 46 – 50 years and two women between 56 – 60 years. Senior female managers in the private sector were slightly older on average than their public counterparts where the youngest interviewee's age was 39 years old and others were late-forties to early-fifties. Meanwhile, public sector senior women were aged between 33 to 59 years old and many of them were early-forties. Interestingly, none of the private sector women were in the early-thirties and late-fifties age categories showing clear differences in ages of respondents from these two employment sectors.

After each interview was finished, knowing the fact that these senior women were busy personnel, I thanked the participants for their time and expressed my appreciation for their willingness to participate in this research by giving each of them a small gift from the UK (a box of English tea). According to Holliday (2007), giving souvenirs to participants is not only a way of expressing appreciation for their cooperation in the research, but it may also decrease the power imbalance between the researcher and the researched. As a Malay, I am influenced by the Malay culture of giving souvenirs to a person we visit, particularly when we come back from abroad. This kind of cultural gesture has resulted in the continuing relationships between me and the respondents after the interview sessions. This can be seen when most of my

respondents expressed concern about whether their answers were what I sought for. They even told me that I could contact them again either through email or phone if I still required any further information.

Generally, I obtained useful information because the respondents were very cooperative and supportive in answering the interview questions. None of them were reluctant to answer any of the questions, although I had assumed that some people might be sensitive and therefore all the face-to-face interviews went well. All interviews were audio-tape recorded with a portable digital recorder because it was small and easy to carry for fieldwork purposes. I also recorded thoughts, ideas, concerns and learning points on personal notes. While these did not serve as data, I referred to this information in writing up the methodology.

4.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section describes some of the steps I took to ensure that this study was conducted in an ethical manner. The Faculty of Business and Law (FBL) has granted me ethical clearance to conduct the interviews by following the ethical approval guidelines of the University of the West of England (UWE). Approved by the UWE Research Ethics Committee, I gained the consent of all participants prior to interviews using the Interview Consent Form as well as an information sheet outlining the purpose of the research and the issues to be discovered (see Appendix D). In order to negate any fears or doubts, I had a discussion with each respondent and assured that all interview information will be treated in strict confidence. All interview materials will remain in my personal ownership. No actual names will be recorded, and anonymity of interviewees was protected by replacing their names with pseudonyms that mirrored the ethnicity of respondents' names. I assured participants that extracts obtained from interviews may be used in the reporting of the results and related follow-up studies, but no references would be made to the specific origin of that information.

As a PhD researcher at UWE, I adhered to UWE guidelines which hinge on the principles of respect, competence, responsibility and integrity throughout the study. With this in mind, I reminded myself to be extra alert and cautious about the ethical issues while I was conducting the interviews. I have the capability to competently, professionally and empathetically respond to any initial concern from insecurities and can handle a degree of emotionality due to participants' recalling experiences of discrimination and was prepared to deal with this during the interviews. The respondents were informed about the potential discomfort they may have felt, and I asked them to stop the interview if they wanted as their involvement in the research was voluntary and they could withdraw at any period of time. Fortunately, nobody chose to withdraw from the interview and I was not aware of any heightened discomfort or distress beyond anger, frustration and disappointment during the interviews. I also conveyed a degree of maturity and professionalism, so that participants would be comfortable with and open to a

research project on their gender and ethnicity as Malay, Chinese and Indian senior female managers in Malaysia.

The data collected, and the written documents (e.g. the interview transcripts) were stored in a secured network drive. These soft-copy documents were named according to the folder that represented all the interviewees using a pseudonym whilst the hard-copy documents (e.g. consent forms) were kept with the paper files either in my office or at home. Finally, when my computer or laptop was not in use, I ensured that they were both kept offline for additional protection of the data to avoid unforeseeable hacking.

4.5 PERSONAL REFLEXIVITY - THE RESEARCHER AND THE RESEARCHED

Researcher reflexivity is necessary as it *"rationalises the relationship between the researcher and the research setting, how the setting looks with an acknowledged researcher presence, and why it is important for this to be addressed within the written study"* (Holliday, 2007, pp 137-138). Explicit knowledge about the background and positioning of the author in relation to the research is important for allowing the reader to assess the effect this may have had on the research. Feminist methodology contributes to the subjective experiences of the researcher and the researched, for example of gender, ethnicity and privilege. The researcher and her personal history becomes part of the process of the research, which is drawn in interpretations and conclusions reached (Maynard, 1998). In order to provide accurate analyses of my research, it is important to critically examine who I am and who I become in relation to the stages of the research process.

I was born a Malay Muslim female, raised by a middle-class family and was always being reminded to be grateful with whatever I have, well-mannered and respectful, particularly to elderly people. I attained my education from pre-primary to university level and at the age of 13 years, I already went to a boarding school. Despite doing well in my studies, the opportunities to go to a boarding school at a young age was due to my ethnic privilege as a Malay in Malaysia (see Chapter Two). My schooling experiences had developed my leadership and management capabilities in dealing with competing demands. For instance, I had to make decisions and efforts from preparing my bed, ironing my school uniform and managing daily schoolwork, to taking part in any school activities, all by myself. Since the age of 13, I had not grown up in front of my parents' eyes and considered myself as an independent girl. After completing my first degree from the longest established premier university in Malaysia, I worked in one of the Government-Linked Companies for four years located in Kuala Lumpur as an Executive of Corporate Affairs. The previous company that I worked with had paid my master' tuition fees as a reward for my excellent performance in the workplace, for which in return, I gained a distinction.

It should be noted that my interest in researching women's advancement in their career trajectories rose partly from my own involvement in the corporate world in Malaysia. I was motivated by seeing how my former CEO, who was also a mother of two children, managed to juggle her work-life balance aptly. At that point of time, I was young, energetic and ambitious to climb up the career ladder. This motivation led me to question why there were not many women in senior management or in male-dominated areas, and why they seemed unable to endure longer in the supposedly level playing field. This later sparked a curiosity in me to know more about how senior female managers confront their career barriers and go on to succeed. My research interest is also triggered to see how women from three different ethnic backgrounds in Malaysia construct their gender and ethnicity in a country with a patriarchal system that is omnipresent in everyday lives. As a Malay woman, I wanted to conduct research involving other minority ethnic groups, I believe that it was crucial for me to be able to provide a sensitive account of ethnic minority experiences in Malaysia due to the Malay privilege.

Living in a multiracial country where there remain considerable racial tensions, I was aware that almost every single subject has a racial dimension. I have been careful to observe this in my data collection and analysis. My position as a Malay Muslim woman and later, researcher, has helped me to be mindful of topics that may be sensitive issues. I had prior knowledge about the structural patriarchal system that influences the lives of senior female managers in Malaysia based on my preliminary readings on women in management as well as personal corporate work experiences as a Muslim Malay woman. I have always had empathy to issues of privilege and I was aware that I needed to 'ground' the importance of sociopolitical background history. I originally indulged myself indirectly with post-colonial as well as ethnicity theory. Rather than covering everything on my plate, for the purpose of this research, I then felt it was necessary to only focus on the core historical background and ethnic privilege issues encountered by the non-Malays in Malaysian society and employing organisations.

This research involved some questions containing potentially personally and ethnically sensitive issues which led me to be more cautious when researching minority ethnic experiences in Malaysia. During the interviews, I shared my social position as a Malay woman with the Malay interviewees, but was more cautious with the non-Malays. This is because I feel that I am familiar with, and sensitive to, many of the issues concerning the Malay privilege in Malaysia. However, as I am currently a feminist researcher who wanted to empower more women to break the glass ceiling, I could not present myself as a Malay researcher *per se*. The issue of my ethnicity may be important for some respondents in terms of putting trust in me during the research process, so I included some information about my research background. Even more crucial, my research sought to include Chinese and Indian senior women who may not be open about their views on gender and ethnicity in the workplace due to political sensitive issues. Even if they were, I did not force the participants to answer any questions about their minority status. I took the approach of being willing to answer questions

about my ethnic privilege if asked by potential interviewees. As a result, my participants started to express their interest in my research, which portrayed their level of professionalism to the next level.

In terms of the rapport developed, it was expected that initially I would find it easier to establish a good connection with the Malay senior women due to the ethnic similarity compared with the non-Malays. Surprisingly, during the course of the interviews, I have been able to develop a rapport with the non-Malay senior women. This is perhaps due to my corporate work background as well as my experience studying abroad that enabled me to respect people from diverse backgrounds. However, when questions related to privilege were asked for example particularly in getting scholarships for their education as one of the career-success factors, Malay senior women were found to talk more freely about their lived experiences. This made me realise that I am also a Malay who has received funding from the government, hence, I was able to understand their views better. On the other hand, some challenges emerged when I addressed the same questions to the non-Malays. One of the non-Malay participants mentioned that I was racist for asking how she differentiated working with other ethnic backgrounds in Malaysia. I responded to her accusation calmly by saying that the question was asked for my research purposes only, with no intention to being racist against her as a minority ethnic woman. I then created a sense of openness with my participants to maintain awareness of enacting my own philosophical stance by giving them a voice during the research process (Broom, Hand and Tovey, 2009). The challenges of obtaining information from the non-Malay senior women by a Malay feminist researcher in itself portrays the strong political tension in Malaysian society.

When adopting social constructionist, individual constructivist, interpretivist as well as feminist approaches, I do not judge respondent's point of view as better than others or even myself during the interviews (Young and Collin, 2004). My position as a researcher has enabled me to investigate the complexities of gender and ethnicity intertwined with privilege amongst senior female managers in Malaysia. My position inevitably gave me an advantage because I knew more about my research topic than my participants. Their lack of in-depth knowledge about this study meant that I was able to encourage them to talk about certain issues. For instance, none of the respondents had heard the term 'intersectionality' and they asked me to explain the meaning. Also, some of my respondents did not focus much onthe quotas debate and policies considered to have empowered women's movement in Malaysia. They also suggested what the government could do to improve some of the policies related to career women (e.g. family-friendly facilities and work-from-home advantages). In the following section, I lay out in detail the specific steps taken for my data analysis.

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The process of transcription for data analysis started after all the semi-structured in-depth interviews were finished. Transcription is a vital part of any research because it helps the researcher to get closer to the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Once the process of transcription was finished, parallel to data immersion, I started to analyse the interview transcripts. As I gathered the interview data, I began the iterative process of analysis, which is presented using a thematic analysis framework. Thematic analysis is known as *"a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data"* (Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp 78). This approach is compatible with my epistemological stances as a social constructionist and an individual constructivism. Thematic analysis does not merely describe the data but seeks to uncover the underlying assumptions and meanings behind the social system. Braun and Clarke (2006) identify six phases of analysis: 1) data familiarisation by the researcher, 2) coding, 3) scanning for potential themes, 4) revising themes, 5) finalising the main themes, and 6) presenting a research report which is related back to the research questions.

I started the process of transcribing by familiarising the data and listening repeatedly to the recorded interviews because transcription needed to be done carefully with the data. As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), I listened to all the audio recordings several times, reading and re-reading and immediately noting important information that was worth quoting, left out irrelevant passages and did some editing if necessary. For instance, I ignored details about senior women who spent a lot of monies to support their children's holidays abroad because I did not consider it to be an important topic to be discussed in this study. Another example was when one of my participants shared her experiences on how she met the parents in law of her children before they were getting married, which I left out as I found it was irrelevant. I found that the listening process allowed me another chance to interpret all my respondents' stories, to note what I had missed during the interviews, to ponder, reflect, understand and analyse the different reasons behind their stories. Bryman (2008) asserts that it is acceptable for researchers to transcribe only the portion of the interviews that is useful and relevant to the topic of study after the interviews have been listened to a few times.

A problem arose when I realised that *"a semi-structured interview transcript made from an audio-recording is likely to be much less ordered. It may be disorganised, eclectic, incoherent in places, and may or may not take the form of a sequential narrative"* (Mason, 2002, pp 150). The second step which was involved after I had finished the process of transcription, was coding. I underlined selected quotations and considered this process to be a preliminary analysis of my data which made it easier for me. I began to manually code the transcripts, had to be selective and only choose the most relevant data that aligned well to the research questions of this study. According to (Yin, 2011), during the transcribing process, it was useful

to separate the data into groups and types as the basis for analysis. During the process of analysing my data and the writing-up, regardless of ethnic backgrounds, I realised that I had obtained similar views about certain issues and questions from the majority of the participants. For example, one of the important similarities was that my respondents consistently talked about their roles of being a career-oriented woman and their challenges juggling work-life balance in order to climb the career ladder. The primary roles for women were connected to house chores and the family and these tasks have received less appreciation, while men's primary role was in paid labour. I coded all the obstacles senior women managers had to encounter throughout their career journey under the career challenges category. In this way, reading transcripts several times was important not only to gain a better understanding of my respondents' stories, but also to ensure useful data was extracted and coded accurately.

Any issues and initial themes which emerged when reading the transcripts, led me to the third step, which was to generate interesting themes and code the data into groups. I analysed and sorted each piece of data in order to identify any other issues that had been highlighted by my respondents, and this was how I constructed the various sub-themes. For instance, I highlighted the queen bee syndrome as one of the sub-themes in the discussion on the challenges encountered by my respondents in the workplace. Apart from that, I also had to code separately senior women managers' perspectives on quotas from both public and private sectors of employment due to the fact that not all senior women managers agreed on the introduction of gender quotas in decision-making positions. The process was not easy to pull all data into readable forms and logical sequences. Many qualitative researchers have found that they were not able to write up all their data (Cassell and Symon, 2004; Greener, 2008; Yin, 2011). This phase is meant to transform the current knowledge attained from the transcripts into research reports.

This, however, has changed throughout the analysis process. The fourth step required me to revise the initial themes. When almost the majority of senior women revealed that they earned more than their spouses, I thought that this issue was interesting enough to be discussed on how supportive their spouses were in detail. I also analysed the repeating themes based on their ethnic backgrounds, for example to differentiate perspectives on the importance of educational attainments between Malay and non-Malay senior women managers. I looked at each interview thoroughly, and then I cut and pasted only selected data that correlated with the aim of the study under the relevant themes. This then led to the fifth stage where I came up with the final four major themes, each with their own sub-themes, which emerged during the analysis process. I presented the data in four different chapters, with each major theme representing the title of one individual chapter, supported by suitable sub-themes. The four themes are: the impact of private patriarchy on women's career choices, the impact of public patriarchy on the careers of senior women, career challenges encountered by senior women

managers, and the government quotas and women's individual career strategies (see Chapters Five to Eight).

Finally, for the final step of coding processes, I compiled a list of all codes occurring in each transcript and immersed myself in the process of answering the research questions. The final checking was done by my supervisors to verify and guarantee that the transcribing data would be used in the analysis chapters. To present an account of my data interpretation, I chose some quotes from my respondents which I used later in the discussion chapters. The discussion of all four major themes also involved the stories of Malay, Chinese and Indian respondents. As this stage *"… involves the final analysis and write-up the report"* (Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp 93), I was aware of not only representing the findings but also searching for suitable literature to support them with so that I can convince my readers. Convincing readers is important for the credibility and significance of the findings and conclusions (Lewis, Saunders and Thornhill, 2007). Feminist standpoint allowed me to disassemble and reconstruct my understanding of the respondents' subjectivities as gendered and ethnicised (Holvino, 2010). Since the theoretical inspirations offered by the intersectional lens (Crenshaw, 1991), this has helped me to refine the social position of the participants at the intersection of their gendered and ethnicised subjugations. The patriarchal ideology does also reinforce the division of labour based on gender and ethnicity within the Malaysian research context. I therefore decided to use my role as a career woman as a way to make sense of my respondents' experiences, but at the same time I also used previous studies conducted by researchers worldwide to strengthen my discussion.

Transcribing the data provided me ample time to recall all the stories shared by respondents and helped me to keep them in mind. As a researcher, I have an advantage in having the final power to interpret my respondents' stories, although I found that separating the relevant from the irrelevant data was not an easy task. I did not have to translate the transcripts from Malay into English as I mentioned in the previous section, I had conducted all the interviews in English. This was easier because it only involved one language that has been widely used in everyday communication between business personnel. Although English is not our first language in Malaysia, having interviewed senior women who hold professional roles in their organisations, I had no problem in understanding my respondents' stories as they delivered their career experiences accordingly. Yet, great consideration and careful thought needed to be given to the data during the process of transcribing and interpretation in order to avoid distortion (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Transcribing not only requires much effort and time, but it can also create various problems for the researcher (Greener, 2008). Although the thirty-one interviews were fully transcribed, I did not realise that the transcribing process could be extremely tiring and time consuming (Lewis, Saunders and Thornhill, 2007; Yin, 2011). I concur with Braun and Clarke's (2006, pp 87)

statement that the transcription process *"may be seen time-consuming, frustrating, and at times boring.."*. The transcribing occupied a lot of my time and a large proportion of the second and third year of study as I did not hire the external party to help with the transcribing due to two reasons: financial constraints to outsource the work and a wish to understand more about my data and its significance , hence choosing to do it all by myself.Consequently, I believe that the time spent in transcription was not wasted as I managed to develop a thorough understanding of my data in this way.

In addition, I opted for a manual data analysis process rather than using popular software packages such as NVivo, Maxqda or Atlas.ti (Oliveira *et al.*, 2013). This would have cost me another time-consuming episode. Despite attending the courses provided by the Business School, as a novice user, I encountered some difficulties and remained unsatisfied when learning the complicated software for the qualitative data analysis. In my point of view, computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) is too complex when relatively small numbers of interviews are performed (Schönfelder, 2011). I also understand that the manual method *"does not require additional expensive software but uses programs available to most researchers"* (Ose, 2016, pp 15). While CAQDAS is functioned to help the researcher to analyse and manage large amounts of qualitative data, I can be confident that my research outcomes were not affected by using Microsoft Word and Excel rather than NVivo and other highly qualitative software tools in my research process.

4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the methodology that guided my study and presented a theoretical perspective on the data collection and analysis. The qualitative method allowed me to obtain rich information about career and lived experiences of Malay, Chinese and Indian senior female managers in Malaysia. This research required me to adopt a social constructionism and an individual constructivism because as a Malay, I am bounded with the privilege that has been built into the Malaysian constitution which has led to the construction of societal expectations about senior women in this study. Also, as a female researcher of women, I employ feminist standpoint methodology to interpret the understanding of women's careers and their lived experiences in a country with a strong patriarchal system. Although qualitative research in Malaysia is starting to emerge, little has been directed towards addressing the senior female managers using an intersectional lens. Therefore, the analysis of intersectionality between gender and ethnicity is needed to explain how these women managed to succeed in their careers. To achieve the research objectives and research questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain more useful insights of this research.

The methodological approach that I employed was designed to fill an empirical gap which was identified through the literature review. I have also explained the ethical research practice that I needed to follow during the interviewing process. I detailed the challenges that I faced during the research process and how I overcome them. While doing the transcribing and analysis, I kalways tried to be sincere and do justice to every aspect of my participants' accounts during the interviews. With the experience that I gained while conducting my fieldwork, I have learned how to carry out successful fieldwork and have developed in my role as a researcher. Consistent with the research philosophical stances, my task here is to enlighten how societal factors shape women's career experiences in everyday lives. Indeed, throughout the rise of women in the boardrooms, as well as its research, there has been no investigation about how the intersection of gender and ethnicity influence the introduction of gender quotas in Malaysia.

Chapters Five to Eight which follow, present the findings from the thematic analysis of the interview data. Each chapter draws primarily on the accounts of senior female managers regardless of their ethnic background. The analysis considers intersectional categories such as gender and ethnicity in shaping women senior managers. I tried to understand how senior female managers manage their social categories (e.g. gender and ethnicity) which sometimes can be both a positive and a negative. The analysis process explicitly incorporated an intersectionality framework by identifying themes and the relationships between these themes. It considers all social categories as inextricably interconnected. I will begin the next chapter by discussing the experiences of senior women around marital status, accessing education and the influence of their family upbringing, which has led them to become career women in their respective field.

CHAPTER 5

THE IMPACT OF PRIVATE PATRIARCHY ON WOMEN'S CAREER CHOICES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter draws upon interview data that captures the socio-political and economic factors that help to explain women's low representation in senior management in Malaysia. The chapter begins by analysing the reasons why and how women enter the labour force and considers the impact of private patriarchy (in the home) on their career choices. In order to understand occupational gender segregation, it is important to analyse social relations both within the household and wider society. This chapter therefore provides insights into why and how women's access to the workforce is interrelated with private patriarchy, reflecting a view that the intersections of gender and ethnicity are highly salient in women's decisions about their careers in Malaysia. Several common themes have emerged from the data analysis, including the importance of the impact of family background, childhood experiences, and educational attainments, which are explored below.

The findings are organised around two subsections. Section one covers socio-economic background and section two focuses upon how Malay and non-Malay women's work and private lives are different but lead to similar career positions. Taking an intersectional approach, the chapter explores the context of career choices made by the participants by using an inter-categorical approach between gender and ethnicity (McCall, 2005). This approach provides insights into the complexity and diversity of women's lived experiences from three different ethnic backgrounds which reflect the incorporation of gender (women) and ethnicity (Malay, Chinese, and Indian) as the analytical categories. The first section is based upon the theme of women's access to the paid labour market in Malaysia. It demonstrates that women's own understandings of their decisions invoke early credentials, often rooted in family and childhood upbringing. It establishes the links between women managers' early socialisation in the family and level of educational attainments, which impacts career choices in later life.

The cross-analysis will be made throughout the chapter to look at the differences between public and private sector women especially when discussing the Malay and non-Malay women's experiences. The relationship between Malaysian women, senior managers and their counterparts in the West, as well as other Asian countries are also referred to. The analysis in this chapter introduces the reader to the primary sources of evidence that contribute to answering the first research question: why women are under-represented in senior management in Malaysia. Not all women are able to fully break out of the private patriarchal relations of the household and this is the case for the interviewees in this study. There appears to be a shift to a different form of private patriarchy in the household which has led to these

women entering the public sector of work and thus to also experience public patriarchal relations.

5.2 WOMEN'S ACCESS TO THE PAID LABOUR FORCE

Women's under-representation in senior management remains a topic of discussion worldwide (see Cho et al., 2015; Durbin, 2016; Krishnan and Park, 2005; Marshall, 1995; O'Connor, 2001). This section explores how women enter paid employment in Malaysia before advancing to senior levels. As discussed in Chapter Two, the social setting in a Malaysian context is strongly influenced by values and beliefs rooted in the predominant culture. Although the country is known for its multiplicity of cultural patterns, the dominant culture is Malay-Islamic, due to historical and political factors. The values and beliefs stemming from this ethnic background are, by and large, imported to the employment sectors, where they tend to be an integral part of the prevailing male-dominated organisation culture.

The socialisation of women during their early developmental years is significant for the establishment of continuing attitudes that may influence their subsequent working experiences (Cooke, 2010; Krook and Norris, 2014; Yukongdi and Benson, 2005). Other studies have found that childhood experiences and educational achievements are equally critical in moulding women's career success (Ismail et al., 2005; White et.al, 1992). Given the limited research on Malaysian women in senior management, the direction and orientation of this study was significantly influenced by research on gender and work in Western countries. Women's participation in the public sphere has been accepted in the Malaysian society due to social and economic government policy, which has provided many opportunities for women to participate in national development, particularly through their careers and expertise. Interviewees explained that entering a management job did not simply happen by chance, although of course women do mention chance encounters or incidents that played a part in guiding them towards certain work. For these women, the positive attitude of their parents had been a starting point that had opened up the opportunity for them to engage in the formal economy. They also reflected on aspects of their gender and ethnicity that was compatible with women's career choices.

5.2.1 Family Background and Childhood Within a Patriarchal Household

In this study, it is pertinent to investigate the socio-economic backgrounds of Malaysian women senior managers' parents to see whether or not they provide some of the antecedents of success for women's careers. The findings from the interviews reveal that Malaysian senior female managers came from varying social backgrounds, ranging from poor rural to wealthier urban areas. As explained in Chapter Two, the divide-and-rule policy introduced during the period of British colonial rule resulted in economic and ethnic segregation in society. The divide-and-rule policy has segregated the Chinese at the top, living in urban areas and working

in more economic modern occupations, the Indians in the middle, living and working on palm-oil and rubber states, and the Malays at the bottom, mostly clustered in rural agricultural areas (Drabble, 2000; Hirschman and Aghajanian, 1980; Jomo, 2004). This situation resulted from colonisation, hence the introduction of Malay privilege following independence. The colonial rule left a legacy of three distinct ethnic groups which are Malay, Chinese and Indian, each with different cultural attributes to the education and future employment of their daughters. It is interesting to note that although some parents were supportive towards their daughters' careers, interviewees' answers to the interview questions were often rooted in family and private patriarchy. In order to explore the differences and similarities on how they were brought up and their educational experiences, the subsequent sections discuss the experiences of Malay women managers and non-Malay women managers, respectively.

5.2.1.1 Malay Senior Women Managers' Experiences of Entering the Labour Market

Parents' occupational status appears to reflect that, despite the policy of Malay privilege having been endowed, historically, most of the Malays had generally resided in the rural areas and engaged in agricultural or fishing occupations (Hirschman and Aghajanian, 1980). However, the Malay parents who held professional or managerial occupations represent an elite, educated and more privileged group. The Malay senior women in this study either lived in rural or town areas. From the interviews, it can be determined that they had working fathers, either in a profession, (e.g. doctor, businessman, director, policeman, army or government officer) or in skilled or unskilled jobs (e.g. contractor, fisherman, or religious teacher). In relation to a patriarchal society in Malaysia, amongst society generally, it was unusual to see women in the public arena as the secondary breadwinners in the family. It is not surprising to note that more than two-thirds of Malay senior women in this study have non-working mothers. These families had maintained the traditional approach to family life which explains why the majority of their mothers were full time homemakers and patriarchy, in the form of a male breadwinner had been the norm for decades. Furthermore, the development of women's careers was not yet established during those early years and began emerging only after the independence of Malaysia was gained in 1957 (see Chapter Two). This explains why there were only four senior Malay women in the study with working mothers in professional jobs (e.g. managers, businesswomen or teachers).

The interviewees also strongly supported the notion that the influence of traditional patriarchal relations in Malaysian families remains as significant today as in the past, which can be seen when respondents talked about their career decisions (Hashim, 2006; Juhary, 2011). Although the findings may not be generalised to the whole population, the following analysis experienced by the Malay women may be influenced by male dominance in the patriarchal Malaysian society. Senior women in this study had good relationships with their parents and the participants often described their parents as being highly supportive of their careers. Yet, there

are different types of support and reasons for this, depending upon whether the influence was from the mother, father or both parents. As indicated by three Malay senior women, being brought up by, and receiving the full attention of, their full time-housewife mothers could have been one of the push factors leading to their career achievements.

According to Rose, a Malay senior woman who worked as a Chief Executive Officer at one of the GLC companies in Kuala Lumpur, she and her other four sisters and a brother were afraid of their mother. At one point, people thought her mother was a school headmistress because she was so proactive in raising her children. Yet, she believed that having a strict mother was a positive influence on her career. Mawar, who was raised by a housewife mother, felt her mother was more influential in the sense of giving spiritual strength and encouraging her career development as well as education. According to Azalea,

> *"My mom is a housewife and she always told us you are all girls, you need to earn your own money. You cannot just expect your husband to give you money because it is not easy to get money from your husband. I think she spoke based on experiences because she got no money and she got to ask from my father which is very difficult, I guess"* (Azalea, Principal Assistant Secretary, Public Sector)

Her mother had illustrated how having a career was important in order to have a bright future without depending upon a spouse. It can be seen that the mothers' experiences of private patriarchy encouraged them to achieve something different for their daughters. Hirschman (2016) argues that Malaysian women are socially and politically controlled by men, thus leaving them oppressed. As one of the countries strongly accustomed to a patriarchal social system, men as the leader will take on the role of 'rice winner' in the family. Given that only a small number of Malaysian women had a place in the job market in those times, women were financially dependent on their men for household expenditures. The Malay senior women had witnessed their mother's lives of hardship which led their career orientation to be driven by a strong need to avoid being a home-maker. More traditional views were held or attributed to the interviewees' mothers where women were controlled through private patriarchy and were indirectly controlled through cultural rules of acceptable behaviour which dictated the ways in which men and women should behave.

In most Asian countries, for instance in China, although women's status has improved greatly, son preference is still strong (Xiaolei *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, some Malay respondents in the study revealed that their parents pursued the female-male role divides where the girls were asked to perform household duties when they were younger compared to their male siblings who helped their father with jobs around the house. Different approaches were used in bringing up sons and daughters where sons tended to have more privileges in their family than

daughters. Their parents tended to assign greater responsibility and physical work especially to the eldest son. The parents were likely to have high expectations for their sons in terms of the jobs they opted for early in their careers. Senior women may learn patterns of loyalty, helpfulness, and protection, which may later reflect on other social relationships. This automatically acceded a superior position to their male siblings, showing them the same amount of obedience and respect as their fathers, adhering to private patriarchy traditions in Malaysia.

However, this experience was not universal, and although the idea of male dominance in Malaysian society has been very much accepted, in contrast, Widuri recalled that her parents did not enforce the stereotypical female-male role divisions at home, which clarifies why she could manage to hold a senior position as an Assistant Director at the Ministry of Women and worked closely with a Woman Minister in Malaysia. She was the youngest of her eight siblings in the family.

> *"My father is very open-minded. He likes to give us freedom and never differentiates between sons and daughters. He treats us fairly. If you want to be a pilot, go ahead even though you are a girl. No gender biases. My mother is very supportive even though she was just a housewife. To her, boys also need to do the house chores, not only girls"* (Widuri, Assistant Director, Public Sector)

These abilities in turn were useful in her career as she could adapt to the different roles all senior managers assumed at work with ease. While Rose, Mawar and Azalea were encouraged to work by their mothers, this is, however, opposite to the opinions of the other twelve Malay senior women whose careers were influenced by the male patriarch in their family. As men are more respected in Asian families, previous studies in Malaysia indicate that senior women's choices to work were dependent upon men's agreement because they are leaders in the family (Hashim, 2006; Noor and Mahudin, 2005). Based on the interviews, in the early years of development, the majority of women's career choices were influenced by their fathers. Cempaka's father became a role model for her to succeed in her career compared to her mother who was a full time housewife. Cempaka claimed that she and her four siblings were dictated to in almost every aspect of life by her father since they were young.

> *"I think the most influential is my father. I do not know. My father tended to be dominant including selecting the right life partner and choosing the types of job"* (Cempaka, Senior Assistant Director, Public Sector)

In the same way, Kamelia felt that her career development was also being predetermined by her father who was a doctor. He had set up a medical faculty in one of the public research universities located in Kuala Lumpur.

> *"Career wise, definitely my father. He is a very strict person and does not accept anything which is not good [laugh]. He would not tolerate"*
> (Kamelia, Vice President of Treasury, Private Sector)

Kamelia, who worked in one of the biggest oil and gas companies in Malaysia, felt that, although her father did very well, he was modest and non-materialistic. Her father, who came from a poor family, was the most successful in the family and believed that education was very important. The close father-daughter relationship encouraged the learning of practical skills that stimulated career choices later. Though there has been a change in patriarchal relations and things have started to change, the male still runs the household. This also reflects that the family was still patriarchal but in a different way because the fathers were now encouraging the interviewees to join the external labour market.

Although private patriarchy seems dominant in Malaysian culture, Malay senior women in this study were encouraged by their families to develop their careers. The findings do not mean all Malay men are supportive of women in paid work, but due to the rapid social change and feminisation of the labour market, women have been provided with employment opportunities. All of these examples above suggest that fathers were a good influence on the interviewees' careers, which is an evolving form of patriarchy, rather than an end to patriarchy.. Walby's (1986, 1990, 2002) argument on patriarchy in Western societies, where it has shifted from the home to the labour market, seems applicable in Malaysian societies. The chain of patriarchy is still existent in Malaysia, but women have started to resist it because of education and an awareness that they cannot remain silent anymore (see section 5.2.2). The shift in family norms and in patriarchal norms varies between ethnic backgrounds which has left a positive impact on women's education and employment. This has also contributed to the public patriarchy, which will be explained in detail in Chapter Six.

On the other hand, the analysis has shown that the parent-child relationship is an important antecedent to the career success for these senior women (Marshall, 1984; White, 1992). Of twenty-five Malay senior female managers interviewed, five mentioned that both fathers and mothers were equally important in shaping who they are today. They have a strong social bond and affiliation with their family back in both the village and the urban areas mainly because the parental influence came from different angles. The fathers were likely to support them in terms of finance and logistics while the mothers were more influential on the spiritual and moral side. A lot of their behavioural characteristics in terms of personality, academic approach and career development were determined by a mix of influences from both parents.

> *"I think both equally have an impact on me. My dad was a government person so I saw the drive, the loyalty and the commitment whereas my mom, I saw a high level of discipline in her. When at home, there is a mom thing with us, you have to do your homework and things like that*" (Zaleha, Senior Vice President, Private Sector)

Kekwa, who worked as a General Manager at one of the engineering companies in Malaysia, explained that both parents were equally important in her career undertaking. Another senior woman, Orked, who worked as a Deputy Under Secretary at the Ministry of Finance, stated that her father taught her how important networking was whereas her mother taught her that perseverance matters the most. Despite the ability to lead and manage her staff, she realised that 'being visible' and maintaining her tenacity had had many positive impacts throughout her career path. Teratai described that as a Malay senior woman whose father used to be a religious scholar, she believed that both parents had their own responsibilities in raising her. From the perspective of these Malay senior women, no doubt, the socio-cultural norms and notions regarding women's participation in economic and political activities are changing in Malaysian society, and women are gaining emancipation from the chain of patriarchy in some ways.

Finally, there were four Malay senior women managers interviewed in the study who claimed they were neither encouraged nor discouraged by their parents to pursue careers, but two were influenced by other family members such as auntie, or a grandmother. Having uneducated parents was the reasons why these senior women felt they had the freedom to choose their careers without interference from their parents. Although brought up in traditional families, these senior women were encouraged to enter the labour force out of economic necessity. As pointed out by Kenanga and Lily,

> *"My parents are not really educated. My mother is a full time housewife and my father is a fisherman. They encouraged me to do well but I had never been influenced by them*" (Kenanga, Head of Portfolio, Management and Growth, Private Sector)

> *"My parents lived in the village. They let me choose what career I wanted to be and never interfere.*" (Lily, General Manager, Private Sector)

On the other hand, Ramlah was raised by her grandparents and could not remember her parents as they had passed away when she was a young child. She also mentioned that her career path was influenced by the grandmother because she lived longest with her since her grandfather died when she was six or seven years old. Being orphaned at a young age, she was driven by strong needs to ensure her life was better than theirs (Renshaw, 1999). This was reflected in her capability to cope successfully with early traumatic life events such as the

loss of parents and guidance, which may in turn set a pattern for coping with future life events positively.

> *"I am the only child, raised by the grandparents … my parents passed away when I was a young kid. I met them, but I do not remember them. Now both grandmother and grandfather had also passed away. I think I have the advantage of doing what I want. Let say if I want to spend with aunty's family, I will just call them and go to their house"* (Ramlah, Senior Vice President, Private Sector)

Overall, Malay senior women interviewees, who had either working or non-working mothers, appear to regard their mothers as positive role models. Yet, different mothers may have different aspirations for their daughters' futures. As most respondents in this study had non-working mothers, the findings reflect that senior women were motivated to improve their lives after seeing all the hardships of being full time homemakers. They were determined to develop career orientations and aspirations to succeed by improving their level of education that could help them to break through at least the first layer of glass ceiling (Marshall, 1995; Powell and Graves, 2003). This shift has definitely given some advantage to women in terms of their education and employment.

Conversely, women with working mothers aspired to continue in their mothers' footsteps by becoming career women when they grew up and not considering the role of housewife. There is some evidence from the analysis in Chapter Six that private patriarchy in Malaysia is now taking on a different form in which women are encouraged to be the main rice winner. This has been reflected in Chapter Six where most of the participants earn more than their spouses. This merely shows the theories of patriarchy in a different form (Walby, 1986, 1990, 2002) as the majority of the fathers were not following traditional male breadwinner models but were still a dominant force in their daughters' lives. However, this still does not give Malay senior women managers equal rights within the home where the household divisions of work are still the responsibility of women rather than their male counterparts (see Chapter Seven). Interestingly, although private patriarchy seems changing and shifting in Malaysia, the shift from private to public patriarchy is not straightforward. It also operates differently in the non-Malay, Chinese and Indian ethnic groups, and this will be explored in the next section.

5.2.1.2 The Non-Malay Senior Women Managers' Experiences of Entering the Labour Market

The non-Malay women in this study come from professional families who are predominantly urban dwellers involved in industry and trade. All of the five non-Malay families lived in urban areas and their fathers worked in professional jobs either as businessmen, estate managers, or government surveyors. Although it is not possible to generalise, in the urban environment, being literate and having an education may have led the non-Malay family to higher paying

and more prestigious jobs within occupational groups. Meanwhile, in Malaysia, the Malay women generally come from poorer backgrounds and have achieved social mobility thanks to Malay privilege policies. As discussed in Chapter Two, the structure of family, society or state in traditional settings that embeds gendered institutional privilege, retains its core in male domination, particularly in Malay males.

In terms of mothers' occupations, like their Malay counterparts, of the five non-Malay participants, four of them had non-working mothers. This is indicative that regardless of ethnicity and socio-economic background, patriarchy in the form of a male breadwinner model is strongly present in the older generations. Women are rarely seen working and being the main rice winner in Malaysia. Similar to the Malays, the analysis also shows that having either a working or non-working mother was inspiring for the non-Malay senior women, but for different reasons. Whether a mother was home orientated or career orientated, it had a similar impact upon the interviewees' motivation to work themselves. Most mothers wanted their daughters to be independent earners after getting married.

Walby (1991) argues that older women, who are the product of private patriarchy, are at a distinct disadvantage, because many will have built their lives around a domestic gender regime, which assumed that a husband would be the main provider. They may not have gained educational qualifications or labour market experience and therefore would find it extremely difficult to become the main provider if their husbands should become redundant or their marriages break down. That could also be the reason why Shanti's mother kept telling her to depend on herself and ensure she had her own career even after she got married. Her mother was the one 'push factor' that ensured Shanti excelled in her career as she spent most of the time with her mother from a very young age, rather than with her father.

> *"My mom was very supportive in every aspect. She was the main pillar for us daughters to actually excel. She always told us do not depend on anyone. Even when you are married, make sure you have your own career. I would say she was the pillar behind our success"* (Shanti, Senior Assistant Director, Public Sector)

Out of five non-Malay women senior managers, only one Chinese senior woman had a working mother with a job as a businesswoman. Previous research on working women reveals that daughters of employed women are more likely to develop less stereotypical views of female and male roles, and have career orientations and aspirations for non-traditional occupations (Powell and Graves, 2003; White, 1992). Although not expressed explicitly, similar to the Malay participants, having a mother who participates in the workforce might be an aspiration for non-Malay women to succeed in their careers and regard work as central to their lives. For instance, Xiu Ying asserted that her mother, who was a successful businesswoman, played a key role

and inspired her career development. Being a full time housewife was not even a consideration and this reflected that she had developed career-orientations rather than home-orientations as she had one model to follow, that of her mother. Xiu Ying was a Chinese senior woman who worked as an Assurance Leader in one of the second largest professional services firm in the world, also known as one of the Big Four based in Kuala Lumpur.

> *"In terms of my career, my mom is a businessperson. So I have seen how she achieved her career because she was very successful. I can see if you want to achieve something in your career, it takes this and all that. So I have seen those"* (Xiu Ying, Assurance Leader and Partner, Private Sector)

Smith (2012) states financial dependency among women may create a number of psychological issues such as low self-confidence to live independently and this often leads to isolation. Thus, having mothers as role models may help women to appreciate as well as value their strengths and abilities as someone who holds feminine characteristics (Marshall, 1995). This motivates women to excel in their careers as they would assume that other members of the family might follow in their footsteps, so they had to show their maximum ability academically and be successful. From an intersectionality perspective, it should be highlighted that there are several differences in the forms of encouragements to work given by the different parent from different ethnic backgrounds. For instance, Madhuri, an Indian senior woman, who is now running her own Ayur Veda business, felt that growing up in an Indian culture, meant the family always aspires for their children to be professional, either doctors, lawyers or engineers. Madhuri considered that Indian parents' expectations are generally very status oriented. This could be due to the influence of the patriarchal ideology submerged in Indian families which requires them to be more closely tied to the traditional Indian caste. They believe that these three professions are the future for their children and this mindset has made determined their direction..

> *"I always wanted to be a lawyer to be honest because I love court-cases… But somehow my hair problem makes me landed to a hair business. My father was against it. He said look you are going to study about hair loss, skin problems. What do you do? I said I can offer this service in Malaysia … He said NO NO NO ... It was not popular in those days. He reluctantly said yes but finally of course he supported my ambition*" (Madhuri, Director, Private Sector)

There were two non-Malay senior women managers interviewed in the study who claimed they were neither encouraged nor discouraged by their parents to pursue careers (both were

Chinese), but one was influenced by a sister. These senior women had the freedom to choose their careers without being influenced by the parents' opinions. As pointed out by Mei Feng,

> *"I came from a very simple family. My parents are old already. They are not that educated in a way. I don't really think that they have any influence on my career. To them, it was actually I do whatever that is of interest to me, provided that I am happy, that was it. You just go for it. What they do is, they give me the education*" (Mei Feng, Group Finance Controller, Private Sector)

Taking ethnicity into account, the analysis shows that Malay, Chinese and Indian senior women differed in the household duties they performed. While the Malay women cleaned and washed, Chinese women looked after their younger siblings and Indian women helped their parents with the family business. Although difficult, these childhood responsibilities may have helped senior female managers to gain character building experiences that should enhance their feelings of competence and self-confidence (White, 1992). The salience of ethnicity may also be higher because different ethnicities come with different values. Given the privileged institutionalisation towards the Malays, non-Malay women claimed that the hard work and perseverance they had learned as children, was instrumental in the shaping of their future careers.

The non-Malay senior women reported that their parents had been strict in their child-rearing practices, maintaining discipline in terms of how they spent their time, their academic performance as well as their general behaviour and disposition. They felt they were likely to have received greater role training from their family circumstances rather than institutional support due to the privilege that had been endowed to the Malay senior women. According to McIntosh (1995), white people are likely to receive economic, political and social advantages as compared to minority ethnic people in the West. Linking this to the non-Malay women, these individuals brought up in less privileged or more challenging environments benefited from a stronger desire to succeed. This may then reflect why the non-Malay women appear to be much more competitive in order to succeed in the senior managerial positions. The unequal access to social structural systems with the intersection of multiple inequalities (Collins, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991) led the non-Malay senior women to feel less advantaged in getting better education in their lives, which will be elucidated more in the section below.

5.2.2 Educational Attainments and Qualifications

Apart from the different upbringing experiences across different ethnic groups, education may be significant in determining important career success for the senior women in this research. Human capital theory suggests that resources invested in education and training are likely to enhance career progression for individuals (Becker, 1964). In the case of women managers,

past research has shown that being educated with high qualifications has contributed to the increasing number of women gaining promotion in senior managerial roles (Cheung and Halpern, 2010; Powell and Graves, 2003). Kadiresan et al (2015) in their gender segregation study in Malaysia demonstrate that investing in their human capital does not help either Malay or non-Malay women progress in their career rather they have to invest twice as much to gain the same results as men. However, the interview findings from this study demonstrate that senior female managers have progressed considerably and education indeed plays a leading role for Malaysian women to succeed in their careers (Ahmad, 1998; Burgess and Tharenou, 2002; Hassan, 1998). More than two-thirds of senior women in the study had shown remarkable achievements throughout their schooling years, often being at the top of their classes. With good educational qualifications, many of these women managers stated that it was easier for them to determine their future and to access job opportunities.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country in which the government has adopted strong preferential policies aimed at restructuring the socio-economic positions of its ethnic groups. The government gives preferential treatment in the areas of education, employment and ownership to its majority ethnic group, Malays (Ibrahim, 2007). In education, such policies include educational subsidies and loans, quotas, exclusive admission to certain institutions, use of the Malay language in classroom instruction, and guaranteed employment for ethnic Malays with credentials (Raman and Sua, 2010). Yet, all types of schools are open to all ethnic backgrounds in Malaysia, where the only difference is the medium of instruction within that particular school.

There are two types of primary schools in Malaysia, the national (with Malay as the medium of instruction) and national-ethnical type; Tamil and Chinese schools with either Tamil or Chinese as the main language, respectively (Pong, 1995). The majority of the senior female managers in the interviews attended mixed-gender and mixed-race schools. Table 5.1 has shown the distribution of attendance of senior female managers by type of school and level of education. Twelve senior women attended single-sex (girls schools) and ten were enrolled in boarding schools. These senior women were taught in Malay due to them attending a national public school in Malaysia. There was only one Chinese woman who attended a national-ethnical type (Chinese) school, and none of the participants attended the Tamil school.

Table 5.1: Distribution of senior women in the public and private sectors by type of school and level of education

	Public Sector Women	**Private Sector Women**	**Ethnicity**		
Type of school			**Malay**	**Chinese**	**Indian**
National Public School	13	16	25	2	2
National Public School (Ethnic)	0	1	0	1	0
National Private School	1	0	1	0	0
Total	14	17	26	3	2
Boarding vs Daily School					
Boarding School	8	2	10	0	0
Daily School	6	15	16	3	2
Total	14	17	26	3	2
Mixed-Sex vs Single-Sex School					
Single-Sex (Girls School)	4	8	12	0	0
Mixed-Sex	10	9	14	3	2
Total	14	17	26	3	2
Level of Education					
Degree	3	11	11	3	0
Masters	9	4	13	0	0
PhD	2	Nil	1	0	1
Total	14	15	25	3	1
Others					
Professional (i.e. ACCA)	Nil	6	3	3	0
Overseas	6	11	14	2	1

Generally, interviewees affirmed that their educational experiences were positive, thus, instrumental in their career development. Around a third of the interviewees identified that

schooling years taught them to be more independent, competitive, disciplined and confident. Moreover, the interview findings validate the results of past research studies (i.e. Broecke and Hamed, 2008; Cornelius and Skinner, 2008; Sabharwal, 2015) that education counts as the most essential element for female interviewees to pass through to their present senior positions. The importance of education has played a role and this continues to play a role in the Malaysian context. Senior female managers needed better educational qualifications for promotional opportunities, and managerial advancement. This could explain why nearly two-thirds of the participants had masters and doctoral degrees as seen in Table 5.1.

Analysing from a public and private sector perspective, at the time of interview, two women in the public sector had just finished their PhDs, six women in the private sector had pursued professional qualifications and thirteen senior women (nine in the public and four in the private sector) had obtained Masters after they started working full time. Some women also insisted that their educational achievements increased their personal credentials, as they earned more respect from others for being highly educated. In the public sector, the promotional opportunities were not only dependent upon practical working experiences, but higher qualifications were also useful to gain initial employment opportunities and speed up their career progression. It was possible for public sector senior women to attain higher education up to doctoral degrees, given the high chance of securing a government scholarship when working in public service. As indicated by Akasia,

> *"For me to be promoted to my current position I think it was because of my doctorate. Most probably because they wanted somebody with a doctorate and matured. It just happened that I was there and they offered me the post"* (Akasia, Deputy Secretary General, Public Sector)

In contrast, the private senior women were less likely to feel the need to further their studies to a doctorate level perhaps due to limited funding for such higher qualifications. Promotion in most of the private sector organisations was based on how well respondents could contribute to the growth of the company. Nevertheless, as seen in Table 5.1, women in the private sector would prefer to sit for professional qualifications that could accelerate their career paths such as from the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), or the Malaysian Institute of Certified Public Accountants (MICPA) rather than pursuing postgraduate degrees.

There were differences in the types of positive schooling and educational experiences and these experiences varied by ethnic backgrounds. Ethnic segregation has become an emerging feature in Malaysia's education system, even though the institutional role of education should have been a unifying force for the country's multi-ethnic society. The underlying problem is that, all levels of education provision in Malaysia have become divided along ethnic lines.

5.2.2.1 Malay Senior Women Managers' Educational Experience

The educational level appears to reflect the policy of Malay privilege. I do not intend to restate the discussion in Chapter Two, rather, I explain how privilege begins at the school level. A special form of highly subsidised boarding school with emphasis on science education was set up by the Ministry of Education to admit selected *Bumiputera* children (Raman and Sua, 2010). The fully residential schools were originally meant for bright students to be given an opportunity to excel in both academic and non-academic areas. The downside is that enrolment in these schools only prioritised the Malay ethnic group, and reflected the weaknesses of the measures taken by the government to desegregate the education system (Pong, 1993). Thus, it is worth examining whether Malay senior women's experiences while in the boarding schools or day schools could be part of a success story for them.

The analysis has shown ten out of thirty-one senior women in this study went to boarding schools (all Malays). The school took over their parents' responsibility to look after them and provide every qualified *Bumiputera* student with the facility. The parents wanted their daughters to learn survival skills that could help them overcome challenges in their future undertakings. A lot of influences came from the teachers and friends they lived with and in a positive way, it made them very independent. At the same time, having the opportunity to join the after school clubs and inter-school competitions increased their level of confidence, which is reflected in their ability to hold senior roles in organisations (Jogulu and Wood, 2011). Melati who went to one of the elite boarding schools in Malaysia confessed that the disciplinary system at boarding school gave her good training and increased her level of confidence. She was motivated to be well organised, punctual and did not like to keep others waiting for her.

On the other hand, Malay women who did not attend a boarding school felt that this reflected their parents' belief that they could excel regardless of whatever type of school they attended. Rose voiced that she was motivated and self-disciplined even though she had only attended a daily school. Tulip mentioned that family bonding was important which was the reason why her family chose day school over boarding school. Apart from being exposed to a good learning environment at home, these women had attended extra classes at tuition centres and received extra revision books for their home learning. This kind of experience may not be something that those who went to a boarding school enjoyed. Malay women's experiences in this study demonstrate that both groups enjoyed similar experiences regardless of whether they went to a boarding or day school.

Interestingly, interviewees, the majority of whom were Malay, who attended girls-only schools stressed the competitiveness was higher than in the other national schools (e.g. mixed-sex day schools, mixed-sex boarding schools, or same-sex boarding schools). The preferential treatment policy resulted in the non-Malays choosing the girls-only schools over the mixed-national school. To a large extent, ethnicity is socially constructed and ethnic inequality in

education is complicated in Malaysia. Having said that, given the ethnic diversity of the students in girls-only day schools teachers were more likely to use English as the medium of instruction, not the Malay language. Melur shared her experience,

> *"I went to the Methodists Girls' school, the competition becomes at that level [raising her hand high]. When everybody speaks in English, I do not understand what they are talking about. They are all non-Malays"* (Melur, Director, Private Sector)

This encouraged Malay senior women to develop their English communication skills when they grew up and helped them to develop their career trajectories to the international level. Kamelia also remembered that she had to compete not only with the Malays, but also with other females from different ethnic backgrounds. Although she was in the top class, she had to work extra hard and be competitive among her multi-ethnic classmates. Five senior women described that ethnicity was never an issue and they had good relationships with their classmates from all ethnic backgrounds. Ten senior women identified they had a lot of fun and enjoyed their schooling years and it did not have much effect on their current careers.

Moving into higher education, approximately half of the women had chosen arts subjects, only six interviewees were in the science streams. It must be remembered that some of these women had been in school during the late 1960s, early 1970s and 1980s, when few women selected science as a major field of study (Chang-Da Wan, 2018). When the senior women were questioned on their subject choices at university, thirteen of them had a career in mind while they were receiving education, seven pursued their 'best subjects', two senior female managers said they had no preference as long as they received their education and three were given advice by family members. Many of the women had majored in Accountancy, Finance and Economy, and Business Administration. Seven Malay women pursued non-traditional areas such as engineering, building and town planning, bio-health, and law.

Also, a degree or professional qualification, especially from a foreign university, was considered a stepping-stone to a career in management, particularly in multinational firms. This can be seen where eleven senior women in the study obtained their first degrees from foreign universities, mainly in the UK, US, and Australia, whereas the remainder had attended public universities in Malaysia. It is possible that the level of education of these senior women managers was more in keeping with the economic boom of the mid-1980s (Pong, 1995; Hussin, 2008). It must be mentioned that eighteen Malay senior women in the study had won the Malaysian government scholarships to study overseas. Following an earlier practice of providing full scholarship to selected students to pursue higher education locally and overseas, the government increased the fund for qualified Malay students. The better qualifications of Malay senior female managers came as no surprise given the government's preferential

treatment of Malays as *Bumiputera* following the introduction of NEP in 1970 (see Chapter Two). Moreover, supported by the quota system at the local universities and the programme for overseas training, this could have increased the number of professionally trained Malay women in Malaysia.

It is also important to look at the differences between Malay public and private sector women where eight private sector women did their first degree abroad whilst only three did so from the public sector. The value of an international education gained by women in the private sector stood in comparison to their public counterparts where the entry to senior positions was influenced more by a higher business qualification. Interviewees believed that they gained more self-confidence, foreign language fluency and were less conservative if they were trained overseas. They felt it was one of the most critical ingredients for senior female managers to succeed since qualifications obtained from a university in an English-speaking country were often accredited higher status than those obtained at home. Although the remaining women went to local universities, this still reflects that the Malays appear to benefit more in education. This comparison can be clearly seen in the next section when discussing the non-Malay women experiences.

When the analysis was associated with the attitudes of the parents in the Malay family, the majority of them reported that their parents recognised the value of education and encouraged them to obtain university-level qualifications. Kamelia clearly recalled her father's advice about getting a good education in order to maintain their family financial stability and social status.

> *"My father is very particular on education especially about the exam results. He said he wanted to put us in a good school because doing well in study is very important for our future"* (Kamelia, Vice President of Treasury, Private Sector)

However, two of the interviewees, Akasia and Nona, disclosed that their parents did not encourage them to pursue their studies. Akasia mentioned that the parents prioritised her younger brother's education more and felt that the rule was unfair. Although her brother was reluctant to study, her parents really forced him to do it, but despite this she was the one who eventually attained higher qualifications than her brother. This reflects the traditional structure of a patriarchal society that enables unequal encouragement towards women to receive better education. Bounded by a set of Islamic teachings and the Malay culture, adhering to the parents' rules is compulsory, hence Akasia acquiesced and pursued her passion without being offended by her parents.

> *"the competition was between me and my younger brother … It's not I'm being envy with him but it's the culture when men will be putting first … I don't believe only men supposed to have higher education. Women*

> *also can if they want to … My brother doesn't really bother into studies, but my parents really forced him to study. When it comes to me, my parents asked what the contribution from me would be if I were to further my studies"* (Akasia, Deputy Secretary General, Public Sector)

The idea of male dominance in society not only prevails in the family system but extends to other aspects of people's lives. Nona, a Vice President in the GLC, voiced her heartfelt frustration when her parents did not allow her to further her study abroad. Her father always had at the back of his mind that women should not gain extra qualifications when they ultimately will end up in the kitchen. Yet, she was more successful in educational achievements as her brother did not focus and had no interest to further his studies.

> *"When I was in Form 4, I had an opportunity to go to Canada for exchange student, but my father did not allow me to go. What hurts me as far as the statement from my father was if it is your brother I will let him go. But my brother is a lazy person. He did not like to study"* (Nona, Vice President, Private Sector)

Similar to Akasia, being a good daughter who was constrained by the Malay cultural upbringing, Nona just obeyed her father's words but continued working and saving so she could pay for her university fees at a later stage. The parents are likely to care more about their sons than daughters due to a highly patriarchal society (Cooke, 2010; Xiaolei *et al.*, 2013). To some extent, the patriarchal privilege might over-ride the ethnic privilege in Malaysian society which has prevented daughters from taking advantage of their ethnic privilege as Malays to obtain an education. The authority of their father was still seen as important for women to access formal education, which to some extent, echoes the existence of private patriarchy in the Malaysian context. These findings indicate the traditional Asian parents' beliefs that women should not be educated are still current and women need to persevere to achieve what they want to do. These Malay women got a good education, but they had to struggle to achieve it due to the patriarchal relations in the family. This situation, nevertheless, is different to the experiences of non-Malay senior women, as discussed in the section below.

5.2.2.2 The Non-Malay Senior Women Managers' Educational Experiences

The socio-economic status for Chinese and Indian families was an important determinant of educational successes that could lead to their children's future employment. They put a great deal of importance on education because they are not given the opportunities that accompany the Malay privilege. Out of five non-Malay participants in the study, three women had majored in Accountancy and they were all Chinese. One Indian woman had chosen the non-traditional female area of Law.

When discussing education and ethnicity, it is not easy to disentangle the complex effects of preferential policy on ethnic differences in education. The non-Malay women were less able to enjoy a good education and a future at little personal cost. Sometimes it seems that the goal of equal representation by ethnicity in education may never be achieved in Malaysian society. It is interesting to highlight that Chinese and Indian senior women in the study appeared to be quite bitter when they were asked about their educational experiences.

> *"We would need to actually always fight for things, as you know sometimes especially education, you need to really have a very good score before you can actually get in to a local university. We know that we would not be able to enjoy certain things. You need to work double of what the others are doing"* (Mei Feng, Group Financial Controller, Private Sector)

> *"Education is not cheap for us. My parents sent me to Australia, they had to spend so much money. The currency differences at that time was 1 dollar 80 cent, now is 3 dollars something. We need that money and we have to make sure we pass. Otherwise we have to stay longer, our parents need to pay more. It's a waste of time and money"* (Daisy, Chief Finance Office, Private Sector)

> *"… Political-wise, as a Malay, you get a lot of benefits. That's how we see it. So, to get the scholarship for the non-Malays is not easy and that is the perception that has been going on. We have to work harder and make sure that we are able to provide for our children to go for a higher education and get them educated"* (Shanti, Senior Assistant Director, Public Sector)

These women grew up with the expectation that they would not have a real opportunity to get a government scholarship and needed to focus on applying for study grants and loans for private foundations or institutions (Brown, 2007; Mellstrom, 2009). Shanti added that although she did not get a scholarship for her first degree, as a government employee, the government had sponsored her Masters degree and PhD and she felt thankful for that.

> *"My parents paid for my degree but I got scholarships for my Masters and PhD because I was in the service. I'm considered lucky that I managed to study and I'm grateful for that. But as I said, being the non-Malay in this country, you have to work hard to get the best out of it."* (Shanti, Senior Assistant Director, Public Sector)

In non-Malay families, patriarchy operates similarly where the patriarchal power is used to influence the type of education and career choices made by their children, regardless of their gender. The preferential treatment of the *Bumiputera* system has been very effective in increasing the number of engineers, accountants, architects, lawyers, doctors, administrators, and educators amongst *Bumiputera* in the wider Malaysian society (Selvaratnam, 1988). Such policy reflects an ethnic bias, which over time impaired ethnic and cultural polarisation, and enhanced further division and maintenance of Malaysian society. Thus, as presented in the section 5.2.1.2, the Indian family had pre-set three professional careers for their children; doctor, engineer, and lawyer. In line with this career predetermination, Shanti's parents encouraged her to take a law degree and she obeyed, but she did it for the sake of satisfying her parents' ambitions.

> *"Maybe doing law it was more on my parents' ambitions. So being a good daughter, I fulfilled their ambitions and I get them the certificate. I said this is what you wanted me to do. So that explains why I did not further my career as a lawyer. I did it more for my parents' sake. But I would not say it as a wrong choice because at that time I was not very sure what I wanted. I wanted to be an archaeologist but then of course sometimes parents' influence is there. Why not you do law first and then later you can pursue yours. I guess this is an Indian trend that they wanted either some of their children be the doctors, lawyers or engineers*" (Shanti, Senior Assistant Director, Public Sector)

From an intersectional perspective, families from different ethnic backgrounds are likely to have different motivations for encouraging their daughters to study. For instance, the macro level of oppressions and the institutional privilege clearly bring the disadvantage to women and minority ethnics in Malaysia. This social stratification has led the non-Malay senior women to prove they could do well in their studies even without financial aid from the government. In terms of level of education, the strong patriarchal structure has driven women in this study to have good academic backgrounds, which explains why all of the participants had achieved at least a degree level of education. This demonstrates that along with family and childhood upbringings, education can be considered to be one of the most important variables in women's career development. Yet, it was not exactly a free choice about what and where they wanted to study. This in turn demonstrates a different form of patriarch as women in this study were encouraged to have a better future but very much in line with what the parents wanted.

5.3 PATRIARCHAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEIR WIVES' EMPLOYMENT

For married women, a husband's permission was vital especially for the Malays because they stated that one of their responsibilities as a wife was to obey their husbands, and this attitude

exists in the Islamic religion. The obligation to obey a husband is always followed by a wife unless the husband tells the wife to do something sinful. This clearly indicates gendered culture or gender roles that contribute to the gendered division of labour at home, as observed in the family decision-making process.

As will be explained in Chapter Six, economic need was the main factor that encouraged women in the study to get involved in the paid labour force. Analysing from a public and private sector perspective, there are large pay differences between the senior women in both sectors, the private sector pay being higher. There is also evidence that the non-Malay women managers in this study earned higher than some Malay women counterparts, especially those who worked in the public sector. In terms of who earns more in the family, as the majority of these married senior female managers had working spouses, the findings of the interviews confirmed that sixteen out of the overall thirty-one women senior managers earned more than their husbands (six senior women in the public sector and ten private sector senior women). Seven senior women earned equal (three in the public and four in the private sector) and eight senior women earned lower than their spouses (five public sector women and three private sector women). In the public sector, although both husband and wife were working in the civil service, this tended to occur most when the husbands were employed under a different scheme and achieved lower promotions than their wives. In contrast, albeit receiving lower income, private sector husbands of senior women managers earn higher salaries than their women counterparts.

Lily added that despite the challenges working as a network engineer in male-dominated areas, her father's condition also was one of the reasons why she had to keep working. Due to this responsibility, she preferred to earn her own income, so she did not have to seek financial aid from her husband to support her parents, as she was well aware that her husband's wages were insufficient to meet those needs.

> *"Being a female working in this technical area, at one time actually, I just wanted to resign and stay at home. But because of my late father was still sick, so I decided I had to work. Now he passed away, I think I still need to work because I don't think I can stay at home. I cannot be a lady of leisure"* (Lily, General Manager, Private Sector)

Several interviewees expressed a clear feminist consciousness and recognised the connections between career choices and the effect on their marriage of a lack of individual income. Perhaps, like the British female managers, the senior women managers in Malaysia had the tendency to regard their husbands as supportive if they tolerated having working wives (Wacjman, 1998). For instance, Melati cited another reason why she needed to work after getting married and offered an eye-opening response about this issue. She believed that her

earning capacity is a guarantee of a comfortable life with her children independently should any misfortune befall her marriage in the future.

Whether their husbands' incomes were higher or lower than their own incomes, these senior women clearly stated that they needed to have their own careers in order to strengthen their family finances (Hite, 2007). As for Kenanga, her job required her to live separately from her husband after getting married, which increased their expenses as they had to pay for all their living needs in duplicate until they could live together. For this reason, despite having an ultimate aspiration to be a housewife, it was important for Kenanga to have her own income,

> *"We have many financial commitments we need to pay. I have two houses I need to pay. He has two houses he needs to pay. One in Kuala Lumpur, two in Sarawak, one in Sabah. I have a car, he also has a car. Having financial lower than me he feels like uncomfortable. It will become quarrel if I refused to help. So, I generously will to pay"* (Kenanga, Head of Portfolio, Management and Growth, Private Sector)

Certainly, statements from both public and private sector senior women support the notion that the traditional 'rice winning' trends in Malaysian families, with the husband as the 'rice winner' and the wife as a full time homemaker, no longer represent the dominant cultural norm (Mashral and Ahmad, 2010). Yet, these are likely to be a fairly small percentage of the population and may be applicable amongst the highly educated senior women. Thus, it may not generally yet be the dominant national model in Malaysia today.

Nevertheless, previous studies have debated that gender boundaries in the family are likely to be most challenged when the wife earns more or is more successful in her career than her spouse (Brennan, Barnett, and Gareis, 2001; Eirich and Robinson, 2017; Ezzedeen and Ritchey, 2008). According to Brennan et al. (2001), the disparity in earnings can cause problems in the marriage, which was also reported by two senior women in this research that the disparity in earnings caused some problems in their marriage. For example, as a government servant, Kemboja benefits from the availability of scholarships to pursue a higher level of education. However, she declined the offer to satisfy her husband who does not want his wife to be more successful in her career than him. Having a wife with a degree was acceptable, but not with a Masters because he was just a diploma holder. Melur described how her ex-husband could not accept the fact that he earned less than her, hence, the divorce happened. When Melur remarried, her current husband was ten years younger than her and, although she still earns more because she is older, he holds a higher position than he in the organisation he works for. *"I have always earned more than my spouse. The first one wasn't okay I guess because I keep on climbing so there is a feeling of inferiority and we always fight. Not easy for him to accept. My current husband is ten years younger than me. Meaning to say*

that he is ten years behind my time. I have accepted him that way and I'm the type who doesn't bother about money, so just fine. If he feels inferior, he's a CEO. So it's just that I'm older than him, he is 44 and I am 54" (Melur, Director, Private Sector)

Melur mentioned that her previous husband began to develop his inferiority complex and friction led to a divorce. This is not the case for Mei Feng, whose husband worked in a manufacturing plant which led him to earn less than her because the capacity to earn more was quite limited. Yet, he could accept the fact that there were more opportunities for his wife to develop her career and earnings as she was working in the finance sector and there was no equality issue in her marriage. Similarly, Madhuri, an Indian respondent who earns similar to her husband, advised,

> *"Those women who earn more should have their limits of being egoistic and the men who earn less should not have the inferiority complex but help their wives to progress better … if the women earn double than the husbands' incomes, perhaps the husbands don't have the opportunity to earn the same amount. Well at least he brings in some money, not zero or being a jobless. He's still earning"* (Madhuri, Directory, Private Sector)

In the context of religious belief in Malaysia, the man plays an important role in his family and his main responsibilities include providing material, spiritual and security needs for his family (Abdullah et al, 2008; Syed 2008). It is also worth noting here that the construction of the husband's responsibility as the main economic provider through Islamic teachings also appeared in the interviews. Men are still regarded as the heads of households and the main breadwinners in the family are still the husbands. Orked shared her perceptions about the role of the breadwinner in her family being based on religion. She considered her husband's. need to carry out his responsibility properly as it is a criterion of a good husband and it will also be judged in the life hereafter. Furthermore, Orked's strong ethno religious belief was revealed in the division of labour at home, which saw the role of husband and wife as more obligation-driven because of their religious beliefs.

> *"I am in this position is to help him out. So, he is no longer the sole breadwinner for the family. I'm also the breadwinner for the family. Share responsibility… I do my work for the sake of Allah and for nothing else. Not for power. Not for position. For money of course because I'm helping my husband"* (Orked, Deputy Under Secretary, Public Sector)

In addition, it may be useful for understanding that Malay, Chinese and Indian women in this research were motivated by the need to survive, the need to do something pleasurable,

accessible and jobs they perceived themselves to be capable of performing. Yet, these desires may be affected by ethnic segregation and organisational structures resulting in inequalities in the labour market. Thus, gender and ethnicity may work together to limit their opportunities for upward mobility as non-Malay women may internalise structural privilege systems and conform to them. In this study, all respondents regardless of ethnicity, tended to see working women as the economic backbone to their husbands even though some of them earned more (Mashral and Ahmad, 2010). It was reflected in my data on women's willingness to work and their spouses' acceptance of having a career wife. This demonstrated that the traditional main rice winner model still strongly influences the division of labour between men and women within Malaysian society. Senior women in this study practiced a degree of egalitarianism in decision-making power and the organisation of their family underlying the difference between the patriarchal and political-democratic systems.

5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter has examined the impact of private patriarchy in the home and educational environments of Malay, Chinese and Indian senior women managers in Malaysia. Throughout the chapter, the understanding of women's lived experiences in the home, coupled with an intersectional perspective, has enabled the comparative analysis between socio-economic backgrounds for Malay and non-Malay senior women managers. Private patriarchy plays a significant impact on women's participation in the paid labour market. This does vary by ethnicity which indicates the importance of differentiating between findings in relation to Malay and non-Malay senior womens' experiences.

The analysis has demonstrated how childhood and relations with parents as well as in relation to their educational attainments, has influenced the impact of private patriarchy on women's involvement in paid work. The parents of the Malay senior women were either professional, skilled or unskilled workers in the government, while parents of the non-Malays were more likely to have their own businesses or to be self-employed. This difference in parental occupations also meant that the non-Malay senior women helped their parents in family business, providing them an early grounding in business principles. In contrast, the Malay senior women were more likely to do typical household chores such as cleaning and washing the dishes.

The social structure of patriarchy, for instance, in the family institution, the workforce and political empowerment has reflected the cultural belief of male dominance in Malaysia. The traditional social system has associated men as the breadwinner for the family with masculine traits, and as being dominant over women's feminine personalities characterised as dependent, passive and maternal. As one of the countries strongly accustomed to a patriarchal social system, men and women are socially segregated which subsequently affects their sense of self. In fact, as discussed earlier, before the 1980's only a small number of the Malaysian

women had a place in the job market. Thus, the positive attitudes portrayed by the parents towards the involvement of their daughters in the formal economy had motivated participants in this study to succeed in their careers. This chapter also demonstrates how choices are controlled by the fathers and that the sons are always privileged over the daughters.

That many of the senior women in the study were career-influenced more by their fathers rather than working/non-working mothers, reflects the shift from private to public patriarchy as claimed by Walby (1986, 1990, 2002). Although the traditional Malay family retains its core in male domination, Walby's research in the Western society with an individualist culture (Hofstede, 2011), seems relevant to the findings of this study. Nevertheless, similar to their Malay counterparts, having someone supportive like mother and sister, were also one of the contributing factors leading to non-Malay women's career choices. Although it can not be generalised to include all non-Malay women managers in Malaysia due to a small sample size that I interviewed, the findings could explain that the non-Malays were more open-minded and had more freedom in choosing their careers.

Out of five non-Malay participants, two senior women were influenced by their mothers, one Chinese and one Indian, respectively and one Chinese was encouraged by her sister. This situation resonates why the application of feminist principles into the context of the study was considered appropriate given that a patriarchal structure is inherent in Malaysian society. There seems to be the need to be empowered or encouraged by another woman in order to challenge the patriarchal experience in the family. In other words, this also suggests that the patriarchal system in Malaysia is changing in the non-Malay family. One Indian senior woman was encouraged by her father, which reverses to the private patriarchy ideology. Also, it seems that males still dominate as rice winners in most families, but there is a movement towards more egalitarian thinking about women's roles. The traditional forms of private patriarchy have prevented women from working in the public sphere. However, the analysis suggests a switch in patriarchal relations to accommodate changing economic circumstances that cannot sustain a single breadwinner model and in which women are therefore required to work in the public sphere but maintain a subordinate position in the private sphere.

The analysis further suggests that women senior managers from certain family backgrounds such as educated parents with privilege have more opportunities to succeed. The findings reveal that applying the combined theoretical lenses of patriarchy and structural intersectionality allowed us to see that senior women from different ethnic backgrounds may have different educational experiences in their career pathways. All research participants are well educated where the minimum qualification they attained was a degree. The awareness of the importance of education had triggered their parents to encourage these senior women to have a good education, some attaining overseas degree qualifications. In terms of scholarships, nineteen senior women had secured full scholarships for their first degrees;

eighteen Malay women won the Malaysian government scholarships while one Chinese woman received the scholarship from the Australian government to study overseas. Undoubtedly, the non-Malay senior women experienced discrimination due to the unequal access to the social structural system with the intersection of multiple inequalities (Haque, 2003; Koenig, 2003). Haque (2003) argued that the ethnic preferential policies represent serious ethnic inequality in Malaysia, which is significant to the situation of the non-Malay participants in the study. The Malay privilege, which marginalises ethnic minority groups, is institutionalised in the state legislation.

Looking at this from a public and private sector perspective, education wise, private sector senior women preferred to undertake professional courses as they did not see the need to pursue higher degrees for career promotion purposes. Meanwhile, public sector senior women increased their chances of being promoted if they acquired higher qualifications. This reflects the nature of working in the public and private sectors and what is required to enter and succeed. In relation to this, it is important to note that scholarship benefits are formally offered to government employees, regardless of ethnicity. Interestingly, all of the public sector workers in this study were Malay, perhaps demonstrating an example of institutionalised privilege. In terms of level of education, private sector senior women thought that there is no urgency to further higher degrees as the nature of working in the private sector is business performance oriented as compared to those who worked in the civil service. Notwithstanding this, both public and private sector senior women acknowledged that gaining qualifications from the overseas institution had led them to earn respect as a symbol of prestige and dignity in Malaysian society. It reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the measures taken by the Malaysian government to desegregate the education system.

The next section will explain the impact of public patriarchy on women's career development and why there are glaring differences between the public and private sector organisations in Malaysia.

CHAPTER 6

THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC PATRIARCHY ON THE CAREERS OF SENIOR WOMEN

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings about senior women's perceptions and experiences of working in the public and private sectors in Malaysia. Data will be analysed from both sectors perspectives to look at the differences between Malay and non-Malay senior women's experiences in their career advancement. While Chapter Five contributes to the understanding of the influences of private patriarchy and education upon the career choices of women, the focus in this chapter turns to a discussion of public patriarchy in the Malaysian labour market. It aims to elucidate how career experiences of the thirty-one senior women in this study have portrayed the extent of patriarchal relations in Malaysian organisations. As discussed in Chapter Three, women's entry into the labour force is seen by policy-makers as their contribution towards the economy whilst women are constantly making a choice of whether or not to work. Gender roles in Malaysia are perhaps more socially and culturally constructed compared to many other countries and this results in discrimination against women, but it operates differently for each ethnic group. While the economy suffers from inefficiency and underutilisation of women's labour, women themselves suffer from impediments to combining paid and unpaid work. Gender differences in the labour market further perpetuate women's employment patterns, job characteristics and cultural norms which require women to work and bring up children, in addition to managing household tasks (see Chapter Seven). This indicates that private patriarchy still has a strong influence upon women, yet, women's participation in paid work is still critical to both the household and the economy.

The findings are discussed from women's career perspectives generally, and women in senior management specifically. It will first outline how the thirty-one senior women managers interviewed for this study, and became employed and promoted to where they were at the point of the interviews, including their career histories. The analysis demonstrates differences between women based upon whether they are employed in the public or private sector. There are differences in the career histories of women in the public and private sectors and the sample of women interviewed becomes occupationally and ethnically segmented, with most Malay interviewees working in the government (public sector) due to the Malay privilege endowed to the Malay women (see Chapter Two). The chapter explains how gender is not the only issue for women in the private sector. The ethnic composition of employees where the non-Malays are heavily employed and segregated within the private sector, has contributed to a different scenario of public patriarchy in the Malaysian context. This chapter also aims to answer the first research question: why women are under-represented in senior management in Malaysia. As discussed in the preceding chapter, senior women in this study are better off

and better educated than their mothers. It is also possible to highlight the impact of public patriarchy on women's career progression amongst the interviewees.

6.2 CAREER HISTORIES AND CURRENT ROLES: WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

A comparative analysis will be made from Malay and non-Malay senior women managers' perspectives to give some insights about their experiences working in both sectors. It is acknowledged that the Malaysian political system is characterised as bureaucratic and that many significant elements of the policy making, decision-making and implementation are in the hands of the civil service in the various ministries and government agencies. Senior women employed in the public sector interviewed in this study were classified as an Administrative and Diplomatic Officer (ADO), known in the Malay acronym as *'Pegawai Tadbir Diplomatik (PTD)'*. ADO refers to a service scheme in the Malaysian Civil Service administration starting with Grade 41 based on their qualification as degree holders (non-degree holders hold posts below this grade and all women interviewed joined at Grade 41 or above). The ADO is responsible in strengthening the country's administration function, social infrastructure development, economy and industry (Masrek, Yusof, Noordin, and Johare, 2013). Putting aside one Indian woman, the majority of Malay women interviewed are dominantly in the public sector, in which senior women who are selected as ADOs are considered as the 'cream of the cream'. In other words, it has been one of the most important portfolios before the country started to put more emphasis on the private sector.

In terms of recruitment, public administration has a set entry system which appears more objective than the private sector method, because the system of competitive public examinations takes account of one's knowledge in the field (Masrek, Yusof, Noordin, and Johare, 2013). The recruitment processes appear to be biased towards the Malay applicants given the affirmative-action policies for *Bumiputera* citizens in education and in employment in the civil service. According to the participants, the selection processes were unique as men and women must undergo three processes; *PTD* writing examination, *PTD* Assessment Centre (PAC), and interview. The public sector senior women who participated in this research were interviewed by panels appointed by the Civil Service Commission known as *Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Awam (SPA).* Passing the ADO exam means that senior women and men can be considered as individuals *"who are mainly involved in executing the country's development strategies including strengthening the administrative functions, social infrastructures and also the performance of the country's economic growth"* (Masrek et al., 2013, pp 1-2). They will then receive the invitation letter from the Prime Minister's office to commence the service. Private sector employers, on the other hand, place emphasis on candidates' past performance and development potential, both factors which are open to subjectivity and which public competitive exams do not consider.

At a general level and looking first at gender, as explained in the previous chapters, the overall percentage of labour force involvement in Malaysia is higher for men than women with men tending to occupy the most prestigious positions and women being marginalised from the key primary segments of the labour market. Women's entry into paid employment usually depends upon a tertiary education and applies to all administrative and managerial posts where training is required, but is also often extended to lower level jobs, such as clerical and secretarial jobs. Competition for a limited range of female occupations in the government creates its own form of gender segregation (Blackburn, Browne, Brooks, and Jarman, 2002), hence credentialism is used as a screening method to choose from the large number of female applicants for one ADO role.

Senior women in the study indicated that the job scopes for the ADO are likely to be the same throughout the whole public sector, depending on the requirement of government ministry and agency. Apart from the international diplomatic representation, the ADO will be placed by rotation in one of the following fields, namely International Relations (IR), National Security and Defence (NSD), Information Technology and Communication Management (ITCM), Town Planning and Administration (TPA), Human Resource and Organisational Development (HROD), Financial Resources (FR), Economy Management (EM) and Organisational Management (OM).

Although the ADO role is meant to be rotated within the civil service, it is evident that the degree of horizontal gender segregation was relatively high for public sector senior women. Unlike women in the private sector, public sector senior women have a tendency to be concentrated in 'traditional' female management areas, such as administration, human resources and finance, as is the case in Western countries (see Blackburn, Browne, Brooks, and Jarman, 2002; Durbin, 2016; Powell and Graves, 2003). As illustrated in Table 6.1 below, senior women interviewed in the study were from these fields; three from Human Resource and Organisational Development (HROD), Financial Resources (FR), Economy Management (EM) and Organisational Management (OM) respectively, also one from International Relations (IR) and National Security and Defence (NSD) individually. None of the women interviewed worked under the Information Technology and Communication Management (ITCM) and Town Planning and Administration (TPA) because due to time constraints and limited access to other ministries and government agencies, I was able to only focus on three ministries; two senior women from Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD), four from Ministry of Finance (MOF), and one from Ministry of Education (MOE), as well as seven senior women from the central agency of government, named the Malaysian Public Service Department (PSD).

Table 6.1: Organisational Status of Senior Women in the Public Sector

NO	NAME	MINISTRY / AGENCY	SECTOR	GRADE WHEN JOINED	GRADE AFTER BEING PROMOTED	ETHNICITY
1	Melati	Public Service Department (PSD)	Human Resource and Organisational Development (HROD)	41	48	MALAY
2	Cempaka	Public Service Department (PSD)	National Security and Defense (NSD)	41	52	MALAY
3	Mawar	Public Service Department (PSD)	Human Resource and Organisational Development (HROD)	41	52	MALAY
4	Kemboja	Public Service Department (PSD)	Economy Management (EM)	41	48	MALAY
5	Tulip	Public Service Department (PSD)	Economy Management (EM)	41	54	MALAY

6	Sakura	Public Service Publ Service Department (PSD) (PSD)	Human Resource and Organisational Development (HROD)	41	54	MALAY
7	Dahlia	Ministry of Finance (MOF)	Financial Resources (FR)	41	54	MALAY
8	Orked	Ministry of Finance (MOF)	Financial Resources (FR)	41	DSG C	MALAY
9	Anggerik	Ministry of Finance (MOF)	Financial Resources (FR)	41	48	MALAY
10	Azalea	Ministry of Finance (MOF)	Economy Management (EM)	41	54	MALAY
11	Akasia	Ministry of Education (MOE)	Organisational Management (OM)	41	DSG C	MALAY
12	Shanti	Public Service Department (PSD)	International Relation (IR)	41	54	INDIAN
13	Kuntum	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD)	Organisational Management (OM)	41	SG	MALAY
14	Widuri	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD)	Organisational Management (OM)	41	52	MALAY

Despite the development of NEP after independence, the labour market has consistently provided the maintenance of male-dominated employment segments (Abu Bakar, 2014). The unequal level of women's access to paid employment explains the level of gender segregation that has occurred in Malaysia. This further encouraged the occupational segregation including gender stereotyping with regard to the assumptions about the capacities of senior women managers. Kuntum shared her experience dealing with gender stereotyping issues when she was a junior employee:

> *"As a woman, several times I had to prove that woman can do because men do not believe in me. Sometimes male officers tried to provoke me whether I could cope with the workloads or not. Men love to challenge my ideas when I speak, which I found it good actually. They look at the bigger things rather than women who tend to be more meticulous"* (Kuntum, Secretary General, Public Sector)

According to the interviewees, the notion that women are unable to deliver such work appears to be relatively fixed in the minds of both management and the workforce. The gendered division of space for men and women in Malaysian society has been very strong due to its attachment to the structural patriarchal system. To uphold such social norms and yet provide employment opportunities to women, the labour market reflects occupational gender segregation. Based on the type of work they were doing, most public sector senior women in this research were found to work with other women, known as pink collar jobs (Howe, 1977) and indicating horizontal gender segregation (or glass walls). They work in slightly lower skilled and slower-paced occupation related groups than men (indicating vertical gender segregation or glass ceilings), yet, they have passed through the glass ceilings. Restrictions on working long hours due to family commitments has effectively denied women access to the workforce (see Chapter Seven) and has led to perpetuate the masculinisation norm of employment. Employers will also at times explicitly state a preference for a male candidate as it is considered unprofitable to employ women because of the legislative issues such as payment of maternity benefits.

Promotion wise, the average upward moves are from Grade 41, 44, 48, 52, 54 to JUSA A, JUSA B, JUSA C and eventually to hold key government positions, KSU. Top level management in the government is ranked at three levels, JUSA A, JUSA B and JUSA C, where JUSA stands for '*Jawatan Utama Sektor Awam'* or in English, Deputy Secretary General (DSG). JUSA A is the highest level bureaucrat, usually the Secretary General of the various ministries (Masrek et al., 2013). One step higher is KSU which translates as '*Ketua Setiausaha Unit'* or Secretary General (SG). In the government, senior government officials can be considered starting from Grade 48 and above, which explains why the participants in this study held positions at grade 48, 52, 54, DSG C to SG.

In many cases, promotions were very slow and started to take performance into account when they reached the higher grade 54 and above as the competition was getting tougher. Although women comprised about 32.4 percent in senior managerial positions in the public sector, exceeding the 30 percent gender quota, their participation at different levels in the civil service started to decrease from Grade 54 onwards (Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2017). This situation, despite more women working at senior grades, reflects vertical gender segregation. Women remain occupying the lower rungs of the decision-making hierarchy in the civil service, which explains why there was only one participant who held an SG role in this study. Though these women were 'getting in' to the lower rungs of senior management, this does not necessarily result in 'getting on' o the more senior positions. It should also be noted that due to Malay privilege, these women were all Malay as all the non-Malay women (with the exception of Shanti) work in the private sector.

The majority of interviewees stated that the predominance of senior male managers had helped to promote junior men over female managers. Positions of authority in most organisations are held by males, illustrating their greater internal mobility within the government. Unlike in the private sector that is based on performance appraisal and recommendation by the top management, the average upward moves from one grade to another in the civil service take an average of five years for most people where the promotion was typically based on level of seniority (batch by batch).

> *"We get promoted by batches, performance or the only way for you to be promoted is by filling up the vacant post. You need to have an empty post for you to be able to be promoted. It means that someone has to retire and then others will replace that position. Unlike in private sector, they go by performance* (Cempaka, Senior Assistant Director, Public Sector)

The lack of female employment opportunities in Malaysia and preferential demand for male labour has continued since the early post-colonial days and women have had to contend with being marginalised. Their employment has been viewed as secondary even though they hold similar qualifications with their male counterparts. According to Hakim (2006) in her study of human capital theory, to promote women requires a pipeline of talented women with qualifications and experience who can fill senior roles. One of the many factors why more than two-thirds of public sector women interviewees had applied for scholarships to further studies (see Section 5.2.2) was because education plays a major role in enabling progress in the government. Women's career advancement could be quicker than is custom, for instance being promoted three times instead of only twice within ten years. This scenario amongst the public sector women, however, contradicts Hakim's (2006) human capital theory, although research participants did not have limited access to invest in their careers in improving

education and work experience. They benefited as government servants, yet, women still experienced vertical and horizontal segregation.

These explanations account for the dominant labour market position of men in general terms yet are inadequate without the discussion of ethnicity. The government policy, in return, has resulted in not only that male privileged positions within the local economy have remained broadly constant, but that policy has also privileged the Malays. Chinese and Indian senior women interviewees felt that they have restricted access to government service positions and are more likely to be employed in the private sector, but the Indian female interviewee is an exception. Malays, on the other hand, are the beneficiaries not constrained by ethnic segregation, and are employed in significant numbers in both public and private organisations, especially the males (Hutchings, 2000). Ethnic segregation has been disadvantageous for non-Malay women in terms of moving freely within the labour market which reflects primarily the ethnic composition of Malaysia in general with Malay men making up the majority (see section 2.3.1). However, Shanti, the Indian woman, made an interesting comment regarding ethnic stereotyping in the government.

> *"Personally, I have not felt anything yet because I have been moving. I would not know whether they have a quota or things like that as I grow more senior"* (Shanti, Senior Assistant Director, Public Sector)

Based on Shanti's comment, once she was recruited as a government servant, she stated that being a minority has helped her climb to a senior level faster than her other colleagues. Shanti further argued that since there were not many non-Malays in the civil sector, it was an advantage for the minority employees like her to progress higher. She felt that she was not disadvantaged once she had entered the public sector. The notion that non-Malays still have the negative perception that they would be discriminated against in public sector promotion decisions might not be true. Yet, Shanti's statement may not adequately explain the significant differences between Malay, Chinese and Indian women's employment involvement in the civil service. The fact that she worked in the International Relations department, perhaps indicates that her ethnicity is an asset in this department in particular.

Past research on the public and private sector differences with respect to organisational commitment found that public employees were less committed to the goals and values of their organisations than private sector employees (Buchanan 1974; Goulet and Frank, 2002; Zeffane 1994). Zeffane (1994) found that employees of Australian private organisations have higher levels of organisational commitment than their public sector counterparts. Buchanan (1974) found lower organisational commitment among federal managers compared to private managers. Notwithstanding this, previous Western literature does not necessarily relate to the findings of this study as the role of ADO is considered as one of the most sought-after jobs in

Malaysia, especially among fresh graduates and private sector employees who want to switch their job to the government sector. Some senior women even undergo extra sacrifices, quitting jobs that pay much better than ADO posts because the perception that ADO is an elite and glamorous post in the civil service, which is reflected below by the case of Melati. This is particularly interesting because government plays a larger role on the political economy, which is supported by the roles of ADO as the policy makers (Masrek et al., 2013). Melati commented that working as an ADO has been the reason why she wanted to join the government,

> *"I have joined two private companies before I joined the government. I have aimed if I got the ADO role, I will go for it. I would not think twice"* (Melati, Principal Assistant Secretary, Public Sector)

In short, public sector female interviewees hold prestigious and sought-after roles in Malaysia. In terms of benefits of working in the civil service, the participants in the study mentioned that besides the monthly salary, government employees are given various perks and allowances such as housing subsidy, cost of living allowance (COLA), and public service allowance. Some allowances are given to specific posts such as critical service allowance, call allowance, hazard allowance, and hardship allowance. Other benefits provided are a computer, motorcycle, car and housing loan facilities, free parking, gym membership, and medical treatment at all government hospitals and clinics, and these senior women interviewees receive all of these benefits. Government officers also enjoy a wide range of leave such as annual leave, maternity leave, pilgrimage leave, compassionate leave, study leave and unrecorded leave for various purposes. Some respondents preferred government employment for reasons of greater job security, shorter working hours, and potentially a more stable long-term career. Mawar explained that the long working hours in the private sector had reduced the number of hours she was able to spend with her family.

> *"Even I have 14 days for holidays within a year, I had difficulties to arrange my holidays. This is because I worked with the oil and gas companies that needed me to work on Saturday"* (Mawar, Principal Assistant Director, Public Sector)

Dahlia and Orked wanted to serve the people, their religion and the country. Sakura, Azalea and Widuri regarded themselves as beneficial to society and to citizens just because they are government officers. This suggests that they placed higher emphasis on work that involved helping others and serving society and not as much emphasis on the amount of income as compared to their private sector counterparts (Donahue 2008; Dur and Zoutenbier 2014). The majority of senior women in the public sector acknowledged the pay differentials between the public and private sectors, but they also agreed that the most important upsides of working in

the civil service were the retirement benefits including pension, gratuity, and the superannuation fund which are not provided by the private sector.

While senior women in the private sector had selected jobs mostly in the fields they had graduated in and had accumulated related job experience throughout their careers, public sector senior women had remained flexible, opting for a combination of tasks and organisational settings, gaining wider job experience along the way. The majority of public sector senior women interviewed explained that they were expected to know almost everything about their roles, as they were inclined to do various types of work unrelated to their qualification backgrounds which sometimes resulted in them being less competent in any specific field. Shanti described the pattern of working in the public sector as a diplomat is like *"Jill-of-all-trades, mistress of none but better than a mistress of one"*. In contrast, senior women in the private sector appeared to have a specific career focus when they joined the organisation. This suggests that the government does not have a proper planning framework when assigning their employees based on individual expertise.

The rigid process, starting from recruitment procedure to promotion process merely based on seniority, has often prevented public sector senior women from gaining explicit skills in their career histories. For instance, according to Tulip who worked as an Assistant Director in the public sector, the government should support employees in planning their career in the civil service. Tulip never had an exact career in mind. Her first posting was in the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) for eight years before she got promoted and transferred to Sabah doing finance. She then moved to the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water for management, which was not related to economics at all. After that, she was sent to do her Masters degree in economics because her degree was in economics.

> *"After I graduated from Masters, they just put me to any vacancy positions they had at that moment and now here I am, doing HR in Public Service Department (PSD). I have no idea why they put me in HR field. They seemed to have no objectives why they asked me to pursue my Masters in economics. If you plan your career, it would not work here in the government. Everybody knows that the government should do something. Same goes if we sponsored our students, we should have our plan what they are going to be after they finished their studies"* (Tulip, Assistant Director, Public Sector)

In summary, this section demonstrates that the state had played a significant role in shaping the extension of public patriarchy in Malaysia, in which the predominance of men in the paid labour force in Malaysia has resulted in the high demand for male labour within industry. Male demand for labour has been reinforced over time through structural patriarchal and gender

stereotyping systems. As the labour market was gender segregated at the time when women in Malaysia joined the labour force, they were only involved in certain types of occupations. Though there has been a shift from private to public patriarchy, which has allowed women to enter paid employment, there were very limited career choices based on gendered work roles which demonstrates why women are offered jobs equivalent to office-desk roles and segregated horizontally. In addition to this, the division of the labour market and male workforce by ethnicity may be explained again through the political agenda in Malaysia, especially because of the Malay privilege. Malay men have a more advantageous position in the labour market as members of an ethnic majority who are less constrained by stereotyping and are free to move both between different sectors as well as vertically within them. This is due to the fact that, in general, the implementation of state legislation is biased towards Malay men. Although the number of women in senior managerial positions in the public sector of employment has increased, the minority group, including minority ethnic women, might be expected to be found in private sectors of employment.

6.3 CAREER HISTORIES AND CURRENT ROLES: WOMEN IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

As mentioned in Chapter Four, four out of five non-Malay women are employed in the private sector. Compared with senior women in the public sector, the majority of those in private sector organisations were older and appeared to be more ambitious and motivated in advancing their careers. While the public sector senior women had formally applied and taken civil service examinations, the procedures of selection and recruitment processes in the private sector were less complicated than that of the public sector. Other than applying through newspapers or online advertisements, the interviewees were headhunted for their current positions (five senior women; four Malay and one Chinese), unlike women in the public sector, who later on appear to have been encouraged into the public sector by their parents. Yet, standard academic qualifications were still mandatory such as being a degree holder as minimum entry requirement. It would be a bonus for the applicants who were able to speak languages fluently other than *Bahasa* or English especially in Mandarin. This is because some of the private organisations in Malaysia are owned by Chinese and for non-Chinese to enter or ‘survive’ in that organisation, the ability to speak Mandarin is an advantage. This, therefore, would be a good place for Chinese women to work.

Table 6.2: Organisational Status of Senior Women in the Private Sector

NO	NAME	ORGANISATION/INDUSTRY	SECTOR	POSITION	ETHNICITY
1	Teratai	Multinational Company (MNC) Oil and Gas	Audit	Business Analysis and Reporting General Manager	Malay
2	Rose	Government-Linked Company (GLC) Engineering	Business Human Capital	Chief Executive Officer	Malay
3	Nona	Government-Linked Company (GLC) Islamic Banking	Human Resource	Vice President	Malay
4	Melur	Private Central Bank	Facilities	Director	Malay
5	Kekwa	Government-Linked Company (GLC) Engineering	Computer Engineering	General Manager	Malay
6	Xiu Ying	Multinational Company (MNC) Audit Firm	Accounting	Assurance Leader	Chinese
7	Kenanga	Government-Linked Company (GLC) Oil and Gas	Joint-Venture Engineering Management	Head of Portfolio, Management and Growth	Malay
8	Seroja	Private Engineering	Business	Managing Director	Malay
9	Lily	Government-Linked Company (GLC) Engineering	Network Engineering	General Manager	Malay
10	Kamelia	Government-Linked Company (GLC) Oil and Gas	Accounting and Finance	Vice President of Treasury	Malay

11	Ramlah	Government-Linked Company (GLC) Investment	Account	Senior Vice President	Malay
12	Zaleha	Government-Linked Company (GLC) Engineering	Business Human Capital	Senior Vice President	Malay
13	Mei Feng	Government-Linked Company (GLC) Engineering	Finance	Group Financial Controller	Chinese
14	Madhuri	Private Ayur Veda	Business Management	Director	Indian
15	Daisy	Government-Linked Company (GLC) Engineering	Finance	Chief Finance Officer	Chinese
16	Iris	Government-Linked Company (GLC) Engineering	Finance	Head of Strategy Implementation	Malay
17	Jasmin	Private Corporate Governance Watchdog	Management	General Manager	Malay

As seen in Table 6.2, of the seventeen senior women managers interviewed from the private sector, eleven were from Government Linked Companies (GLCs), four worked with private organisations and the remainder were from Multinational Companies (MNCs) with titles such as Managing Director, Director, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Senior Vice President, Vice President, Group Finance Controller, General Manager, and others were two to three steps away from decision-making positions. If the labour market in the private sector is viewed vertically, men dominate the upper layers in managerial positions. However, women may not necessarily be located at the lower end of the hierarchy. From an intersectional perspective, gender wise, the private sector is more male dominated and government services are more female dominated. In terms of ethnicity, both public and private sectors are ethnicised with the Malays predominating, reflecting the structural state legislation embedded in the Malaysian workforce. Nevertheless, this may be less prevalent in private organisations, with a

large proportion of non-Malays in Malaysia employed in this sector (Lee and Abdul Khalid, 2016; Woo and Teng, 2019). According to Woo and Teng (2019), the perception of discrimination against minority groups makes public employment appear to be less attractive amongst the non-Malay men and women graduates in Malaysia. This indirectly explains that in terms of employment opportunities, the private sector is less likely to discriminate against non-Malay women. Echoed by the study of Lee and Abdul Khalid (2016), the possible discrimination in the hiring process reflects the preference in *Bumiputeras* in general, and in Malays in particular. Table 6.2 summarises the organisational background of the seventeen senior women interviewed in the private sector samples of this study.

Analysis of the data shows that the first jobs for private sector women included management trainee, graduate roles, junior executive or general assistant. Most of these senior women had entered the job market based on the qualifications attained after graduating from their first bachelor degrees (Durbin, 2016). There were no differences between the Malay and non-Malay women in this study if they had always worked in the private sector. For instance, eight senior women who graduated in accounting and finance started out either as accountants or auditors; three senior women with engineering educational backgrounds worked with the engineering companies; three were doing business management and the remainder were employed under the building division, human capital and ayer veda fields. Fifteen women in the private sector sample had been assigned in the past or presently to roles by foreign companies in other countries or seconded internationally.

Additionally, it was an interesting finding when one private sector senior woman, Kamelia, a Vice President of Treasury, who had received a government scholarship for her ACCA, decided to break from her contract working in the government. After her graduation, she only managed to survive in what she described as a ‘slow pace working culture’ for three months before she then applied for a job as an accountant in the GLC. She complained that she did not want to waste her talent and knowledge by just sitting around and doing nothing in the workplace, so she left the government. Her experience could be regarded as evidence that there was a tendency for career-oriented women to be demotivated if working in the environment where people were not driven much to develop their careers (Cornelius and Skinner, 2008; Wood, 2003). This is echoed by Melur, Rose, Ramlah and Jasmin who mentioned that being employed as a government servant was not at the top of their career-checklist.

Analysis of the data also demonstrated that seven out of seventeen senior women from the private sector sample had worked in the same organisations since being recruited after graduating from their studies. These women were either recruited in their final year of studies, were scholarship holders so they felt obliged to ‘pay back’ the company for funding their education by being loyal, joined under the company’s graduate program, or were running their

own businesses. It is not that they refused to move to other organisations, but that their current employers had taken care of them well and provided lots of training to enhance their managerial skills, enabling them to attain their current senior roles. Though they did not move to other companies, these women still received different kinds of work exposure such as being transferred from one division to another, being assigned tasks that were out of their skills range, working with different bosses and management teams and even witnessing the company changing its name during their career. So, the experiences they gained were diverse throughout their career trajectories.

The remaining senior women who were not working for the same organisation after completing their studies expressed that they would have certain time limits in mind for staying with one company. Five senior women asserted that they would expect to work in the same organisation for between five and seven years before starting to look for another job. This reflects that women in the private sector are more likely to be career oriented in comparison to those in the civil service. They believe that moving from one company to another is beneficial for their career growth as it helps senior women to establish networks (see Chapter Seven), enhance knowledge, and to gain different perspectives on different issues, as well as working in diverse cultures and in various positions. Based on the analysis, it seems that these senior women were not able to contribute much in the first year but started to contribute more when they entered the second year of employment. After two years of contribution, they began to learn, lead and bring the company to the next level which at the same time could improve their personal involvement too. It appeared to be fair for the employers who gave opportunities for senior women to explore where they had to give something back in return for not jumping to another organisation every two years. Jasmin, a General Manager, who had been involved in HR fields more than ten years pointed out,

> *"bear in mind you should not leave too often because I always believe a person who always moves average about one year, you know, this person I would say is not the good candidate to be considered for employment"* (Jasmin, General Manager, Private Sector)

Nonetheless, it is interesting to note the reason why senior women decided to move from one company to another within less than three years, this was frequently because they wanted to find their career footing after finishing their degrees. Being well-educated as well as highly ambitious, these senior women had moved faster between jobs and had made several employment changes. At the time of the interview, roughly ten senior women had changed employers three times within the last ten years. These women explained that the initial years were to actually determine where they wanted to be. Some had no chemistry with the nature of that company which eventually led them to resign. This is evidenced when more than two thirds from the private sector sample had been working in the same company for more than

fifteen years after they had secured a job where they considered their workplace as a second home and were content with their working environment.

Nona, who was a Malay Vice President, confessed that despite better pay and opportunities, she left her previous company which was Chinese owned and received less pay at her new organisation, which was one of the Islamic banks in Kuala Lumpur. She did not want to be a person in charge who handled events and functions that needed her to order alcohol for the guests and sign those bills.

> *"At that time I was thinking how long I am going to involve with those beer things. It's like the social context in life, first few years I was not wearing a hijab but when I started to wear hijab, it seemed inappropriate to handle this task"* (Nona, Vice President, Private Sector)

She also added,

> *"My husband was not agreeable as well as my Mom"*

From an intersectional perspective, Nona's situation reflects that the contemporary perceptions of individuals about the religious beliefs and the status of women in society cannot be neglected (Shome, 2002; Hassan, 2007; Ali, 2008). As pointed out by Omar and Davidson (2004), Malay women might not be suited to certain employment areas given the Islamic code of behaviour which places Muslim women in disadvantaged positions. In this situation, the Malay privilege is unable to counteract, which is why the privilege applies more to the public sector where these kinds of activities would not happen. Although the company offered a good workplace environment with extensive remunerations, it can be seen that Nona's turning point was when she started to wear the hijab. As a Muslim female, she was more likely to forget about the monetary aspects and leave the company due to her religious beliefs as she could no longer tolerate parts of the job role any longer. (see Chapter Two).

The working environment in the private sector is quite competitive in terms of skills and performance. Merit and recommendation by top management is also considered as a parameter to being promoted. In terms of promotion timeframes, the majority of senior women in the private sector took between two to five years to progress in their careers. It was slightly quicker than those in the public sector as it is understandable that regardless of how many years they have been employed in that company, performance is the main indicator for senior women to be promoted. In certain cases, promotion may be given within 18 months because senior women who had obtained entry positions as management trainees appeared to climb the career ladder faster than the rest. This reflects the kind of graduate program which was specifically designed to develop their career trajectory from the day they joined the company as a junior executive until they reached the senior level.

The working culture in the private sector is competitive, but it is associated with a good compensation and benefits package, covering medical treatment and insurance at exclusive selected private hospitals and clinics with a range dependent on their titles or positions in the company. Similar to public sector senior women, those in the private sector also enjoyed various types of leave such as annual leave, study leave and emergency leave, only differing in the number of days. The analysis has also shown that the maternity leave breaks for women tended to vary across sectors. Although private sector women are offered maternity leave, in most cases it is for only up to 60 days. Meanwhile, senior women in the public sector are more likely to take maternity leave for longer periods as they are entitled to take up to three months. Both women in the public and private sectors received full salary throughout their maternity leave. It should be noted that both public and private sectors had no parental leave benefits. This, however, is in contrast to the study of Gregory and Milner (2009, pp 7) where some organisations in the European countries do provide *"generous provision of paternity leave … allows men to spend more time with their children"*.

Table 6.3 displays the approximate full-time monthly salaries earned by both public and private sector senior women interviewees where in general, there were large pay differences between the senior women in the public and private sectors. On average, the findings show that public sector senior women earned between MYR5K to MYR15K and the average private sector senior women earned above MYR20K. Six respondents from the public earned between MYR5K – MY10K, five made MYR10K – MYR15K, two women in the public and private received MYR15K – MYR20K respectively. It is worth highlighting that fifteen private sector senior females earned more than MYR20K in comparison to only one senior woman in the civil service. The highest salary in the private sector was eight figures and the lowest in between MYR15K to MYR20K. No participants from the private sector in this study earned below MYR15K per month.

Table 6.3: Approximate wages earned by senior women in the public and private

NO	NAME	ETHNICITY	JOB TITLE	SECTOR	SALARY
1	Melati	Malay	Principal Assistant Secretary	Public	MYR5 – 10K
2	Cempaka	Malay	Senior Assistant Director	Public	MYR5 – 10K
3	Mawar	Malay	Principal Assistant Director	Public	MYR5 – 10K
4	Kemboja	Malay	Principal Assistant Director	Public	MYR5 – 10K
5	Tulip	Malay	Assistant Director	Public	MYR5 – 10K
6	Teratai	Malay	Business Analysis & Reporting General Manager	Private	> MYR20K
7	Sakura	Malay	Assistant Director	Public	MYR5 – 10K
8	Dahlia	Malay	Head of Unit, Commercial Sector	Public	MYR10 – 15K
9	Orked	Malay	Deputy Under Secretary	Public	MYR10 – 15K
10	Anggerik	Malay	Principal Assistant Secretary	Public	MYR5 – 10K
11	Azalea	Malay	Principal Assistant Secretary	Public	MYR15 – 20K
12	Rose	Malay	Chief Executive Officer	Private	> MYR20K
13	Nona	Malay	Vice President	Private	> MYR20K
14	Akasia	Malay	Deputy Secretary General	Public	MYR15 – 20K
15	Melur	Malay	Director	Private	> MYR20K
16	Kekwa	Malay	General Manager	Private	> MYR20K
17	Shanti	India	Senior Assistant Director	Public	MYR10 – 15K
18	Xiu Ying	Chinese	Assurance Leader	Private	> MYR20K
19	Kenanga	Malay	Head of Portfolio, Management & Growth	Private	> MYR20K
20	Seroja	Malay	Managing Director	Private	> MYR20K
21	Lily	Malay	General Manager	Private	MYR15 – 20K
22	Kamelia	Malay	Vice President of Treasury	Private	> MYR20K
23	Ramlah	Malay	Senior Vice President	Private	> MYR20K

24	Zaleha	Malay	Senior Vice President	Private	> MYR20K
25	Mei Feng	Chinese	Group Financial Controller	Private	> MYR20K
26	Madhuri	India	Director	Private	> MYR20K
27	Daisy	Chinese	Chief Finance Officer	Private	> MYR20K
28	Iris	Malay	Head of Strategy Implementation	Private	> MYR20K
29	Kuntum	Malay	Secretary General	Public	> MYR20K
30	Widuri	Malay	Senior Assistant Director	Public	MYR10 – 15K
31	Jasmin	Malay	General Manager	Private	> MYR20K

*Currency converter English pound sterling to Malaysian Ringgit; £1 = MYR5.5

Additionally, some of the private sector senior women were given drivers, credit cards to entertain clients or stakeholders, meeting allowances, free car petrol up to MYR500 per month, free mobile phone with paid line, free parking spaces and many more incentives, which reflects how luxurious financial rewards for corporate women were, in comparison to their public counterparts. In terms of the differences between public and private sector employment, the analysis confirms that private sector pay is higher than in the public sector. This pay discrepancy could also reflect the ethnic labour segregation in the public-private sectors of employment in Malaysia. For instance, the non-Malays, especially Chinese people, tend to be richer in comparison to their Malay counterparts (Jomo, 2004). This is due to the fact that many Chinese are working in private organisations that could offer higher pay than the government. The majority of public sector senior women admitted that getting less pay was a normal government practice and they readily accepted this norm. They mentioned that working in the government was not about high wages but about benefitting from the pension scheme after retirement.

To summarise, the pattern of recruitment and selection for women in the private sector is different than for their public sector counterparts. Unlike in the government, women were either recruited through a normal interview process without the examinations or were head-hunted. Private sector senior women were also older and more career-oriented, and as reflected in Table 6.2, they held senior managerial positions within the organisations they worked for. This also explains that the salary gaps between women in the private and public sector of employment are due to the fact that the private sector is more likely to be a profit-oriented organisation. In relation to occupational segregation, private sector women appear to work in male-dominated areas such as engineering and facilities departments. The level of vertical segregation seems higher for women in the private sector given the nature of their working

environment is highly competitive. Gender issues are not the only issues for women in the private sector, given that non-Malays are heavily employed and segregated within this industry. This intersection between gender and ethnicity has indirectly marginalised women and led to a number of career challenges for women to succeed in the public arena (see Chapter Seven). The next section discusses if the economic need could be the reason to motivate senior women managers in Malaysia, or in line with what their parents tell them to do, with the focus more on job security.

6.4 CAREER MOTIVATION VS ECONOMIC NEED

Economic need was one of the main factors why senior women in this study became involved in the paid labour force rather than becoming full-time homemakers (Lewison, Kumar, Wong, Roe, and Webber, 2016; Malaysian Department of Statistics, 2017). Other than being career oriented, living in the capital city of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur and highly populated areas such as Putrajaya and Selangor are very costly which meant our research participants were required to work. According to Abd Ghani et al., (2001), several factors affecting salary levels in Malaysia have been identified including the influx of foreign labour with the rapid expansion of the Malaysian economy and tight labour markets and increased mobility of Malaysian workers. This indirectly has created an excess of managerial jobs in the private sector (Permarupan, Al-Mamun, and Ahmad Saufi, 2013). Data analysis from this research acknowledges that socio-economic factors contribute to a common situation among Malaysian women to have a career.

In terms of salary ranges, the analysis strongly confirmed that the government indeed pays slightly lower monthly income on average than the private sector (see section 6.3). Women in the public sector are concentrated in the lower pay bands, with the majority earning up to MYR20,000, while only one (Secretary General) earned more than MYR20,000. This contrasts with private sector senior women more than half of whom earned over this amount. It is worth noting that there seems to be a mix of motives for participants in this study to join the public sphere of paid work. As discussed in the previous chapter, the shifting nature of private patriarchy has encouraged some participants to work and contribute to their family's financial stability, as well as fulfilling their personal needs, with a good career and good income. In fact, the majority of the women in the study earn more than their spouses (see chapter Seven for a fuller explanation). For example, Tulip, Sakura and Azalea were aware that there have been increases in life demands and the excessive cost of living, referring to daily expenses such as spending on groceries, children's educational fees, and paying tolls. They felt that they would not have enough money if they only depended on their husbands as breadwinners to support their family commitments, and that their standard of living would be significantly reduced if they were not also earning. Yet, if their spouses were rich or could give them the same amount of what they earned every month, they would be willing to leave their job.

> *"I have seven children. I used to tell my husband, if he can give me MYR10 000, I can give up my job straight away"* (Sakura, Assistant Director, Public Sector)

> *"If my husband can afford to pay everything, then I'll quit my job"* (Tulip, Assistant Director, Public Sector)

In contrast, given the movement from private to public patriarchy, the findings reported that twenty-seven women expressed that they could not imagine being a full-time homemaker. During the transition process, private and public patriarchy can exist at the same time. Women may have managed to venture out into the public domain, but the decisions of their career progression could be still controlled by their role in the private sphere. Rose, who worked in the private sector, was offered the chance of being supported by her spouse when they got married. Yet, if Rose was destined to be a housewife, she felt her husband must get them a maid as she would still want to work or run a business from home. Although Rose could have chosen not to work, having a career was necessary and she did not want to accept a traditional female homemaking role that would have left her dependent. Being motivated to do paid work, Kekwa claimed that she would have a headache because she could not wait for Monday to come!

> *"I feel better when I come to work rather than staying at home. I used to have a headache so bad on Saturday and Sunday because I cannot wait for Monday [laugh]. I never thought of not working"* (Kekwa, General Manager, Private Sector)

The analysis could suggest why private sector women appear to be more career-oriented rather than domestic-oriented due to the nature of working in the business sector. It seems that they would be bored if they stayed at home and wanted to be independent of their husbands. Perhaps they wish to break out of the confines of the private patriarchal at home. For public sector senior women, it seems that their motivations are more domestic-oriented, yet the economic needs had driven them to work. It is apparent from the accounts shared by the participants regarding their motivations and what influenced their career direction that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors are at play. While for some, the motivation comes from a need to develop themselves as a career woman and a manager, for others it results from an external financial need. Moving onto the next section, unlike their counterparts in the public sector, many private senior women managers had planned their career paths in advance. The section then further explores whether or not these women in the public and private sector are satisfied with their careers.

6.5 CAREER PLANNING AND CAREER SATISFACTION

Many senior women in the public sector described their initial career decisions as unplanned or unintentional. While six public senior women had joined other private organisations during the first one or two initial years of their careers, eight had started their careers in the government immediately after graduation, at the average age of 23 or 24. Most senior women had joined the public sector as a result of the encouragement they received from their fathers or mothers who were also working in the government office. With respect to ethnicity, the Malay families tend to rely on the civil service for their livelihood while the non-Malays are more likely to be found working in the private sector. As discussed in Chapter Five, the analysis has shown that private patriarchal relations and family background were significant factors in relation to career choices in later life. This plays a major role in determining the future of women in the public sector. For example, Widuri was immediately asked by her father to apply for an ADO position and she did the written exam, went to the interview and passed all stages without knowing what an ADO was. Sakura commented that her late father asked her to be an ADO from a young age. Azalea's parents had influenced her to seek employment in the public sector because her father was a retired policeman who once served in the government. Azalea confessed that her mother declined an interview invitation as a reporter for The Star, the journalist company, on behalf of Azalea and lied that her daughter had already been employed by the government. Though Azalea's actual ambition was to be a journalist, she finally obeyed her parents' decision and joined the service right after her graduation. From the perspectives of private patriarchal relations, the parents (including the mothers) tend to push their daughters towards the public sector. This explains the patriarchal relations discussed in Chapter Five have only been slightly modified by the move of women into employment, as men remain the dominant decision-makers.

Another reason why these Malay senior women enrolled in the government sector was because they received government scholarships under Malay privilege. In return, these women were tied to a contract where they had to serve the government for a certain number of years. Women from the public sector explained that if the duration of their degree was three years, the length of the bond for working in the government would be times two and plus 1 i.e. 3 years of undergraduate degree x 2 = 6 + 1 additional year = 7 years of commitment to serve the government. This would also explain why not many non-Malay women are to be found in the public sector, because they are not offered the scholarship.

On the other hand, Orked applied to work in the public sector with intentions to feel more relaxed and have a personal life after quitting the stressful work culture in the private sector organisation.

> *"To be honest, I moved out from the private sector and joining the public sector because of my family. I did not have a personal life when I was in the private sector. Even when I was at home, I still think about my workload in the office. So I heard people said working in the public sector is relaxed, so I applied the government"* (Orked, Deputy Under Secretary, Public Sector)

At the time of the interviews, the three eldest senior female managers in the public sector aged 59, 56 and 52 had been in service for an average of 30 years. In two out of three cases above, these senior women worked in the department where they had started three decades before. Through long service, they had moved upwards through the ranks, however, public sector senior women asserted that they did not foresee any more upward moves in their career ladders. They then made the choice either to retire early and start their own business or to continue until retirement at the age of 60. Based on the analysis, though these women could support the notion indicated by Yukongdi and Benson (2005), that Asian women have 'cracked' the glass ceilings, it seems that these senior women had started to simply think about how or when to leave after reaching certain stages of their careers.

Chapter Five shows that more than half of private sector senior women in this research were educated overseas. As a result, some of the participants were interviewed when they were still abroad. The big companies were likely to recruit these senior women during their final year and offer them a job right after they had finished their studies. The participants felt that panels were particularly impressed by women who graduated from abroad considering them smart and bright enough to be employed in their organisations, which was evidenced during the interview session based on their attitudes and personality. Four senior women in the private sector sample admitted they had been recruited and had already secured a job in Malaysia before they even completed their studies abroad. For instance, Teratai, a Business Analysis and Reporting General Manager, said that when she got an offer from the company she worked with, they flew her from Washington DC where her Georgetown university was, to Florent Part to interview her. They bought the flight ticket for her and she went to the airport. When she arrived at New York airport, a stretch black limousine waited for her. After being interviewed, they offered her a place in the company immediately. Teratai's experience was similar to Rose's, a Chief Executive Officer, where during her final year, the company came to interview her in Australia.

> *"I was okay because who does not want to work at that point of time? You know job comes to you right? I think I am being blessed in that sense so when I came back, I do not have to find a job anymore. Then I came back, straight away served and been bonded for three years. So*

that was where the journey begins enduring my life with this company until now" (Rose, Chief Executive Officer, Private Sector)

It is worth noting that, contrary to the public sector women, senior female managers in the private sector were more likely to have in mind which career paths they wanted to venture into that suited their interests, so there was less of an influence from home and parents. Underlying these differences in planning careers between the public and private sector senior managers was the ambition of individual senior managers. Eleven senior women in the private sector described themselves as being ambitious and stressed that having career plans was as important as having a good education and opening up opportunities. They attributed their career achievements to good planning and following the plans no matter the circumstances. As Cho et al. (2015) suggested, Asian women managers have shown a significant shift in the last few decades. Private sector women in this study reflect how they have partially escaped from the traditional private patriarchy and moved to the public arena by being more career-oriented and working in a male-dominated environment. In contrast, only seven public sector women said they had career goals. The differences in personal ambition were also apparent through the body gestures when these managers described their ambitious natures. It seemed that public sector women prefer to avoid having too much of a career challenge that some women in the private sector experienced. The private sector senior women were generally more relaxed about describing themselves as motivated and ambitious, whereas their public counterparts were more uncertain and hesitant to admit the same.

The remaining thirteen senior women in the sample (seven public and six private) suggested that they had flexible careers, with minimum planning. From the findings of the study, the lack of career guidance at schools or university level, lack of encouragement in the work setting and negative socialisation experiences, may have contributed to the lack of career planning observed amongst the senior female managers in the study. Without career planning, senior female managers were more likely to experience missed opportunities and stay longer in the same position. Senior women in the public sector mentioned that securing jobs that were matched with their personal interests was not as important as finding any job, and they had careers because they stayed in their respective jobs in the government. Others believed in the sustenance which is part of the religious belief that if they deserved to receive things they had planned, they would get it. The following comments made by three public sector and one private sector senior manager (all Malays) aptly captured these scenarios;

"We can plan but Allah will determine. We believe in that destiny. If you are the chosen one to hold that position, so it's yours. We can plan but everything is in God's hands" (Mawar, Principal Assistant Director, Public Sector)

> *"I have no target. I am sorry but I do not have that target. Just go with the flow. As a woman, come what may, I have to accept it. One more thing, I always believe that great power comes with great responsibility. So, it's always a package like that. Now I think I have enough of my plate and this is fine with me"* (Orked, Deputy Under Secretary, Public Sector)

> *"I do not have the particular plan. I just want to give the best to the organization and personally I want the best for my children. Never have a goal to be a President. Just go with the flow. If it comes, it will come"* (Kamelia, Vice President of Treasury, Private Sector)

When asked about their career satisfaction, the analysis revealed that senior women from both sectors expressed different levels of career satisfaction in the workplace. The educational level, higher-ranking positions, challenging jobs, flexible working hours and monetary reward were positively associated with career satisfaction amongst senior women interviewed in the study. The interviews in this research validated the findings of Marshall (1995) as well as Powell and Graves (2003) in which they concluded that women must possess a good level of human capital in order to be at the same par like their male counterparts. For women in the public sector, having to hold higher-ranking positions in accordance with their qualifications and skills, has elevated their social status and respectability in the Malaysian society. As explained in the preceding chapter, unlike private sector women, public sector women would take the chance to further their higher degrees up to a doctorate level. Deep-rooted patriarchal values have also led women to improve their managerial and human capital skills in the workplace. The tensions between public and private patriarchy have influenced the development of women's career development. Left to its own devices, private patriarchy would discourage women working in the public sphere and therefore discourage them gaining human capital.

Career satisfaction for women working in the public sector was largely linked to status and prestige, which would also link with the concept of Malay privilege. Public sector women indicated that being in power-related positions like the ADO or as bureaucrats are considered prestigious, which contributes to personal qualities such as authority and charisma. It seemed that holding a top-level decision-making position was the reason for career satisfaction in light of the greater status of the position. This is linked to the ability of breaking the structural limitations in Malaysian society through the lens of intersectionality; gender and ethnicity (Crenshaw, 1991). Those who were employed in the civil service perceived to be successful for getting offered a pension scheme, which is linked to privilege working as a government servant. Belonging to relatively advantaged intersection groups especially as Malay women, they would have a strong social standing and esteem. Furthermore, public sector women thought that they were in the elite social group as they see themselves linked with the achieved

quota of having 30 percent women in senior managerial positions (see Chapter Eight), this in turn has led to career satisfaction.

On the other hand, the majority of private sector senior women interviewed perceived their wage as the major reason for their career satisfaction. The analysis found that the time requirements and stress associated with holding a top-level management position may reduce the quality of these managers' family and personal lives. It should be noted that domestic tasks are commonly an issue associated with gender inequality in Malaysia (see Chapter Seven). Their higher salaries allowed them to hire servants to perform childcare and housework, which indirectly may increase career satisfaction as it may provide the perfect balance of prestige and family time. The fact that not many private organisations could offer flexible working hours to employees has been found to be another signal of satisfaction in women's careers, for breaking the barriers and climbing up to the top ladder (Omar and Hamzah, 2003; White, 1992). In addition, managerial positions in the private sector can also be considered prestigious as they were likely to compete with the non-Malays in order to succeed. As elucidated in section 6.3, unlike in the government, the competition is likely higher given the fact that non-Malay men and women are heavily employed within this sector (Lee and Abdul Khalid, 2016). Therefore, those Malay women who have been promoted to senior managerial levels would be the inspiration, especially for younger women to succeed in a competitive playing field.

The responses received on what these women felt about their career accomplishment to date were either 'satisfied', 'not really satisfied but sufficient', or 'never satisfied'. While more than half of the senior women were satisfied and felt grateful for what they had achieved, five were never satisfied (two women and three women from the public and private sectors respectively) and three were dissatisfied but sufficient (two in the public and one from the private sector). Of five non-Malays interviewed in this research, two of them (one Chinese and one Indian) never felt satisfied with their career achievements, whereas the remainder were very contented with where they are now, which reflects that they had reached the most senior positions in their careers.

> *"I am very satisfied, and I think I have fulfilled all my ambitions to be honest with you"* (Madhuri, Director, Private Sector)

This is not the case for Daisy, being a Chinese career woman, who never felt satisfied and always wanted to contribute more to the organisation.

> *"Never satisfied [laugh]. I am a workaholic. Even though I hate to admit it, but in the end, I admit I am a career woman"* (Daisy, Chief Finance Officer, Private Sector)

Financially, Malay senior women, on the whole, tended to feel satisfied with their careers though in some circumstances the level of satisfaction was not at the highest. It is possible that this situation could be influenced by a religious belief whereby the Malays believe that as a female Muslim, they have to just accept a given situation, and things will come at the right place at the right time, but nothing can happen unless permitted by Allah. They also use the word *alhamdulillah* [Praise to Allah] to demonstrate their satisfaction, happiness and gratitude that they had been able to be in their current positions. It is noteworthy to mention here that the word *alhamdulillah* [Praise to Allah] is an Arabic word that Malay people often use as a statement of appreciation to Allah for whatever good things are happening to them at that time.

Moreover, women appeared to feel satisfied when they had been placed in positions where they would be most effective and have the best opportunities to demonstrate their abilities. This becomes more pronounced with status when senior women obtained their overall life satisfaction both emotionally and socially from the contributions of many areas throughout their career trajectory. However, this was not the case for Melur. Though she was happy with things she had been blessed with, Melur thought that she could be earning more.

> *"Not really satisfied. Supposed at my age people will be earning RM50k and above"* (Melur, Director, Private Sector)

To conclude, more than half of senior women in the private sector really enjoyed being in their current senior positions and always worked towards their goals, unlike public sector senior women whose careers had always happened to them by chance and over time. While some senior women in the government had spent their entire life working in one organisation, quicker promotions, higher pay and being hungry to learn were also cited as a major reason for senior women planning to have a career in the private sector because they had been motivated by the needs of career growth. Based on the analysis, private sector women, regardless of ethnicity, appeared to be more career-oriented as compared to their public sector counterparts, the majority of whom were Malays. They were more likely to plan their career in advance in order for them to achieve their targets for career promotions. Contrary to this, public sector senior women were likely to accept what had been offered even if it did not suit their career interests. Equally important, the major reason behind career satisfaction was socio-economic class, as some respondents belong to upper and middle classes, where ethnicity is considered a symbol of class due to structural privilege systems in Malaysia. Both public and private sector women in the study were likely to measure their career satisfaction as more objective, but in different ways. Private sector women were more attracted with the amount of salary offered to them whereas for public sector women, given the opportunity to become an ADO, a prestigious position in the government, has made them feel satisfied with their career. In terms of ethnicity, Malay women appeared to feel grateful with things they have achieved due to religious backgrounds and believe that if a position was meant to be theirs, it would be. On the other

hand, the non-Malay women always wanted to earn more and never felt satisfied with their career achievements. Being career-oriented, these women believe they have a lot more to offer to organisations and are wanting to drive their career to the next level of success.

6.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has explored the theme of women's careers and public patriarchy in Malaysia. The evidence presented in this chapter has been related to women's interpretation of the traditional patriarchal values in Malaysia. The responses of the senior women managers demonstrate that they are not an homogenous group and that differences can be attributed to their education, age, ethnicity, social position, as well as the sector in which they work. It is also argued that intersectional social categories such as gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status have a significant influence on women's career progression. Throughout this chapter, the understanding of women's career experiences in the public sphere has led to the comparative profile of the work experience faced by public and private sector senior female managers. It summarises how occupational gender segregation and privilege may have influenced senior female managers' involvement in the workplace in Malaysia.

Senior women in the study encountered traditional patriarchal experiences in the public sphere differently to one another, depending on the sector they worked in. Though senior women from both public and private sectors tend to have similar work-related experiences, the level of gender occupational segregation is different where public sector senior women encounter lower vertical segregation as compared to their private sector counterparts. As cited in the western literature (Cabrera, 2009; O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimoria, 2007; Wood, 2008), women who work in stereotypical female employment are seen as horizontally segregated. In the case of this research, public sector women are found to work in female management areas such as administrative and human resource, whereas private sector counterparts appeared to choose male-dominated areas such as engineering and manufacturing. Yet in most cases, the senior hierarchy is still male dominated, vertically segregated and demonstrated gender inequality.

The discussion of occupational gender segregation highlights the need to investigate labour markets which are differentiated by both gender and ethnic segregation. In the study on the BAME women who are less likely to hold managerial positions, Bradley and Healy (2008) suggested that labour markets remain segmented by the hierarchies of gender and ethnicity. This chapter confirmed that, senior women and ethnic groups achieve a significant degree of flexibility yet are still excluded from upper levels of the labour market. This is due to the fact that men still dominate in both sectors in Malaysia, especially Malay men. Consistent with Crenshaw's (1991) structural intersectionality, gender and ethnic differentiation is highly embedded in the public sector where Malay males have been the most advantaged given the impact of Malay privilege which is firmly embedded in the way the labour market is structured. Malay women are also privileged, but to a lesser extent.

Due to the Malays right embedded in the Malaysian constitution decades ago (Abd Rahim, Mustaffa, Ahmad, and Lyndon, 2013), the non-Malay women managers generally believed that they were discriminated against because of their ethnic background. The research participants belonging to the Malay ethnic group benefit from the opportunities to work in the civil service. These senior women experienced recognition and respectability because of their profession working as the ADO in the government's elite group. The fact that the public sector has exceeded the 30 percent quota introduced by the government, could be seen as evidence that gender inequality in the public sector is less evident than for their private counterparts. Although the quota has been met, it is only 30 percent and men still dominate. This is also highly influenced by the endowment of Malay privilege to the Malay employees, public sector women in this study still felt proud of their prestigious role and obliged to give back to the society. On the other hand, women in the private sector perceived that the amount of salary they earned, and the fact that they managed to work in male-dominated areas and compete with other employees from different ethnic backgrounds, has made them proud of their career achievements.

The analysis has demonstrated that senior women from three different ethnic backgrounds encountered different sets of privileges and that emerge based on the unequal access to social structural systems (Haque, 2003). The multiple social categories in society does not work without the other. The unequal pattern of structural intersectionality and patriarchy in Malaysia explains why these managers tended to work in the private organisations as most of the Malay female managers worked in governmental bodies. As argued by Collins (2000), a different type of marginalisation demonstrates a different outcome as it may vary from one to another dimension of social differences. For instance, biculturalism may not be a problem that public sector women must face, hence, they are less competitive, in comparison to their private sector counterparts.

It is also noteworthy that, unlike in the public sector, private sector women managers were older, more ambitious and career-oriented. Senior women managers from both sectors appeared to be satisfied with their career progression and quality of corporate life. Yet, the only differences are how they measure their own career satisfaction as a result of different objectives. Senior women who avoid government jobs see the salary scheme in the public sector as less flexible than in the private sector. On the contrary, public sector senior women thought that the pension scheme after retirement was good earnings in the long-term, though it was recognised that pay would be low while in service. This was particularly important for women who have felt comfortable upon joining the government immediately after graduation with no previous work experience. Being career-oriented women had guaranteed the participants from both sectors in this study job security as they have a good position and there is no reason for them to leave their jobs. Senior women also mentioned their greater satisfaction in careers occurred after going through challenges that have led them to succeed.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the interviewee's career challenges and strategies. I will highlight how Malay, Chinese and Indian senior women encounter the 3Cs of career challenges in order to reach senior management levels.

CHAPTER 7

CAREER CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY SENIOR WOMEN MANAGERS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in the preceding chapter, senior women in this study are better off financially than their spouses and are generally well educated. This chapter analyses what I define as the '3Cs' of career challenges encountered by women senior managers. (1) Commitment between career and family, (2) Challenges experienced by senior women because of their gender, and (3) Competitiveness when competing with men and other women in the workplace. The analysis provides an insight into how the participants are juggling dual roles and balancing the demand of work and household chores at senior management levels. Support in household tasks was confined to families who had young children and did not have any domestic helpers, and where there was very little involvement by men in household tasks. The gendered division of labour was clear and very much evident with strong patriarchal views noted by most women. Thus, the discussion focuses on how career and family influence women's experiences in the private and public spheres. Women are more likely to experience a conflict of being a female senior manager in the workplace, which leads to discussion of the impact of gendered management styles. In terms of societal changes, there has been a tremendous shift in the social attitude towards women senior managers in the workplace.

The data analysed in this chapter addresses the second research question; (2) What are the challenges that women have encountered in getting to senior positions? Do challenges to reach senior management become more or less prominent when gender and ethnicity intersect in the cases of Malay, Chinese and Indian women? The level of analysis begins with the public and private sector analysis and continues from the view of an intersectional perspective between gender and ethnicity. The discussion strongly focuses on the challenges identified by the senior female managers during the in-depth interviews.

7.2 CAREER AND FAMILY COMMITMENT

Linking to the discussion in the previous two chapters on private and public patriarchal relations in Malaysia, this section explores how women manage career and family in their daily routine. It focuses on the impact of marital status and family issues on women's career advancement. When asked about work-life, the interviewees had a range of perspectives about what it meant to them. Working women, unlike working men, face the difficulty of participating in two activity systems that are not compatible. Empirical studies in the past (see Davidson and Cooper, 1992; Durbin, 2016; Marshall, 1995; Wacjman, 1998; Wichert, 2011) demonstrated that women who combined work and family paid heavy penalties; they were more susceptible to feelings of guilt, role conflicts and stress, and they were often forced to give up personal interests in their efforts to balance work and family responsibilities. Marriage and children are

generally associated with why women may have lacked career focus and or were less committed to their careers due to their roles as mothers as well as managers. Yet, not all married women have children. This is evident in Durbin's study (2016) where two-thirds of private sector women interviewed had no children, whereas two-thirds of public sector women had children. This is more or less consistent with my research findings in terms of the number of children between public and private sector women interviewed.

Based on the interviews, public sector senior women are likely to have more children as compared to private sector senior women in Malaysia (see Appendix C for fuller details). All fourteen public sector women interviewed were married and had on average four children and one senior woman had seven children. The pace of the working environment might influence senior women when deciding whether to expand the number of their children. Working in the public sector can be seen as more relaxing and less hectic in comparison to the private sector. As commented by Cempaka, prior to joining the government, she worked in one of the biggest accounting firms in the world, during which time she had three miscarriages and no children. She now has four children after she joined the civil service and was convinced that a less stressful working environment improved the chances of her having children.

Meanwhile, in the private sector, the data shows that women were likely to have fewer children: five have two children and three children, respectively and the remainder have either one child or no child at all. Although most of the interviewees do have children, some senior women from both sectors either have fewer children or no children at all. Though this could be a personal and sensitive question, the senior women in this study explained professionally during the research interview. Ramlah, a Malay woman, had no children because she was single and openly confessed why she opted to be single,

> *"I am not married not because of my career. I am not married because of certain reasons that became history in my life. It was complicated to marry a non-Malay who does not want to convert into Islam. I wanted to marry a man who can guide me in the religion side. I have not found a person who I can tolerate. I received offers to marriage, but I refused to accept if the offer was to be the second wife"* (Ramlah, Senior Vice President, Private Sector)

Like female managers in the UK (Davidson and Cooper, 1992), Ramlah's statement indicated that being single for women generally, was far from easy and it affected Malay women more. Considering the religious culture in Malaysia where Malays are Muslims, it is evident that it is very difficult to marry someone who does not have mutual religious beliefs as a life partner (Aziz and Shamsul, 2004). In addition, three women in the sample who had only one child

mentioned it was unplanned and career was never a reason why they only had one child. Another private sector senior woman, Seroja, explained,

> *"I only have one daughter. One child. It was not planned that I only want to have one child because of the career. No. It is just I do not have anymore. I got her after 5 years of marriage. Quite late. But in a way … I should be thankful to Allah"* (Seroja, Managing Director, Private Sector)

Late marriage is more common among professional women, which is confirmed by the participants in this study who had children between their late twenties and late thirties. Postponing marriage is necessary for women to ensure that they have adequate time and energy to establish their careers before taking on the responsibility of marriage and family. Senior women in the private sector appeared to marry later compared to senior women in the public sector. Private sector senior women in this study managed to enhance their career ladder faster than other colleagues. They admitted that having no child or fewer children was a career advantage in comparison to those who had more children. In terms of ethnicity, it seems that the non-Malay married women were likely to have fewer children than their Malay counterparts. Out of five non-Malay participants, two Chinese women had two children and one did not have any. This was Daisy, who had miscarried a few times until she did not foresee becoming a mother as she was already in her early-forties.

With respect to the ages of senior manager's children, private sector women tended to have more grown-up children as compared to their public counterparts. Senior women with grown-up children appeared to have the least problem with balancing their family and working lives. Based on the findings, childcare was not important for senior women with grown-up children given their children's capability to look after themselves. These women had achieved a pattern of equilibrium over the years and had learned to cope. Senior women managers with younger children experienced the most tension by way of balancing their lives and had little time for other social activities. Three public sector senior women had children under two years old whereas only one private sector woman had a child aged six-months-old. Some of them had either school-age children or under six and had a maid or full-time nursery place.

Gender differences in the public and private sector therefore seem to be influenced by the domestic sphere. For women to succeed at work, they needed instrumental support from their spouses either in terms of sharing of household chores or hiring outside help (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). Table 7.1 shows a number of senior women managers who have hired a domestic helper to enable them to carry out their family obligations.

Table 7.1: Number of Senior Women Managers with or without Domestic Helpers

Sectors	Live-in Maid	Part-time Maid	Used to Have a Maid	No Maid	Total
Public Sector Women	5	1	2	6	14 senior women managers
Private Sector Women	10	2	1	4	17 senior women managers

Family commitments and responsibilities would require senior women to manage their time effectively and it seems that private sector women in the study had no difficulties in striking a balance between a manager and a mother role. Regardless of ethnic backgrounds, private sector women are likely to have either a live-in maid or a part-time maid to help with cleaning, cooking, doing laundry or taking care of their children. The majority of private sector women explained that their husbands did not help much with house chores and having a maid helped to reduce their family burdens, even though they still had to manage their maids at home. As it is so easy to hire a maid, most men are at ease with their light involvement in domestic commitments (Norzareen and Nobaya, 2010). Men prefer to hire a maid to carry out their tasks at home than to increase their own participation.

> *"I do handle house chores either I do it or I manage my maid to do it … but my husband does not cook at all ... No. he does not, he is not that type ... he does not clean up, he does not cook at all"* (Teratai, Business Analysis and Reporting General Manager, Private Sector)

> *"At his level, he would not be doing any house chore. Having a maid at home, our role is of course to make sure the maid does her job. So I managed the maid … My husband will just monitor but in the event I got stuck, then only he will come in … so he does not interfere much"* (Rose, Chief Executive Officer, Private Sector)

> *"Overall I manage the household a little bit more like making sure the gardeners are in, the maid is doing what she is doing, it is also a matter of managing the people and the things at home"* (Iris, Head of Strategy Implementation, Private Sector)

Even when women managers have transferred the household tasks to the domestic workers, they are still responsible for ensuring that their home environment is well-organised and up to standard. For these women, having a strong support system such as hiring a maid was important in the Malaysian context as no nurseries or creches are necessarily available for working women, especially in the private sector organisations. Even though their children have grown-up, their maids were loyal and remained working for these women for many years to help with the household activities.

> *"I have a very strong support system at home … for example I have to fetch my children, I have a maid working for me for 22 years until today. You can imagine how my support system is. I have people who take care of my garden. So, they do not have to disturb my work. None of the family disturb my work"* (Melur, Director, Private Sector)

> *"We have a maid. It is not too difficult. First few years, when we have no child, we do not have a servant, so we shared responsibility. Not so much cooking because only two of us … When we have a child, for two years sent to babysitter and then until now I have a servant. I am also fortunate, my current Indonesian maid has been looking for my child since she was in Primary 1. It also helps. Otherwise, all those bother you"* (Seroja, Managing Director, Private Sector)

Four private sector women have no maid at all and only one senior woman used to have a maid who is now no longer needed as the children are grown-up. Interestingly, Kenanga from the private sector, mentioned that although she has a baby and could afford to pay the agency fees, she was afraid of the possibility that child abuse could be perpetrated by maids (Ochiai, 2008). She would prefer to send her daughter to a babysitter because she did not trust a foreign maid.

In the public sector, although eight senior women have no maid, they received help from different sources, to minimise their family burden. For instance, six public sector women mentioned that their husbands were helpful, the government has provided a day-care centre for them to put their children in while they are at work or they send their children to a nanny. This has enabled them to occupy leadership posts without having a live-in maid

> *"To be honest, my husband helps me a lot on the housework like taking care of my children. He does the cooking sometimes. He does the cleaning, washing, ironing as well"* (Anggerik, Principal Assistant Secretary, Public Sector)

> *"my husband was helpful … he can do all except for cooking"* (Sakura, Assistant Director, Public Sector)

> *"Husband is helpful. We share responsibility. He can cook. He even cooked during my confinement days. But now my children are grown up so less burden"* (Widuri, Senior Assistant Director, Public Sector)

> *"My husband also can help me to wash the dishes, to help me cooking. He is very helpful. Because you need to have more understanding … be flexible between each other … Harmony life at home leads to productive works"* (Mawar, Principal Assistant Director, Public Sector)

This finding substantiates the claim by some Western researchers that female managers in the West have been enabled to carry out multiple roles simultaneously because of the help they received from their husbands (Marshall, 1984) or their organisations (Davidson and Burke, 2011). The analysis of the data demonstrates that senior managers from both sectors hold similar family responsibilities and obtained the support of either their maids, helpful husbands or extended family. This helps senior women to encounter the challenge of combining work and family commitments. Yet, given the fact that public sector women have more children, the commitment of bringing them up may slow down their career development as compared to private sector women.

In terms of ethnicity, non-Malay women in the study were also juggling dual roles as career women with or without a maid. Xiu Ying, a Chinese interviewee, confessed that her maid does the house chores, but she is in-charge of education such as homework or school activities. She did not want to miss any of her children's performances. If she had to travel, she would write a to-do-list on schedules and routines, and on what food to prepare for her husband, children, maid and driver. She would also take the last flight out and the first flight back in, sleeping on the plane in order to minimise the time away from home. Another Chinese woman interviewee, Mei Feng', says her husband is also helpful as they do not have a maid at home. An Indian woman, Madhuri, also mentioned that her husband helped in everything although she has a maid. She further explained that her husband is not the type of Indian where husbands are God and expect wives to treat them like the Lord.

> *"He does not expect me to cook and feed him every day. He does not expect me to wash and iron his clothes. You know, in Indian, husbands are God. He is not like that"* (Madhuri, Director, Private Sector)

Generally, women from both sectors still wanted to maintain the traditional perception of themselves as women by performing some primary household tasks over the weekend. They believe that a woman is not a good mother and wife if she abandons her primary

responsibilities in the family. Although these women have made some adjustments and accommodations between their situation and social beliefs, they still hold strongly to their roles in the family as a wife and as a mother. For Malay women, when they act according to Islamic teachings and please their husbands and children, they believe that they will gain the blessings of Allah. This is despite the changes in terms of private patriarchal relations where women are now allowed to participate int paid employment. The family is still patriarchal, and women are still confined by the societal expectations of their roles, despite engaging in full-time careers. This reflects, it seems, that they are condoning the private patriarchy themselves to some extent.

In summary, public sector women have more children in comparison to their private sector counterparts. Women are well aware of the implications for their careers when they have children where they need to juggle between career and family. This clearly indicates that the division of labour at home is still determined by gender, with women maintaining their responsibility for household management. For instance, although women interviewees hire domestic workers, they are left to organise how the work is carried out. Also, unlike in the West, using domestic workers to provide household services at home is the most popular option, particularly amongst the middle-class and upper-class households in Malaysia. Some senior women from both sectors in this study employ a live-in maid to reduce their domestic commitments and alleviate their household duties. Nevertheless, some women themselves are still tempted to perform all the household duties as they consider those tasks to be their responsibility even with help from their maids. For women without a domestic helper, they either have a helpful husband or send their children to nursery. A woman's position in the family has not really changed in relation to household duties even though their economic positions have improved. The next section looks at the conflicts women encounter while working in senior management.

7.3 THE CONFLICT OF BEING SENIOR WOMEN MANAGERS

Management is characterised as a relatively masculine job with traits such as being aggressive, decisive and independent, whereas women's characteristics in management may differ from their male counterparts (Bradley, 2013; Durbin, 2016). Marshall (1995) asserts that women had to bear with some sets of obstacles in their career development simply because they were 'being a woman'. Five senior women (two from the public sector and three from the private sector) confessed that working in male-dominated areas meant they received little respect and less recognition than their male counterparts who were often shocked to see a female boss on site. These senior women did tend to agree that their gender negatively impacted on their career trajectories and thought it was part of the learning curve Daisy, a Chinese senior woman in the private sector, recalled her first month as a Chief Financial Officer (CFO). She experienced a culture shock when she first went to the plant; people were

unfriendly, walked past her and did not acknowledge her as a superior. She also received harassment all the way up to the boardroom by her male subordinates, complaining about her, accusing her of being 'too powerful' which she strongly denies. It was likely that the male colleagues at the plant felt uncomfortable dealing with a female senior manager like Daisy. It took her a while to change the mindset and attitudes especially of the older workers, but she managed this by going to the plant more often and establishing a rapport with the workforce.

A comparable situation happened to Seroja, who was the only woman in 300 companies managing automotive and plastic industries in Malaysia. She mentioned an incident in which she had a meeting in Japan and she took her male employees along. During the meeting, the clients did not engage, despite knowing that she was the most senior person in the group, a managing director. Jasmin also recalled that the office boy used to scratch her car and punctured the tyres because he did not like the idea of having a woman in control of the staff.This indicates that some men are more likely to feel threatened by women in high positions which led them to become antagonistic towards women in these roles. Kemboja recalled she was not seen as a female boss, but as a 'substitute' for male managers who were busy attending to the clients who wanted to see a male officer, not believing that the real officer could be young and a female!

There was clear evidence that women in non-traditional careers were more likely to face career challenges in different forms. In Malaysia, Johari *et al.* (2013) argued that male-dominated workplaces give men the most power and influence over decisions, which in turn could affect women dramatically. The findings echoed previous research that women may feel a sense of isolation, bias or not fitting in the workplace because it was rare to have women in a male dominated field (Powell, Bagilhole and Dainty, 2009). It then became more challenging when they needed to disprove the conservative mentality that men made better managers. As for Lily, while higher management trusted her ability to carry out 'men-tasks' as a network engineer, the lower level staff refused to acknowledge her ability to manage the technical staff. They assumed that Lily had inadequate technical skills to be a manager in the telco department because she was a female. Widuri, from the Ministry of Women, shared a frustrating story that made her cry when her male subordinate could not accept the fact that he had a female manager and did not want to cooperate whenever she asked him to execute his job.

> *"I used to cry before. I asked him to do work, he refused. I messaged, he did not reply. I was down when facing those problems. As a boss, I felt like he insulted me. He did not want to listen. He admitted that he did not like me because a female cannot be a leader"* (Widuri, Assistant Director, Public Sector)

The above situations could be explained in a way that, although these women were already at a senior stage in their careers, such attitudes possibly were held by older workers not used to having a female boss. This negative mindset still prevails probably due to men's reluctance towards seeing successful women in their careers, which confirms that *"think manager think male"* (Schein 2001, pp 676) is not only a phenomenon in Western countries, but a phenomenon in Malaysia too. The notion of being senior women managers was not only challenging but also stressful for the women themselves.

On the other hand, twelve senior women interviewed from both sectors expressed that they had never encountered gender discrimination in the workplace. During the interviews, they insisted that it was nothing to do with gender but performance that matters the most and the organisations they worked for were strongly committed to equality opportunities. Some women were more reserved in their answers, neither admitting nor denying gender bias concerns as they believed that management was not a gendered profession. According to these women, working in a professional environment had moulded them to show their capability to be a leader and they did not want anyone to view them as a 'female senior manager' *per se*. Melur described that though there was no toilet for ladies on the construction site, it was not an excuse for her to feel discriminated against as she had never been bullied by the workers who were all males. Another senior woman, Kenanga who also worked in the engineering field, summarised that even though she always went off-shore where all her colleagues were male, she did not feel intimidated at all.

> *"Totally there was no issue at all. Even when I was in environmental engineering, I always went off shore. Off shore is 100% male. I did not feel scared. So far since I started my work, I did not feel that experience"*
> (Kenanga, Head of Portfolio, Management and Growth, Private Sector)

Kenanga felt this reflected her professionalism in handling gender issues even though, at that point of time, she was only a young manager and her position required her to give instructions to male staff. She then added that her career progress was negatively affected by the company system that resulted in her receiving delayed promotions. Arguably, this might be the result of discrimination although she denied this and refused to admit discrimination. According to some women interviewees, being a woman was not seen as a challenge as women managers believed that being rational when making decisions and producing good quality work spoke for itself. These senior women admitted that they always doubled or sometimes tripled their efforts to make sure their opinions and suggestions were being listened to by male counterparts. They were constantly putting themselves under pressure to prove both to men as well as to women that they could work under intense scrutiny just to achieve the same level of success as men.

Based on the analysis, gender discriminations do exist in both public and private sectors in Malaysia. Some findings still support the *think-manager, think-male* notion where their male subordinates refused to respect senior women as their bosses. However, there were differences by ethnic group on why some women felt discriminated against while others did not. As mentioned above, Daisy was discriminated in the first place because she was a Chinese CFO who worked in a Malay male-dominated area. Daisy's intersectional experience explains how non-Malay women are less privileged than Malay women for being a woman (gender) and non-Malay (ethnicity). On the other hand, Malay women such as Kenanga and Melur, who felt they were not experiencing discrimination, believed it was because they were all well-educated and managed to handle their colleagues or subordinates in a diplomatic way. It seems that they did not see gender as having a negative impact on the way in which they are valued by others at work. Whilst believing that attitudes could be changed over time, many senior women from both sectors understood it would be a difficult process to make this happen. They would only anticipate that as women increasingly climbed the upper management ladder, people may get used to having women in top positions and therefore attitudes towards women would become more positive. As well as these aspects of being a senior woman, however, there were other complaints related to competitiveness in the workplace, which will be discussed below.

7.4 COMPETITIVENESS: THE 'QUEEN BEES'?

Despite a huge amount of literature stating that males are more competitive than females in the workplace (Acker, 2012; Gill et al., 2008; Martin and Barnard, 2013), it was expected that the senior women would identify men as their main competitors. However, more than half of the interviewees revealed that their competitors were females. Twelve women in the public sector and seven women in the private sector said they preferred to work with men and under male superiors as they felt that working with women was more difficult. These women admitted that they had experienced dealing with females who were unhelpful and did not want to see another female succeed, which was equivalent to the 'queen bee' syndrome. According to Kanter (1977), the queen bees are strongly individualistic and tend to deny the existence of discrimination against women which might be the case with some women interviewees mentioned earlier. This can be seen as another form of discrimination practiced by successful and competitive senior women managers who were unhelpful and exclusionary towards other women (Staines et al, 1974). Also, women see men as holding the power in organisations, so they prefer to side with those who hold power.

Some women reflected that an ideal female boss should be more understanding when it comes to family matters. However, Kemboja said that her male bosses tended to understand her role as a mother more than her female bosses. Anggerik preferred to take annual leave to look after and comfort her children when they were ill at home, but the female bosses did not allow

her to do so. She was asked to bring her children to the office and that made Anggerik feel guilty as it was not very compatible to have sick children in the office while at the same time, she still had to do her work. Similarly, Cempaka, who felt she did not receive enough support with regards to family issues from her intolerant female boss, felt forced to opt for a one-year career break to raise her child. These disappointing experiences, in line with existing research, suggest that for some senior women there may be additional factors that hinder other women's promotional opportunities in the workplace. The 'queen bees' were more likely to become enemies rather than function as role models because they wanted to secure their positions as top women managers (Bradley, 2013; Durbin, 2016).

The findings clearly indicate that the difficulty in conquering the career ladder was that, they had to deal with other females before competing with their male counterparts. In turn, according to Derks et al. (2016), as senior women climbed the upper echelons of management, they appeared to adopt masculine traits and distance themselves from junior women. This seems to result in a vicious cycle. Such negative behaviours by senior women could endorse gender inequality which eventually placed junior women at a disadvantaged position in the workplace. According to Zaleha, when she was a manager, her female superior felt insecure when a male Managing Director called and discussed with her directly, bypassing her female boss. The male boss did that because he wanted to have a quick decision from Zaleha as the female boss did not share the same portfolios. These 'queen bees' have become female warriors or female misogynists to strengthen their power and to stand in the same line with men in power (Mavin, 2008). By discriminating against another female, they can make themselves stand out and look more outstanding to impress other colleagues in the workplace.

Senior women felt that other female colleagues were threats that could jeopardise their performances as managers. They were forced to level the playing field by any means to make sure they could access the top jobs on the upward ladder. Orked, who worked in the Ministry of Finance, described that women tended to be her worst enemies in the workplace, probably because of the nature of financial positions in Malaysia which are female-dominated. In having to deal with highly competitive female peers because they were the majority, Orked even made a joke saying that MOF stands for Ministry of Females instead.

> *"It was always a female who destroys another female's life, not the male counterparts. Maybe because now there are many females. MOF is actually Ministry of Females instead of Ministry of Finance [laugh]"* (Orked, Deputy Under Secretary, Public Sector)

Eight women in the public sector and six women from the private sector felt it could be possible that the nature of being a woman is itself prone to extreme jealousy that triggered negative feelings towards other women. Daisy who loved to dress up in a flamboyant style expressed

her frustration when she heard rumours saying that she wanted to attract special attention from her male peers and superiors. She further commented that the rumours were apparently coming from women themselves who she felt were envious of her workwear fashion. This is evidence that women can have a negative influence on other women's career development because of jealousy. This suggests that female rivalry issues would indirectly encourage women to have a preference to work with men (Pringle, 1998). Lily felt her experiences of being badmouthed and backstabbed by other colleagues were from those who wanted to move up the career ladder faster than her. These bad incidents indirectly gave her more impetus to succeed as she had to prove that those rumours were incorrect. Such feeling leads to unhealthy working environments and can be considered as a major reason why many senior women prefer to work with men instead.

> "*Once been backstabbed and badmouthed, I need to work harder to prove that I am not that type of person. All this while I have been surrounded with male bosses and I am comfortable to work with men"*
> (Lily, General Manager, Private Sector)

The interview material clearly indicated that female competitiveness was a major concern for senior women in this study. The 'queen bees' are strongly determined to succeed on the basis of their own merit, with no hint of patronage, and expect the same of other women. Only three private sector senior women claimed that they have not seen other women as their competitors, but the competition was within themselves. Organisations that these three women worked with might have been strongly committed to equality of opportunities which meant that they did not encounter any sort of resistance in the workplace. For example, Rose confirmed that she was not in competition with anybody because none of her colleagues were qualified to take over her senior position. Jasmin believed in working as a team, hence there was no need to undercut one another either males or females. Similarly, Kamelia thought that she should not be worried about competing with others if she was doing good for other people.

It is interesting to note that female competitive behaviour was shaped by government regulations and socio-economic policies in Malaysia. In correlation to the existing privilege accorded to the Malays, some interviewees spelled out that female Chinese managers were more competitive than others, including the non-Malay women in the study. They explained the differences between working with Malay, Chinese and Indian people based on their experiences.

> *"I would say female Chinese are more competitive. Normally somehow, … I guess in their attitudes…. Those kiasus are mostly Chinese. Kiasu means so scared of losing … Very competitive and we always want the*

best in everything. We always want to succeed. Not to lose out" (Daisy, Chief Finance Officer, Private Sector)

The unequal ethnic preferential policies have caused Chinese female managers to be more competitive (Yeoh and Yeoh, 2015). Likewise, Daisy felt that Chinese senior women display this competitive nature because of being brought up in a system where the non-Malays have been marginalized.

> *"Malays are more caring maybe. They do find out how are you doing in terms of family and all that. While the Chinese are more transactional what is the work that needs to be done"* (Xiu Ying, Assurance Leader, Private Sector)

> *"Honestly, Chinese are very hardworking. When they come to work, it is strictly work. No baggage. Malays, there are two different categories, one is the hardworking, one is the laziest. The Indians, they have a lot of baggage with them. It was more on home problem they carry to the office. They expect us to be sympathetic towards them"* (Madhuri, Director, Private Sector)

Mei Feng explained that the Malays were more team-oriented whereas the Chinese were more work-oriented

> "*From the perspective of speed, of course I would like to work with Chinese. But in terms of working as a team, that would be Malay. I think the value is actually from the. Chinese community, it is more on I work, I work and I work. But Malay community is you tend to have that bonding … for example, I can hug a Malay but as a Chinese, I do not know how to hug them"* (Mei Feng, Group Financial Controller, Private Sector)

Drawing thorough analysis about how competitiveness amongst women themselves comes in the picture, there is the issue of the 'queen bee syndrome', who did not support other women to achieve success in the workplace. Only a few women managers thought they had nothing against other women and their competitors were themselves. There were also clear differences in terms of women's experiences working with Malay and non-Malay women in the workplace. The analysis demonstrates that the attitudes of the non-Malay women were more rigid whereas the Malays tended to be more approachable. In other words, non-Malay women were more competitive as compared to their Malay counterparts. Privilege is indeed the outcome of the institutionalisation of discrimination by the government where it reconstructs colonial privilege in favour of Malays. Their rights and privileges have been maintained through government policies. Thus, the affirmative action policies and strategies such as quotas were introduced

by the state to redress imbalances among ethnic groups as well as women's representation, especially in senior managerial levels from both sectors.

7.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

One of the objectives for this research was to determine how gender and ethnicity influenced the experiences of thirty-one senior female managers from public and private sectors during their career challenges in Malaysia. Throughout this chapter, the data has been presented in relation to senior managers from three different ethnic backgrounds; Malay, Chinese and Indian, who have made it to a senior role. The multiplicity of experiences and career problems encountered by Malaysian senior female managers was complex and varied, depending on both gender and ethnicity. The main difficulties faced by the Malay and non-Malay senior women at work and at home I have described as the 3Cs of career challenges; career and family commitment, conflict of being a senior woman, and competitiveness amongst females in the workplace

Given the importance of family institutionalisation in the Malaysian society, it was not surprising that more female managers placed their families before their careers. Regardless of ethnic backgrounds, there were strong patriarchal relations in the household where married senior female managers spent more time on household chores than their husbands did. These senior women believed that being a married woman carried tremendous social pressure for them in the workplace and at home, which required them to balance the two roles rationally. Nevertheless, there was one key point that often posed as a barrier to women in the West, but which was not perceived as such in Malaysia. Time-off and provisions for childcare were not as critical as among Western counterparts, because these Asian women often have domestic helpers to reduce the burden. This is to suggest that their career successes were partly due to the strong support system they had at home either in terms of supportive husbands or domestic helpers, particularly among private sector interviewees.

Although a number of these senior women believed that being a senior woman manager did negatively influence their career experiences, they asserted that the challenges they confronted as senior managers were problems of opportunities rather than problems of abilities. This however, might be argued that women interviewees can be blind to discrimination even when they face it for several reasons such as when they hold strongly traditional values themselves, or they wish to portray themselves in a positive light. Very few women can move up the career ladder and become senior managers, and when they do, they sometimes perform better than their male counterparts. Indeed, the interview findings showed that many senior female managers had to work even harder and prove themselves more than their male counterparts When asked to identify the career barriers they have experienced over the years, senior woman stated that the attitudes of others, especially men, was the most significant barrier in the workplace. Despite this, the queen bee syndrome (Derks, Van Laar and Ellemers,

2016) seemed prevalent in Malaysian society and led women from both sectors to be likely to prefer to work with men rather than women bosses. Ironically, these results can constitute a disadvantage for women at work in general if they are not supportive of each other. (Kanter, 1977). At best, women are determined to succeed on the basis of their own merit, with no hint of patronage and expect the same of other women.

Chapter Eight will discuss gender quotas as the government strategies and interviewees' personal strategies try to address these career challenges.

CHAPTER 8

GOVERNMENT QUOTAS AND WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL CAREER STRATEGIES

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter draws upon a theory of 'critical mass' in relation to the introduction of quotas to increase the number of women in senior management, in the public and private sectors in Malaysia. The chapter explores senior women managers' views in relation to the introduction of quotas. Opportunities and structures created to advance gender rights have also been highlighted. The final section explores how senior women from the public and private sectors utilised their own career strategies, alongside the macro government strategy of the introduction of quotas. In so doing, it explores the women's career strategies to climb up the occupational hierarchy. It also establishes the links between mentoring and networking as strategies by these women to further their careers. Taken together, the chapter explores the macro strategy of the government's introduction of quotas, alongside the more individual and personalised strategies of mentoring and networking. The data analysed in this chapter addresses the third research question; (3) What are the impacts of the introduction of quotas in Malaysia from the perspectives of senior women managers and their labour market composition? The discussion focuses on the career experiences identified by the senior female managers during the in-depth interviews only. Similar to the preceding chapters, the level of analysis begins with the public and private sector analysis and continues with the Malay and non-Malay women analysis using an intersectional lens.

8.2 GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES – The Introduction of Quotas to Increase Women's Representation at Senior Management Levels in the Public and Private Sectors in Malaysia

Chapter Five and Six have demonstrated how a structural patriarchal system is still present in the home and in the labour market, but that this has taken on a different form in the home. As mentioned earlier, women were allowed to enter the labour market because of economic needs. They then started to challenge the perception that women were unfit for the public sphere. Yet, the patriarchal attitude which had not changed, despite the large number of women who joined the paid labour force, has still constrained women's opportunities to engage in the public arena, especially in senior managerial positions. Therefore, the government policies are important in influencing the experiences and perceptions of women senior managers in Malaysia and also general attitudes towards women being successful. As discussed in Chapter Two, a number of programmes have been established to address the need to promote women's empowerment, as well as best practices such as the formulation of a National Policy on Women, maternity leave and women's return to work. The government used different strategies to promote women's representation in senior managerial positions.

Women's representation in senior positions is necessary not only for reasons of social justice and fairness, but also as a compensation for historical discrimination and marginalisation (Abdullah et al., 2008). As a democratic gesture, the implementation of quotas introduced by the government to have at least 30 percent of women in decision-making positions in the public and private sectors was an important impetus for women's empowerment in Malaysia. In principle, the government emphasises the value of involving women in senior management in terms of the legitimacy of democracy and as a way of ensuring that gender equality is widely disseminated. Gender quotas, indirectly, were implemented to correct the inherent gender imbalance.

8.3 THE 30 PERCENT QUOTA POLICY

Chapter Three has demonstrated that quotas have been extensively adopted in European countries (Baldez, 2004; Franceschet and Piscopo, 2008; Rickne, 2015; Weeks and Baldez, 2015). The introduction of quotas has remarkably sparked a number of arguments for and against how to enable women to enter the boardroom. It is argued that quotas are an 'insult' to competent women who can achieve senior positions on their own and have created another form of gender discrimination (Adams and Ferreira, 2009). In Malaysia, the state has played a significant role in implementing gender quotas as have the states of other countries with quotas. The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development wanted to employ better strategies, and this was reflected in the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006 – 2010) where an agenda for women's participation in the labour force has been strengthened. The idea of 30 percent quotas was introduced to redress gender imbalance at decision-making levels in the public sector and Malaysia was the first country in Asia to introduce such a measure (see Chapter Two). The objective recognises women's roles and commits to include women in decision-making not only because it is fair, but in respect of challenging the patriarchal norm and institutional bias in Malaysia.

As structural patriarchal systems are enduring, the quotas have been achieved within a span of five years and in 2011, the policy was extended to the private sector in the Tenth Malaysian Plan (2011 – 2015); however, the private sector has failed to achieve the 30 percent quota policy. The analysis of the findings was a wake-up call because it drew attention to the legacy of patriarchal social relations and gendered norms in Malaysia. This leads to the discussion in the next subsections on senior women's awareness on 30 percent quotas, their views on gender quotas, and the impact of quotas on women senior managers' experience in public and private sector employment.

8.3.1 Perspectives on Quotas from the Public Sector Senior Women Managers

The majority of public sector senior women in this study indicated that they were aware of the introduction of quotas by the government. As discussed in Chapter Two, there are structures

and programmes established to raise consciousness and enhance implementation of gender quotas. Given that the percentage of women in senior management had exceeded the 30 percent quota in the public sector, they were aware of their constitutional rights and continued to promote equitable representation in decision-making levels. Only Kemboja stated that she heard about the quota but did not pay attention to its implementation. This could reflect the fact that the adoption of gender quotas in the legal framework was not straightforward. Kemboja believed that quotas should not be necessary if she performed well in her job.

There were six senior women (all Malays) who agreed with the implementation of quotas as it provided legal grounds for gender balance in the labour force. These women claimed that gender quotas have exerted a huge impact on women's representation, which is now at30 percent, but pointed out that they still tend not to occupy the most senior levels. They agreed that gender quotas have created a space to: raise consciousness about women's socio-economic development, influence women-friendly policies where most of the workplaces in the public sector now have a nursery or 'kids' corner' and facilitate women to challenge the patriarchal culture in the workplace. Moreover, the Women Directors' Program was organised by NAM Institute for the Empowerment of Women Malaysia (NIEW), fully funded by the Malaysian government, to conduct training on the role of directorships amongst women (Ministry of Women and Family and Community Development, 2014). Kuntum and Widuri, who worked in the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development explained the importance of having a quota policy for women in decision-making positions.

> *"If we do not provide the quota, nobody cares to place women at the higher level of management. If there is such a policy like now, we are obliged to fulfill the policy of the government. But that does not mean we can place anyone in the position. Only those who are qualified to fill the positions"* (Kuntum, Secretary General, Public Sector)

> *"Looking at the situation of women in Malaysia, quota is a must to have gender equality in order to push women forward"* (Widuri, Senior Assistant Director, Public Sector)

Based on their explanations, gender quotas can be seen as a crucial step towards gender equality due to the fact that women still struggle to get the same opportunities in the workplace (Squires, 2003). The policy promotes a broader talent pool of women's competence and allocates talent in an advantageous way in the labour market. The 30 percent quotas could be linked back to the critical mass theory (Kanter, 1977) where the government sets a minimum percentage for women's representation on corporate boards. It brings diverse women with different skills into management and is a good way of eliminating structural discrimination in a male-dominated world. Nevertheless, six senior women managers opposed quotas stressing

that the arguments against quotas were based on the grounds of fairness, merit, traditional gender roles and regulations.

> *"I always believe in merit. I do not believe in quota. I disagree with the quota. I believe that people should be promoted based on merit. If it is 50 percent merit, it should be 50 percent. Gender should not be a parameter"* (Orked, Deputy Under Secretary, Public Sector)

In most cases, the government adjusted to accept women as senior managers, while maintaining the traditional patriarchal norms in organisations. Thus, the participants mentioned that women's issues need to be represented by women. They wanted to be present in the boardroom to ensure their voices and concerns are deliberated. Sharing similar views to Orked, Shanti, who was the only non-Malay public sector senior woman interviewed in the study, also disagreed with the introduction of quotas. Looking at the high percentages of female graduates in Malaysia (TalentCorp, 2017), Shanti believes that women are just as capable of doing the job as men are.

> *"Of course, I disagree. It should be based on your merit that means if you qualify, you should get the post … I do not believe in quotas. Look at the studies out there, those who are educated are mainly women even in the universities. So, if we do not have quotas, anything would be dominated by women. It should not be any gender bias in this"* (Shanti, Senior Assistance Director, Public Sector)

From an intersectionality perspective, the non-Malay senior women were the most marginalised and may have encountered discrimination in relation to both ethnicity and gender. Western literature asserts that women have been at a more disadvantaged position for being minority ethnic women in the workplace (Collins 2000; Acker 2012; McCall 2005). Political discrimination and ethnic politics were commonly practiced with a negative effect on women's empowerment and this can be seen in Malaysian society due to the embedded Malay privilege system. Interestingly, Shanti's views go against this literature. She mentioned that being a minority in the government sector was an advantage for her in moving up the career ladder faster.

> *"… Being a minority in the government service, most of my colleagues have felt that we could have gone faster … of course some of them say that this majority is controlled by the Malays, so you have quotas and things like that … There are grievances saying that because we are non-Malays, it is not easy for us to go up. Personally, for me I have not felt*

anything yet because I have been moving." (Shanti, Senior Assistance Director, Public Sector)

Shanti would prefer to look at things positively and not to get involved in ethnicity issues as she felt it was very sensitive to discuss this in public and would affect her career development. As reviewed in Chapter Two, the racial riots and bloodshed which occurred on 13th May 1969 due to the political disparities between ethnicities, leading to traumatic episodes in Malaysian history, are an on-going controversy (Ramli and Jamaludin, 2011). However, as the only non-Malay woman interviewed in the public sector, Shanti's experience cannot be generalised to include other non-Malay women in the public sector. By acknowledging that ethnic minority women are more marginalised demonstrates the differential impact of the structural patriarchal system and socio-economic and privilege practices on men and women, on Malays and non-Malays, but also that non-Malay women are the most affected.

On the other hand, Sakura's disagreement based on her views as a Muslim woman triggered an interesting finding for this study. The discrimination that emerges from Muslim patriarchy has indirectly encouraged gender-bias among senior women due to Islamic ideology, laws and rulings (Mohamad, 2010).

"To me, if we look from the Islamic perspectives, women are not suitable enough to hold higher positions. To be in the top positions, we only lead the organisation, but we also need to relate with the religion matter" (Sakura, Assistant Director, Public Sector)

Sakura's view does not reflect the views of all Muslim women, but it demonstrates the mindset of women's association with traditional roles in the Malaysian society (Abdullah, 2014; Abdullah and Ku Ismail, 2013), which in most cases disempower women and discourage potential female managers from coming forward. Though quotas change the proportion of women's representation, it does not guarantee that senior women will act on behalf of women or establish rigorous accountability to women as a group. Such women tend not to challenge the status quo or gendered norms. Although quotas can change the attitudes towards women's managerial capabilities to lead and make decisions (Pande and Ford, 2011), Akasia and Cempaka complained that women's representation of 30 percent was not enough.

"We should not limit with that 30 percent. Nowadays women are much more competent than men. Men are less likely to perform better than women … research has shown, women are better managers" (Akasia, Deputy Secretary General, Public Sector)

> *"What makes 30 percent is enough for women to hold the top positions? … To me, whoever deserves to be on top should be at the top"* (Cempaka, Principal Assistant Director, Public Sector)

Promoting the quota policy is aiming to make women non-token. This complicates the relationship with women's empowerment, in that quotas can be seen to reach the political agenda for different goals rather than empowering women. Azalea who worked in the Ministry of Finance (MOF), explained that the MOF has the responsibility to appoint directorships in most of the companies in Malaysia (i.e. the government agencies, GLCs, MNCs). She revealed her views about why there were many men in senior management.

> *"Let me tell you something about this, which is not a healthy practice. We are forced to accord directorship to the retired civil servants who are holding the senior post like JUSA and KSU. To show appreciation, we give them directorships in companies which has become our obligations to propose a retired KSU, for example, to be a director without looking at his eligibility, expertise and contribution to the company. There are fewer directorships we can offer because they are all full and under the code of corporate governance, we have to wait until six years for the renewal"* (Azalea, Principal Assistant Secretary, Public Sector)

Azalea believes that quotas are strongly opposed by some women because the intention was to appeal to the general public and be seen as an inclusive working environment rather than to address the under-representation of women in decision-making positions. Azalea continued to explain that the Ministry of Women who introduced the 30 percent policy did not know about this internal problem as the MOF are not transparent about their selection processes. Due to this unhealthy practice, although there was a list of women who could be potential directors, the MOF did not get to nominate them because of the power exerted by retired senior civil servants. This could be analysed as the unwritten rules that guarantee the continuance of dominant patriarchal hierarchies since the retired civil servants are mostly Malay males because the government itself is heavily Malay dominated.

In summary, many interviewees believe that women's voices were included in the Malaysian plans, yet they were left out of decision-making structures. Evidence provided in this section has demonstrated that around half of these women were advocates of quotas. Yet, women were sceptical about the implementation arguing that quotas caused favouritism, selected token women, and devalued women's traditional status. Women's entry to a male domain remains difficult because of the deeply embedded culture of masculinity and gender resistance that permeates the role of the state. The patriarchal system can operate to support and replicate gender patterns of behaviour to exclude women in the public sphere. The debate on

critical mass as argued in the Western literature (Kanter, 1977; Dahlerup, 1988) was reflected in the analysis of this study when some women supported the movement to challenge the structural power relations of Malay male privilege in Malaysia. Contributing to the empirical validity on Kanter's (1977) theory, findings from this study confirmed that there is a transition from *skewed* to *tilted* groups in the public sector. Meanwhile, others argued that progression should be based on merit.

8.3.2 Perspectives on Quotas from the Private Sector Senior Women Managers

As discussed in Chapter Six, senior women in private organisations are more motivated in advancing their careers. Although there is continued support for gender quotas, the analysis of the study indicates that the implementation is still at unsatisfactory levels in the private sector. The success of gender quotas is a tall order to achieve given that women account for 26.7 percent of senior management positions with only 16.9 percent of women on boards, falling short by 3.3 percent and 13.2 percent to achieve the quota set in 2016, respectively (TalentCorp, 2017). Gender power relations continue in a structural patriarchal society despite the commitment to integrate women in decision making positions. The majority of private sector senior women in the study acknowledged that management is considered masculine which supports the study of Koshal et al (1998). As in the public sector, there are mixed views about the adoption of gender quotas in the private sector. Seven private sector women who agreed with the implementation of quotas mentioned the importance of creating awareness and providing women with the experience and knowledge of quotas. Being the first female appointed to the boardroom, Rose claimed that quotas had encouraged women to join the male-dominated boardroom.

> *"It is good to have quotas because prior to this, there are no ladies in the boardroom. Most of them are dominated by males"* (Rose, Chief Executive Officer, Private Sector)

With the growth in the appointment of more senior women managers in Malaysia, boards have become more diversified and women's voices can now be heard. For instance, Ramlah, who worked as a Senior Vice President, agreed with the objective of having more senior women managers, but believed it was unethical to put unqualified women for the sake of fulfilling the quota into boardroom level positions. Past studies in the West suggested that a few token individuals are not sufficient for provoking policy changes controlled by men (Torchia, Calabrò and Huse, 2011; Durbin, 2016). The scholars argued that the numerical proportion of female directors must be significant enough to allow the female voice to be heard and truly valued. The analysis in this study has shown that tokenism can be both seen as an opportunity as well as a challenge for senior women. Senior women who disagreed with the implementation of quotas emphasised that women and men should compete on equal terms and should gain

office on merit. Kamelia and Jasmin believed that there should not be a quota in the first place, opportunity should be equal, and the promotion must be based on merit. They further claimed that board members should be diverse to achieve a strong and effective board composition. This is echoed in the study of Schwartz-Ziv (2015) where organisations with a critical mass of senior women managers are likely to be more dynamic at board level.

The government itself as a formal institution, had embraced rules and norms which divided powers and responsibilities between certain groups unevenly. Although women were given freedom to empower themselves and participate in leadership programmes, the patriarchal social relations and gendered institutions continued to control their activities (Azmi and Barrett, 2013). Senior women managers in the study tend to have limited access to, and control over resources in Malaysia. Working as a Managing Director in an engineering company, Seroja pointed out that it was good to have gender quotas given the fact that the 'old-boys' network was not easy for women to penetrate women (see section 8.4.2).

> *"It is good … I know at corporate level, they have their own old-boys sort of association where not many women are given a chance to be on board … mostly are old people. So, at that level, it is even harder for them to accept women"* (Seroja, Managing Director, Private Sector)

As discussed in Chapter Five, senior men were normally from the older generation where their mothers were the homemakers when they were younger, and it would be difficult for them to accept women at senior levels in the work environment. Women's entry at boardroom level, may be unwelcome or prone to gendered resistance because traditionally Malaysian society has assigned women to the private sphere and to subordinate roles. Therefore, strategies such as the introduction of quotas can be effective forces in challenging gendered norms constraining women's access to senior managerial positions (Idea, 2003; Squires, 2003; Suisse, 2012). Despite the strong patriarchal structure that remains in the private sphere, quotas would reduce structural discrimination for women to have equal representation and equal opportunities in the workplace.

From an intersectional view, four non-Malay women interviewed in the study shared more or less similar opinions, as discussed above, on the implementation of gender quotas in the workplace. Mei Feng, a Chinese senior female manager, suggested that diversity and equality should be executed in the modern world without any differentiation. This could avoid the multiplicative disadvantage of being a minority ethnic in Malaysia, where Malay privilege has marginalised the non-Malay senior women within two subordinated characteristics: gender and ethnicity. Similarly, as an Assurance Leader, Xiu Ying commented that a higher quota would allow more opportunities as it indirectly acknowledged the importance of diversity in the

boardroom. She mentioned that women, regardless of ethnicity, must have a level playing field to be in senior management.

> *"What I would hate is that I got the job because I am a woman. If you speak to a lot of women in senior management, they will say the same thing. You do not want to be in the position because you are a woman … So, all we are doing is we must have a level playing field … if you are the best person for the job, then you will be given the role"* (Xiu Ying, Assurance Leader, Private Sector)

Quotas aim at increasing women's representation in senior managerial positions, yet Adams and Ferreira (2009) argued that quotas seem to disregard capable women who can achieve senior positions on their own merit, and allowed tokenism to prevail so creating another form of gender discrimination. Like the public sector counterparts, most senior women in the private sector who opposed quotas did so on the grounds that it was an unfair measure in favour of women. From this point of view, the radical approach of quotas may add a further burden to equality of women relative to men which further complicates the existing gender stereotyping in Malaysia. However, debates on critical mass were deliberated amongst six private sector senior women who disagreed on the number of percentages for women's representation in decision-making positions. Melur, Zaleha, Lily and Madhuri declared that women should be in the *balanced* group (Kanter, 1977) where 50:50 or 60:40 of gender quotas should be imposed by the policy.

> *"Maybe we should go by 50 – 50 … they should have increased the quota. If not 50 percent, 40 percent also can … if women meet the qualification and skills needed, they should be on the board. Most of the female board of directors that I have met, they are very focused. They are all top-notch ladies in Malaysia"* (Melur, Director, Private Sector)

> *"I disagree with the 30 percent. Maybe 40 percent. Maybe 45 percent. It should be more. Now women are more empowered. They are intelligent"* (Zaleha, Senior Vice President, Private Sector)

These views are in line with arguments for and against gender quotas presented in Chapter Two, suggesting that women's access to senior managerial positions is a continuing struggle even for senior women. This has implications for gender equality at senior levels where boards with three or more women performed better in relation to those with an all-male board (Broome, Conley, and Krawiec, 2010; Kramer, Konrad, and Erkut, 2006). The participants in this study agreed that the representation of women in senior roles makes a positive impact on the reputation of companies as a whole. They were able to work more effectively together as their

numbers grew and appeared to inspire other women to achieve their own career goals. Meanwhile, two senior women, Ramlah and Kekwa neither agreed nor disagreed as they believed that ethically, regardless of whether or not they have the 30 percent quotas, women should be sitting in the boardroom if qualified to this level. Apart from that, Kenanga and Teratai were unaware of the implementation of 30 percent quotas in the corporate sector. As a Business Analysis and Reporting General Manager, Teratai claimed that she did not pay attention to the quota and argued that working in a competitive company, the employees should be promoted based on performance. If good people are making the decisions, naturally the company would be more competitive.

For some research participants, gender did not affect an individual's performance, but in the context of patriarchal norms, female managers were more likely to encounter discrimination on the basis of their gender. Sharing the same views with Sakura in section 8.3.1, although Nona has agreed with the 30 percent policy, she pointed out that women should not be leaders. This was indeed gendered discrimination and support for quotas was undermined. She felt that quotas of up to 50 percent or more should not be used to enable female domination, as this would be equally as unfair as male domination.

> *"I agree with the 30 percent, but the 70 percent cannot be given to women. Women should be heard but they should not be a leader. There are many situations that I see when women lead, it became a chaos."*
> (Nona, Vice President, Private Sector)

To summarise, the analysis has shown that despite the under-representation of women in senior management in Malaysia, particularly in the private sector, there were qualified senior women managers in the study with diverse backgrounds, education levels and professions in the organisations. The under-representation in decision-making could be argued because of the gendered regime and the nature of working in a competitive corporate environment that makes it difficult to reach the 30 percent quota in the private sector (TalentCorp, 2017). Yet, they still managed to break the glass ceiling and hold the senior managerial positions. Mixed opinions on the adoption of quotas were given by the participants. Some agreed with quotas as a platform to increase the higher proportion of women in the boardroom. Similar to Kanter's (1977) critical mass, the participants suggested for women to be at least in the *balanced* group with 60:40 to 50:50 distribution of quotas. Gender quotas can be seen as a way of securing a woman's career given the absence of equal opportunity legislation in Malaysia. Notwithstanding, some disagreed claiming it was an unfair measure putting women in positions just to fulfill a quota. Access to and control over resources remain a battleground, with gendered resistance and ongoing contestation. The privileges have benefited certain groups over others, particularly Malay males, thus, indirectly sustaining discrimination and undermining feminist goals. The Malaysian government needs to consider the implementation

of some measure of equality legislation to outlaw the more blatant forms of gender and ethnic discrimination commonly practiced. The government could also revoke the concept of Malay privilege, which is impossible to be implemented in a strong patriarchal system. Having examined the impacts of the role of state on the introduction of quotas, the next section discusses the strategies employed by women, alongside the introduction of quotas to succeed in their careers.

8.4 WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL CAREER STRATEGIES

The analysis has demonstrated that senior women employed a number of career strategies in order to break through the glass ceiling. Although the previous chapter explained that women in the public sector were less likely to plan their careers, the majority of Malay and non-Malay women participants believe that having a strategy for their career is very important. There are two main strategies that exist in relation to careers in management for these women: mentoring and networking.

8.4.1 Mentoring

The analysis in general has shown that holding their current positions as senior managers, women in both sectors saw themselves as mentors and role models to both the women and the men they supervised either in the workplace or outside office hours. Some women identified their experiences with past mentors when they were junior managers and other results of the in-depth interviews on women's perceptions about mentoring will be explained in the following sections. In order to see the link between the impact of the introduction of quotas and the fact the quota target has been achieved in the public sector, but not in the private sector, a comparative sectoral analysis will be drawn upon to show similarities and differences in the mentoring experience of women in both public and private sectors.

8.4.1.1 Senior Women Managers' Experience of Mentoring in the Public Sector

The majority of the public sector female managers in the study said that they had formal mentors. They were assigned a mentor on the day they started their service as a government officer through a formal mentoring scheme. They had no choice of who they were assigned to. Their mentors, regardless of gender, were internal to the organisation in which the interviewee was employed at the time mentoring took place. When asked about the benefits of mentoring in the public sector, eight senior women interviewed said that having a mentor was a crucial factor in the success of a women's career. They believed that women need a mentor not only to guide but also to enable access to resources and other senior colleagues within the organisation. For Cempaka, having to deal with sensitive aspects at work, she would not share with her husband as he might not understand the situation, but her mentor did.

> *"… Not all office matters you can share with your partner or spouse due to some level of confidentiality … especially when we deal with sensitive agencies"* (Cempaka, Senior Assistant Director, Public Sector)

The participants also stressed that the importance of having a mentor, should not only be restricted to women. Four senior women felt that everyone needed a mentor regardless of gender, especially the junior employees. Sakura thought that a formal mentor-mentee programme could complement each other as they were able to share ideas and problems together with people from diverse backgrounds. Shanti, an Indian senior woman, admitted that the right mentors could guide her on how to improve her work performance. Shanti also mentored men and women given her position as a senior manager and would do her best to encourage and develop her mentees in the workplace. In contrast to intersectional theories, Shanti's mentor was a Malay senior man with whom she could always refer to and talk to. This may be due to the dearth of sufficient non-Malay senior women or men at the top of management in the public sector. Similarly, Azalea, who happened to have non-Malay bosses, confessed she did not want to be mentored by her own Malay ethnic group. She felt comfortable with her non-Malay male mentor as he believed in her and would advise her and help her to meet and communicate with people she could learn from.

> *"I would prefer male mentors and the non-Malays. I do not like my own Malay ethnic [laugh] … I like his approach of openness. He listened and trusted me to make a decision"* (Azalea, Principal Assistant Secretary, Public Sector)

In view of the numerous benefits associated with mentoring relationships in Malaysia (Ganesh, Bozas, Subban, and Munapo, 2015), it is somewhat disconcerting that some senior women managers interviewed did not necessarily value the formality of the mentoring scheme. These women felt that having a formal mentor was not the best way forward in terms of career development. They had no strong rapport with their mentors as they only checked on their mentees' career updates sporadically. The limited benefit of having a mentor was perhaps felt because they could not choose their mentor in this formal system and would have preferred an informal mentoring relationship. Thus, there can be problems with mismatch between mentor and mentee backgrounds, attitudes, beliefs and values, mentor self-absorption, manipulative behaviours by the mentor, poor interpersonal and competency skills, and mentor neglect of the mentee (see Eby, Butts, Durley, and Ragins, 2010; Eby, McManus, Simon, and Russell, 2000). As pointed out by Tulip,

> *"We used to have a program called Mentoring and Coaching, but it goes nowhere. For example, me and my boss. She should mentor me, guide me, coach me, but it did not happen … she has no idea how to help or*

what she wants…So, I have to work on my own" (Tulip, Assistant Director, Public Sector)

Tulip felt a formal mentorship had been less useful as her mentor did not use her experiences to guide her as a mentee. Orked mentioned that the mentoring system provided in the public sector has also not been systematically organised. Cempaka believed that mentors should offer advice, but not force mentees to follow this. Although mentoring may help the junior managers to break down the barriers, it seems difficult to bridge the gap between senior and junior level managers due to the structural patriarchal system in Malaysia. This could reflect on Durbin's (2016) arguments that some formal mentoring schemes have been poorly designed and perceived as being ineffective by simply allocating their mentors to the wrong protegees. It has failed to attract a suitable number of senior men and women to guide the junior managers.

Women are less likely than men to be mentors given the shortage of women senior managers in the workplace to support one another (Marshall, 1995; Ehrich, 2008). Having said that, Clutterbuck (2004) suggested that informal mentoring is considered as the most successful mentoring. The old boys' network has turned informal mentoring into the norm in some workplaces given that most senior managers are likely to be men. Yet, it is in stark contrast to that situation when, of fourteen public sector senior women interviewed in this study, only four had informal mentors to help their career advancement. This could mean that the quality of the relationship between mentor and mentee can be variable. As a Senior Assistant Director, Widuri mentioned that some women do not need a mentor because of their own inner drive and ability to climb up the career ladder.

Additionally, the analysis has shown that seven senior women preferred a female rather than a male mentor, though five senior women would choose the latter for their career progression. Participants cautioned against over generalising in this respect, however, stating that the degree of preference depended on the job assignment. Female mentors were likely to provide emotional support whereas male mentors were at times preferred as they have the inclination to guide their protegees from an instrumental or technical perspective. (Feeney and Bozeman, 2008). As Muslim women, Akasia and Sakura would prefer a female mentor because it is easier for them to discuss issues. They would be prevented from doing the same if their mentor was a man due to religious restrictions (see Chapter Two). Anggerik argued that male mentors may not understand women's feelings and would prefer to share with female mentors. Mawar felt that female mentors are very strict and meticulous, so they are good in areas of planning whereas male mentors were likely to be more relaxed and have less experience of pressure in the workplace. Cempaka claimed that she would choose female mentors because they were good at listening and men were likely to have some ego issues when receiving opinions from females.

Mentoring is a limited career strategy for senior women to employ in the public sector given that they do not like the formal scheme and only a small number of women have informal mentors. Yet, most of them agreed on the importance of having a mentor in the workplace. They admitted a mentor should be seen as a support mechanism for senior women to have better access to resources in organisations and create pathways for them to succeed in their career. A formal mentoring scheme was designed in the civil service to assign a mentor to these senior women on the day they started their ADO roles. Yet, some senior women interviewees disagreed on the implementation of a formal mentoring scheme as it had been poorly designed and less useful to the advancement of women's careers in Malaysia. Surprisingly, although Clutterbuck (2004) suggested that informal mentoring is considered as the most successful mentoring scheme in the West, only four public sector senior women had an informal mentor. With respect to gender preference, the analysis has also shown how public sector senior women are in favour of having a female mentor rather than a male mentor. More than one-third of public sector senior women believe that a female mentor could provide emotional support to the mentee, whereas a male mentor could help them learn the right approach and give advice on technical aspects. The discussion on women's mentoring experience in the public sector differs from those in the private, which is discussed in the next section.

8.4.1.2 Senior Women Managers' Experience of Mentoring in the Private Sector

Although a formal mentoring scheme is a well-established concept amongst public sector women, this is not the case in the private sector as the majority of private sector women do not have formal mentors. Neither of the private sector organisations had an official mentoring scheme, and as far as the interviewees were aware, there were no plans to introduce one. Private sector senior women expressed a preference for informal mentoring and as women become more senior, they prefer to look outside of the organisation for a mentor. These senior women are much more active in seeking out 'powerful' mentors, whom they know will be able to offer good career advice, access networks, and provide reflected power. This is echoed in the study in the West where women choose their own potential superiors to be their mentors (see Singh, Bains and Vinnicombe, 2002; Durbin and Tomlinson, 2014). This indicates that the lack of choice could also explain the prevalence of informal mentoring in this sector. Yet, getting the right mentors with the relevant experience at senior management levels outside the employer provided structured scheme is not easy. As women progress to higher managerial ranks, they are more likely to be without female mentors (Broadbridge, 1999; Powell and Graves, 2003).

The data analysis has demonstrated that private sector women were more likely to have had male mentors throughout their careers. Almost three quarters of private sector interviewees had a male mentor, and most of these were external and informal so mentoring was much

more important for private sector women. The majority mentioned that the reason why they became competent was because they had been mentored by male superiors. These women had become attached to their direct bosses who were mostly males and attributed their success largely to the support of the male mentors. Lily shared her experience of having an American male mentor who gave her a lot of insight with respect to both technical and cultural perspectives. She felt comfortable having him as a mentor because he did not look patronise or dismiss Asians and thought that she had a 'shared wavelength' with him, whom she later learned had sponsored her career. Zaleha personally preferred to have a male mentor as men appear to have less family commitments and could guide her to prioritise and focus ton succeeding in her career.

> *"In terms of mentoring, men are far sighted … in terms of looking ahead, strategic wise, men would be able to do that … they are more focused in that sense because they do not have other baggage, they do have but not really sitting on their shoulders."* (Zaleha, Senior Vice President, Private Sector)

Interestingly, Xiu Ying had rationalised the reason of why her male mentor kept pushing her to do more and perform well in her career by linking the situation to the #HeforShe campaign, a gender equality movement, initiated by UN Women (2014).

> *"I hate going up to do presentation but my mentor, who was my Chairman, he always pushed me and said Oh you can do so much more … we must get a man to speak for a woman because there are men in a leadership position. That is why there is a #HeforShe campaign … He has to speak for the women to be promoted to the leadership position. That was what my Chairman and Managing Partner did for me"* (Xiu Ying, Assurance Leader, Private Sector)

This campaign seeks to actively involve men and boys in a women's movement against gender stereotyping (UN Women, 2014). Additionally, the interviewees believed that male mentors had helped them access important resources and this can also be associated with male networks (Bevelander and Page, 2011). The analysis has demonstrated that as long as the executive suite is still largely populated by men, male mentors will be in a better position to provide access to advancement opportunities than female mentors. Only two private sector women would prefer to have a female mentor, and Rose and Seroja regard their spouse and father as their mentors, respectively.

In significant contrast to women in the public sector, more than two-thirds of private sector interviewees said they had informally mentored others in organisations due to the lack of

women in senior positions. When asked what their roles as mentors were, most women cited three roles; coaching in terms of job performance, advising on career decisions and nominating their mentees for promotion.

> *"I mentor quite a number of people. When you work with people, you must care about them. I am very strict and fussy in terms of work. When I review the board paper, I would really scrutinise … but when it comes to other things, they know I am there for them"* (Kamelia, Vice President of Treasury, Private Sector)

From an intersectional view, all non-Malay women in the private sector felt that it is necessary to have either a formal or informal mentor in the workplace. Xiu Ying believed that a good mentor will help her to think about what her work means to her, and considers it important to have mentors who women can relate to and have a good affinity with.. Mei Feng mentioned that it would be good to have someone to talk to when you are trying to find solutions, but not necessarily just work solutions. Madhuri felt that in the business world, women do need a mentor when they first join the organisations so they can learn how to develop their career. For Daisy, although she did not have a formal mentor, she thought that women tend to feel insecure in the workplace as compared to male counterparts, so it is necessary for women to have a mentor to help increase their confidence. Notwithstanding, six private sector women mentioned that it is unnecessary to have a mentor in the workplace. Kenanga believed that women are as good as men, so that mentors did not help her much in terms of progressing her career.

To summarise, women managers in the private sector are likely to have had informal mentors, male mentors or no mentor at all. Meanwhile, public sector women appeared to have female mentors as the majority had worked in female-dominated departments. Across both sectors, senior women valued informal mentoring more, where career progression had been achieved predominantly through this strategy rather than through formal mentoring schemes. More women in the private sector served as mentors to other women as compared to their public counterparts. Regardless of ethnic backgrounds, these senior women still believed that having a mentor is important for both men and women in the workplace. Though it seemed difficult for junior female managers to have senior mentors in the workplace, the next section will discuss how networking is a platform for women to climb up the career ladder more quickly.

8.4.2 Networking

Similar to mentoring, research in the West has shown that networking provides access to valuable resources, improves performance ratings, has a positive impact on salary, and increases the likelihood of promotion (see Kanter, 1977; Ibarra, 1992, 1993; Marshall, 1995; Wacjman, 1998; Singh, Vinnicombe and Kumra, 2006; Klerk and Verreynne, 2017). While

networking is arguably important to career success at every level, it might be viewed to be of vital importance in senior managerial positions. The discussion below therefore reports evidence relating to the similarities and differences on how senior women managers in public and private sectors in Malaysia may or may not leverage their networks to the same extent as their male colleagues in the workplace.

8.4.2.1 Senior Women Managers' Experience of Networking in the Public Sector

Formal networking tended to be utilised in the public sector to access business knowledge, to meet useful contacts, and to build a personal profile within the sector. Four senior women had actively joined either the internal or external formal networking such as attending training and seminars organised by the government, or alumni. Dahlia, Mawar and Widuri were active participants of a women's network called PUSPANITA (the abbreviation for *Persatuan Suri dan Anggota Wanita Perkhidmatan Malaysia*.) PUSPANITA. This is a network for female members of the Civil Service at all levels (Puspanita, 1983). PUSPANITA has provided activities such as cooking, baking and sewing for women employees to participate in. Activities associated with traditional female roles were still maintained in the public sector women's network and this did not challenge the gender inequality regime in the workplace. Yet, these women appeared to feel positive about their employers and felt their participation had given many benefits, including social contacts and professional networking.

Five senior women expressed the only time for them to get involved in informal networking was during the lunch hour. These women usually had a quick catch up with their contacts from other ministries during their lunch hour. Kemboja mentioned that there is a long lunch hour every Friday as the Muslim males had to go for Friday prayer in the afternoon. She took that opportunity to meet up with her senior female colleagues. This data supported the literature from the West where women at senior level form 'homophilous' informal networks at managerial levels (Ibarra, 1992, 1993; Marshall, 1995). Interestingly, among interviewees, three senior women mentioned that communicating through WhatsApp group is the most comfortable way to network with both genders. Cempaka felt that WhatsApp has provided a platform to stay in contact with not only her office colleagues, but also with others around the world. Tulip found that an informal networking via WhatsApp application was rather more convenient than having a discussion over coffee.

> *"I don't do discussion over coffee because I have no time. Normally guys do the coffee session while smoking. I contact via WhatsApp or email"*
> (Tulip, Assistant Director, Public Sector)

Two public sector senior women confessed that they did not join in with networking after office hours. Anggerik considered herself a non-social person that meant she refused to join in with any networking. Azalea explained that she was too busy and did not have time to network after

office hours. She had other household responsibilities after 5:30 pm such as doing the laundry, helping with her children's homework and getting ready for tomorrow's schooling. These women's views sit in the more traditional trapping of Malaysian gender stereotyping culture where it is believed that a woman's leisure time must be spent with her family.

Although there was not much discussion around networking amongst public sector women, the analysis has demonstrated that senior women in the public sector viewed formal and informal networking in a different perspective. For formal networking, some female managers attended seminars, club activities and women's networks such as PUSPANITA for career development opportunities. Just like in the West, these women tended to form 'homophilous' informal networks which have similar or higher seniority status than themselves, to support each other's careers (Durbin, 2016). One third of senior women mentioned that going out for a lunch was the only time for them to network and considered that as an informal way of networking to build their profile as an ADO. The positivity around networking could be linked to a critical mass of women (Kanter, 1977) in the public sector organisations more generally, and perhaps more specifically because this is a less competitive environment. Some would prefer to communicate via WhatsApp application rather than have a physical contact meeting over coffee or lunch. Two senior women did not consider networking to be 'a big deal' for women to succeed in careers and gave priority to childcare responsibilities after working hours. The next section discusses some contradictions about how networks for public sector women differ from those in private sector.

8.4.2.2 Senior Women Managers' Experience of Networking in the Private Sector

Most private sector women expressed similar views where developing business requires networking, formally or informally. Informal networking for women in the private sector tended to be conducted both externally and internally to their organisation. When asked about their involvement in networking activities, two thirds of private sector interviewees had participated in informal networking and identified three main activities such as joining male networks, attending corporate events for clients and within the job itself. These reasons were mostly instrumental such as catching up with or getting to know professional contacts within the industry. In addition, and unlike their public sector counterparts, three senior women in the private sector had taken up golf, sports, and even a marathon with their male networks in order to be visible among senior managerial people, which was usually dominated by males (Linehan and Scullion, 2008). Private sector interviewees had a number of strategies to cope with the old boys' networks. For instance, working in the manufacturing industry, Seroja believes that women should not be too feminine as men do not find that appropriate. She had to be firm and independent in order to be accepted into exclusive male networks.

> *"I used to play golf last time and being the only woman … My networks are all males because of the nature of my business. If we were being embarrassed, the guys will make a joke of it … If they make joke, I am fine … I can tolerate with them, so they feel that they can work with me, that is the reason I can partly move up in the association."* (Seroja, Managing Director, Private Sector)

Seroja clearly valued the importance of her participation in male networks and placed a high priority on her involvement. This, however, is in contrast to Melur's view who also played golf with her male networks. She admitted that it was not easy to be at the top, but to advance women within the organisation, it is important for senior women to stand out as role models without being too masculine and domineering like men.

> *"I play golf … It's not easy to be at the top … I was the head of charity golf … I have been surrounded by guys, but I don't have to be like them. I still dress very well, I still wear baju kurung, wearing hijab."* (Melur, Director, Private Sector)

Also, two private sector women reported feeling comfortable about mixing socially with male groups from work. Some women were likely to follow their husbands, who were also professionals in the business world, which has enabled them to break into the all-male-networks. They did not feel worried that their behaviour would be misconstrued by others in their organisations because their spouses were also attending the same functions. Nona said that following her husband in networking would indirectly allow her to access into old boys' networks. Melur highlighted that it was easy for her to expand her networking strategies given that her husband who was also a company CEO, had always engaged with many politicians, who had been predominantly male in Malaysia.

The internal informal networking was more likely to take place with senior managers who were predominantly male. Three private sector women had joined informal networking by attending staff events or club activities organised by their employers. Although Ramlah did not play golf, she explained how being well networked helped her to perform her role and to get to know decision-makers at a very senior level. She would attend all. functions held by her organisation and felt she had greatly benefited from doing this. From an intersectional viewpoint, the Chinese appeared to excel more because of their capability to talk and promote themselves through networking. For instance, Xiu Ying mentioned that she will have either a one-to-one meeting or bring her team to have dinner with their clients for celebrations. Likewise, Daisy will also go out for dinner with the people in the company she works in.

Three interviewees explained that their job nature required them to network. For example, Nona who used to work in a marketing team found that she did not have to network separately

as her daily tasks involved meeting people and organising functions. Rose and Iris mentioned that they had no choice but always had to attend lunch, dinner or tea functions to entertain their clients. For formal networking, most interviewees' reasons were based on instrumental perspectives (Feeney and Bozeman, 2008) such as building business rapport, enhancing corporate profile and knowledge sharing. Five private interviewees highlighted that they only joined formal networking during office hours and mentioned the difficulties they experienced in trying to attend informal networking events. Surprisingly, these five women shared similar views, as they were unable to attend an informal networking event mainly because of their dual responsibilities both at home and at work. Jasmin and Kamelia wanted to spend time with their family and relax at home during weekends as they had already worked a lot on weekdays. Kenanga felt that having childcare responsibilities made it difficult for her to attend any informal networking events after office hours. These findings could be linked to career and family commitment challenges encountered by senior women in this study (see Chapter Seven). Being a career woman would not enable these women to fully challenge private patriarchal relations in Malaysia as a whole. Women were still likely to be seen as a homemaker when they are at home. Apart from family responsibilities, Mei Feng, a Chinese senior woman, who regarded herself as an introvert, thought that networking was the least interesting activity and it seemed a shortcut to succeed. She believed that her strength was in her performance rather than approaching a stranger in order to network. Teratai mentioned that once she went home, she would entertain her family and avoided having a meeting outside office hours. She also shared her experience working in the US which had strengthened her determination to be respected despite refusing to join informal networking.

> *"Well I mean this is an American company … sometimes they go for happy hours after work … When we go out, I will be drinking coke and they will be drinking beer. So, the atmosphere is different. After a while, I feel like I am not fitting in anymore … then I leave."* (Teratai, Business Analysis and Reporting General Manager, Private Sector)

As a Muslim female working in Western society, she did not feel comfortable due to Islamic rules (Omar and Davidson, 2001), which had not allowed her to drink alcohol. Meanwhile, two interviewees felt that networking was unlikely to be useful and never felt disadvantaged as women in careers despite this.

> *"I do not see any need … I just had my personal style test. It did say I do not like to network. If you are my friend, you're going to be my friend for life and I pick my friends very carefully … But I do not network … I am not a social person. I like to sit at home and read books"* (Kekwa, General Manager, Private Sector)

In summary, networking I can be important and can lead to successful career outcomes for private sector interviewees. Women opted to participate in formal networking due to the need to maintain a balance between work and family, outside of office hours. Notwithstanding, the majority of private sector senior women had actually built on their career progression by socialising with their male colleagues after office hours such as playing golf or attending events. Research findings suggest that old boys' networks remain a gender culture in organisations. The analysis from the data has demonstrated that in order for women to succeed, they must know their subjects, possess good networking skills and a high level of perseverance. Whilst public sector interviewees had less to say about old boys' networks, this does not mean that the male networks do not exist in the public sector. Their presence could be felt less due to a greater critical mass of women in the workplace compared to their private counterparts.

8.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter has discussed the interviewees' perceptions about gender quotas in senior managerial positions. The debate on critical mass as argued in the Western literature (Kanter, 1977; Dahlerup, 1988) was reflected in the analysis of this study when some women supported the movement to challenge the structural power relations of Malay male privilege in Malaysia. Some senior women argued that progression should be based on merit. The analysis has demonstrated that around half of public sector women were advocates of quotas, contributing to the empirical validity on Kanter's (1977) theory, where there is a transition from *skewed* to *tilted* groups in the public sector. Although this is not the case in the private sector due to under-representation of women in senior management, private sector interviewees appeared to acquire good human capital skills such as education and work experience. Private sector interviewees suggested that women ought to be at least in the *balanced* group with 60:40 to 50:50 distribution of quotas. The government needs to revoke the Malay privilege and open access without favouring Malay males that sustains gendered discrimination.

In terms of senior women's strategies to succeed, evidence suggests that there is a correlation between mentoring and networking with career progression and interviewees in both sectors confirmed this. Clearly, there are differences between mentoring and networking processes, even though they are conceptually aligned as a platform to raise visibility, make business contacts and aid promotion. In the public sector, formal mentoring was designed where interviewees would be assigned to a mentor on the first day at work. Having a female mentor, who could provide emotional support, was also cited as a benefit amongst public sector interviewees. This differs to their private counterparts where women tended to search for a powerful mentor, particularly males, either within or outside of the organisation. More women in the private sector also served as mentors to other women as compared to their public counterparts.

The networking opportunities may be more likely to benefit those in the private sector, rather than their public sector counterparts where progression opportunities are possibly more restricted, and networking is less beneficial. There was not much discussion around networking amongst public sector women, particularly about the existence of male networks in organisations. In contrast, private sector women had demonstrated their propensity to network, this had been achieved through informal networking by joining the old boys' networks. This is unlikely to happen without mandatory quotas. Organisations may want to encourage their senior women to make themselves more visible and attend more formal and informal networking events. Getting more senior women involved would enable other female employees to understand the demands of being in a senior career position and to consider strategies to avoid career barriers as they progress. Otherwise, it is difficult to see how things will change without the senior women themselves actively enabling more women to enjoy more success in their careers.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the empirical findings of this research, which both supports and questions previous empirical studies concerning the participation of women in the labour markets in general and in senior management in particular. It summarises the empirical data from the study by addressing the key research questions investigated. This exploratory empirical research revealed that the multiplicity of experience and discrimination encountered by Malaysian senior women managers is complex and varied depending on gender and ethnic background. It focuses on the possible strategies that could be adopted in Malaysia to produce better work opportunities for women at work generally and women in senior management specifically. This is followed by a theoretical discussion of the issues which emerge from these findings that could improve the socio-economic status of Malaysian women and society at large. The discussion further draws out the impact of patriarchy, intersectionality and critical mass in the context of women in senior management in Malaysia. The limitations of the empirical study have been considered, and some policy recommendations suggested which may assist to increase women's participation in paid labour in Malaysia. Finally, the chapter presents directions for future research.

9.2 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

This section explains how the research findings address the three research questions of this empirical study and considers the five key contributions of the thesis. The thesis has provided empirical data that addresses several areas of research, identified in Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight. The explanation throughout will be underpinned using the existing Western theories of occupational gender segregation, intersectionality, and critical mass in the context of Malaysia. Empirical evidences drawn from numerous studies indicated that the experiences of women in senior management across national boundaries were similar to a certain extent (see Beatrice, 2019; Linehan, 2019; Liao, Loureiro and Taboada, 2019; Zahid et al., 2020; Durbin, 2016). The first contribution of this thesis is the evaluation of how Malaysian senior women managers differ from those in the West. This leads to the second contribution, which is a unique comparative analysis of how women senior managers in Malaysia encounter their career challenges in both the public and private sectors.

Yet, considering that Malaysia was the first Asian country to introduce quotas, there has, to date, been no empirical research directly exploring how far Malaysian women have progressed in senior management. This contributes to the third empirical contribution on the experiences and perceptions of women who have broken through the glass ceiling into senior positions in Malaysia. The research further contributes by employing a qualitative feminist methodology

which was designed to fill an empirical gap and identified through the literature review. For instance, as discussed in Chapter Two, previous research made a comparison study of 512 managers' leadership styles from three different ethnic backgrounds, this was conducted through quantitative study and did not focus on gender per se (Selvarajah and Meyer, 2008). This leads to the final contribution where the research presents the empirical results through an intersectional qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences of Malay, Chinese and Indian senior women who succeed in senior managerial positions.

9.2.1 Enriching Literature on Women in Senior Management – How Malaysian Senior Women Managers Differ from their Western Counterparts

My first research question asked why are women under-represented in senior management in Malaysia? To answer this question, Chapters Five and Six examined existing statistical and research evidence, followed by the original qualitative data gathered for this research from women interviewees. There have been numerous studies on women in management in Western countries (Liao, Loureiro and Taboada, 2019; Linehand, 2019). There have also been a few studies conducted in Asian countries such as Thailand, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, including Malaysia (Omar and Davidson, 2001; Raman, 2002; Chou, Fosh and Foster, 2005; Kang and Rowley, 2005; Lee, 2005; Ng and Chakrabarty, 2005; Yukongdi, 2005; Beatrice, 2019; Izharuddin, 2019). This thesis contributes to filling some of the gaps in research on women in senior management in non-Western contexts. It is interesting to note that on the whole, senior women managers in this study exhibit both similarities and differences from those reported in previous studies. The application of Western theories of occupational gender segregation has led to the critiques of patriarchy theory (Walby, 1990) where this thesis contributes to argue her theory from a non-Western perspective. Although Walby's (1990) theories on public and private patriarchy have been critiqued in a contemporary Western setting, I argue that they offer a useful theoretical framework for understanding women's careers in Malaysia. This empirical research argues that occupational gender segregation is better understood by analysing the role of senior women within the private sphere of the household and beyond in the public sphere while taking account of the intersections between gender and ethnicity (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991).

Research focusing upon gender inequality in Malaysia has identified patriarchal relations of society as the main reason for the disadvantaged position of women in the labour market (Ariffin, 1997; Ahmad, 1998; Mashral and Ahmad, 2010; Abdullah Yusof, 2015). This thesis goes beyond this in that it gives more significance to the interaction of gender relations both in the private and public spheres, the state policies such as the Malay privileges endowed to the Malays, and the labour market structure in a specific structural patriarchal system. This empirical research has contributed in understanding the relationships between gender relations in the domestic sphere and the impacts of public patriarchy on the careers of senior

women. It argues that there has been a positive shift to a different form of private patriarchy in the household, which has led to the women in this study entering paid work and thus to also experience public patriarchal relations. The findings to some extent support Acker's (2006) assertion that some organisations have actively taken steps to address the specific issues of minority ethnic women in the workplace, driven by a combination of legislative and business demands, supported by shifting patriarchal attitudes.

The key contributions in this study suggest that patriarchy is still strong in the private and public sphere in Malaysian society. More needs to be done to promote gender equality and to encourage men to become more involved in family life. However, the introduction of quotas has begun to reduce gender bias in the workplace. This has indirectly helped women to enhance their management of work and family responsibilities through support from family members, other people and the policies put in place by the government and employers. Women can now engage in paid employment alongside their male counterparts, and this is a major positive change in Malaysian society.

9.2.2 Enriching Literature on Women in Senior Management – A Comparative Analysis between Senior Women Managers in Public and Private Sectors in Malaysia

A unique comparative analysis between senior women managers in public and private sectors in Malaysia leads to the second contribution of the empirical research. It contributes to the compilation of secondary data to analyse the representation of women in the labour market from both sectors. My data analysis chapters have provided comparative analyses of the public and private sector organisations in relation to the issues of career advancement opportunities, career challenges and career strategies. There is a difference between the attitudes and motivations of public sector women and their private sector counterparts. Women senior managers in the public sector appear to be more dissatisfied with their progress than their private sector counterparts. Senior women managers in the public sector had to wait much longer to achieve similar positions as their private sector counterparts due to the fact that their rewards and progression did not solely rely on their performance and ability. This has resulted in low career satisfaction in comparison to their private sector counterparts. There was strong evidence that senior women managers employed in the private sector had the most positive view of their career-oriented experiences. Yet, from the remarks made by private sector senior women managers, it appears that many wanted to participate more in family life, but they lack time for family commitments compared to the public sector senior women managers.

My second research question explored the challenges that women have encountered in getting to senior positions. Thus by employing an intersectional approach in the design of the study (Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005; Collins, 2015), it further analysed how these challenges would be different when gender and ethnicity intersect amongst senior women managers. The analysis has shown that senior women managers employed a number of career strategies in

order to break through the glass ceiling. There are two main strategies that exist in relation to careers in management for these women: mentoring and networking. A further benefit, as well as difficulty, of taking an intersectional approach is that attention was drawn to the effects of other social divisions such as age and religion, which would also benefit from further exploration. To avoid the analysis becoming too unwieldy, the focus remained primarily on interactions of gender and ethnicity, perhaps leaving unexplored some additional areas of interest.

Chapter Seven presents empirical evidence that many of the challenges that women senior managers in Malaysia encounter are similar to those encountered in the West albeit there are a few differences, and these have their roots in the intersectional framework between gender and ethnicity. Similar to developed countries, the stories of women in senior management have both positive and negative elements. The findings of the study suggest that Malaysian women are capable of succeeding in their careers, hence their current senior roles in the workplace. Nevertheless, unlike their Western counterparts who are making continuous attempts to shatter the glass ceiling, there were few indications that Malaysian women senior managers were blatantly challenging men or demanding to be valued on new and different terms. Private patriarchy continues to have an immense influence on the lives of senior women managers in Malaysia resulting in particularly strong career tensions. For instance, some senior women managers believed that if they worked too hard, divorce would result, and this strengthened the tendency to value the stability of their family relationships more than they valued the opportunity to progress in the company. In the West, women frequently express concern about the childcare costs and are actively seeking creches or workplace nurseries provided by the state or by individual organisations (Yerkes and Javornik, 2019; Ginn *et al,* 1996). Ironically, given the strength of private patriarchy, this is not the case in Malaysia given that many Malaysian senior women managers have live-in domestic servants or extended families to look after their children. Some organisations, especially within the government have provided childcare facilities for their employees in the workplace.

This section looks at empirical research that has traced the changing roles of women in the labour market who combined work and family. This empirical research also provides a unique analysis of the trend of inclusion of women in senior management and further contributes to the theoretical debate on quotas to have more women in decision making positions.

9.2.3 Enriching Literature on Quotas Debate – How the 30 Percent Quotas Can Elevate More Women into Senior Managerial Positions in the Malaysian Context

The third research question concerned the impact of the introduction of quotas in Malaysia from the perspective of senior women in public and private sectors. This highlights the third empirical contribution of this research, where Malaysia was the first Asian country to adopt the mandatory quotas for women in decision making positions. Although quotas aim at increasing

women's representation in senior managerial positions around the world (Liao, Loureiro and Taboada, 2019), the discussion is pierced with arguments for and against on how to get into the boardroom. Adams and Ferreira (2009) argue that quotas seem to have insulted competent women who can achieve senior positions on their own, prevailed tokenism and created another form of gender discrimination. Pande and Ford (2011) argue that if women and men are different in terms of managerial abilities, quotas may have a negative effect on allocation of board members. For instance, if quotas lead to the appointment of less experienced female board members, this may result in lower performing boards. Quotas can have negative effects on potential female board members in many ways because they are seen as unfair and do not align with the concept of equal opportunities. If women think that a quota has made their advancement path easier, they may be less likely to invest and believe that they might end up in senior positions because of their gender, rather than their qualifications and innate ability. When mandatory quotas have been implemented, the organisations may have not developed a justifiable pipeline for women managers in future recruitment and selection.

As discussed in Chapter Six, senior women in private sector organisations were more motivated towards advancing their careers. Although there is continued support for gender quotas, the analysis of the study indicates that the implementation is still at unsatisfactory levels in the private sector. Gendered power relations continue in an institutionally patriarchal society despite the commitment to integrate women into decision making positions. The majority of private sector senior women managers in the study acknowledged that management is considered masculine which supports the study of Koshal et al (1998). As in the public sector, there were mixed views about the adoption of gender quotas in the private sector. Seven private sector women who agreed with the implementation of quotas mentioned the importance of creating awareness and providing women with the experience and knowledge of quotas (see Chapter Eight). Being the first female appointed to the boardroom, Rose claimed that quotas had encouraged women to join the male dominated boardroom. This echoes the critical mass theory by Kanter (1977) where the government sets a minimum percentage for women's representation on corporate boards. Kanter (1977) distinguished *tilted* groups (at a ratio of 65:35, male:female) and *balanced* groups (60:40 to 50:50). The debate on critical mass as argued in the Western literature (Kanter, 1977; Dahlerup, 1988) was reflected in the analysis of this study when some women supported the movement to challenge the structural power relations of Malay male privilege in Malaysia. This empirical study is also important to the policy makers as it provides better insight on the need to impose the 30 percent quota to change the mindset of men towards accepting women in senior management (Ismail et al., 2019; Izharuddin, 2019).

The Tenth Malaysian Plan (2011 – 2015) encourages women's involvement in training opportunities to enhance their career trajectories in the knowledge-based economy. Women are expected to become more skilled to increase the number of women entering paid work.

Despite looking as a radical approach to equal representation in senior positions (Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2010), women senior managers can champion and change the patriarchal culture, values and attitudes that are prejudicial to other women in organisations (Seierstad, 2016). The empirical findings of this research suggest that although more than two thirds of the respondents tend to favour the policy, the private sector organisations are not ready for the quota, which explains why the companies will not be sanctioned in any form (Lim *et al.*, 2019). Yet, as argued in Chapter Two, the government has shown their positive commitment by establishing comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress of having 30 percent women in decision making positions. Pande and Ford (2011) suggest that quotas can change attitudes regarding female leadership by having an impact on discrimination and by correcting biased beliefs about women in leadership positions. Quotas can have a role model effect for women who wish to pursue board positions and it may improve their aspirations. Plus, women can be viewed in a new light as qualified and confident individuals with the ability to lead, make policy decisions and serve as role models to other junior female managers to participate in the paid labour force (Kelan, 2012; Durbin, 2016).

The effect of quotas can encourage women to invest more in their education and careers if they see senior managerial positions as available. The empirical study indicates that senior women managers are highly qualified, with the majority of them holding at least a degree. Malay senior women, because of their privilege are even better qualified as they are more likely to have postgraduate qualifications compared to their non-Malay counterparts. This represents a shift from an equal opportunities' framework to a positive measures' framework that aims at equality through action. Gender quotas can compensate structural barriers to entry rather than following the 'equal treatment' route, which is unlikely to have an impact in a context of strongly embedded public and private patriarchy.

9.2.4 Using an Intersectional Qualitative Approach and Feminist Methodology Focusing on the Lived Experiences of Malay, Chinese and Indian Senior Women Managers Who Succeed in Malaysia

This section elucidates both the fourth and fifth contributions of the study as they are connected to one another. The fourth empirical contribution explains how this research has employed a qualitative feminist methodology where in brief, the empirical data was gathered and thirty-one senior women managers from three major ethnic backgrounds were interviewed in this research. Feminist standpoint theory was influential in my research approach and helped me to understand from the lives of women who hold senior managerial roles in organisations (Harding, 1989, 1997). Despite criticism that feminist standpoint prioritises woman over other categories, I hope I have succeeded in showing that it is compatible with an intersectional approach that explores links between different forms of oppression, and brings a perspective on power relations that is consistent with Acker's (2006) framework of inequality regimes in

organisations which recognises that the powerful tend not to see their privilege. Also, my own position in relation to the senior women that I interviewed reflected a mixture of insider and outsider positions. Sharing similar experiences avoided the danger of my respondents creating a distance that would cause them to refuse to see me as being in their gender category. Oakley (1981) asserts that a good relationship between the researcher and the researched can be built up by sharing identities and stories and that this sharing can also reduce the researcher's early judgements over respondents. Through this lived experience, I was able to comprehend the reality of the experiences of other Malaysian senior women managers that I interviewed. Having certain similarities helped me to generate meaningful data due to sharing the same understandings on women empowerment.

Ethnicity emerged as a salient factor interacting with gender at various points, which also affected workplace relations. This indirectly leads to the final contribution which presents the empirical results through an intersectional approach exploring the lived experiences of Malay, Chinese and Indian senior women managers in Malaysia. There is little empirical evidence that investigates Malay, Chinese and Indian senior women managers and this empirical study presents findings that are unique in the sense that it utilises an intersectional theoretical framework in public and private sectors organisations. This thesis also employed McCall's (2005) intercategorical approach which applies a multi-group analysis to enable consideration of both advantage and disadvantage, in particular, between Malay and non-Malay women senior managers. By making comparisons across groups, the empirical data provides evidence to question cumulative conceptions of intersectionality, which, for example, place non-Malay women at an automatic disadvantage in comparison to Malay women.

My research interest was triggered to see how women from three different ethnic backgrounds in Malaysia construct their gender and ethnicity in a country with a patriarchal system in everyday lives. Though the previous chapter explained that senior women managers in the public sector were less likely to plan their careers, the majority of Malay and non-Malay women participants believed that having a strategy for their career was very important. For non-Malay senior women managers, things have been marginalised by state policies and therefore having a strategy was important. As a Malay female manager wanting to conduct research involving other minority ethnic groups, I believe that it was crucial for me to ensure that this empirical study would do no harm to my respondents and also to protect myself as a researcher. Their personal experience should be treated as a sensitive account of ethnic minority experiences in Malaysia due to the Malay privilege (see Chapter Two).

There are advantages of an insider perspective in terms of familiarity with the socio-cultural experiences of the participants, yet disadvantages of insider knowledge may arise from a failure to notice the familiar norms within the society. When the researcher and the researched share a similar background, there is a tendency to ignore certain issues such as how my life

at some points was shaped by the fact that the privilege has been granted to the Malays in Malaysia. In some instances, senior Malay women managers may not be able to see themselves in an advantaged position in comparison to the non-Malay senior women, which I anticipated as an ethnic discrimination. In such situations, I have minimised my involvement to impose my own opinions. There may also be a relationship between my position in the research process and the fact that non-Malay participants were open about their career lived experiences, reflecting a group who were confident about their ethnic background. Non-Malay senior women who were not open might have required greater reassurance about my position. I do not think this was a particular problem as I reiterated confidentiality several times.

Above all, while I was framing the questions, it was important for me to avoid any that sounded threatening or judgmental. Since the participants of my research were high-profile women, I anticipated their willingness to share their experiences on ethnicity issues and that they may be somewhat progressive because they were well-educated. Furthermore, being a researcher helped me to understand my respondents' stories. The literature review, my career experiences and my personal background were the crucial tools that enhanced my capabilities as a Malay feminist researcher to obtain deeper understanding of the research topic. Positioning myself as a feminist researcher was important in helping me to analyse certain useful data in a more critical and professional manner. At the same time, I managed to interpret, understand and represent the data gathered from what the respondents told me during the interviews because they knew more than I did about their stories. I consider my position as a Malay Muslim feminist researcher who had corporate work experience to be an advantage that has facilitated me to obtain rich information, particularly from the non-Malay senior women managers, to whom a Malay researcher may not be able to gain access. I felt that it would be appropriate in terms of obtaining access and information if the interviews with non-Malay senior women had been conducted by a non-Malay feminist researcher.

9.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS: THE GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONAL BODIES

The research started from an interest in the persistence of occupational gender segregation in both sectors, and identified a number of initiatives taking place, thus it has had a strong focus on policy throughout. As structural patriarchal systems are enduring in the government, it is surprising that the quotas have been achieved within a span of just five years. The policy has been extended to the private sector in the Tenth Malaysian Plan (2011 – 2015), however, the private sector has failed to achieve the 30 percent quota policy. The analysis of the findings is a wake-up call because it draws attention to the legacy of patriarchal social relations and gendered norms in Malaysia. This leads to the discussion on senior women's views on gender quotas, and the impact of quotas on women senior managers' experience in public and private sector employment.

The practical implication to be noted here is related to attracting more minorities to the public sector to promote social inclusiveness and the legitimacy of the government. In any modern democratic government, representation is necessary in relation to legitimacy and democracy. At the minimum, it is argued that the government administration should recognise the diversity of its society. Hence, having a representative bureaucracy is essential in modern democracies. Policymakers must realise the importance of having women's representatives and offering opportunities to women's career development. Studies demonstrated that having diversity could capture most, if not all, aspects of its society's population in the governing body of the state and would improve equitable responsiveness, social inclusiveness, civil service performance and the legitimacy of a government, among others (McBride et al., 2015; Tatli and Ozbilgin, 2012). Attracting more minorities to the public sector is the main way to improve the representativeness of the increasingly mono-ethnic bureaucracy. To enhance the attractiveness of public employment to minority groups, the utmost challenge that appears to the government is to rectify the negative discriminatory image against minorities. This issue needs to be addressed urgently to attract talents of minority groups. Policies of selection and recruitment into the public sector might be ethnic biased when the Malay privilege still clearly exists, however, human being factors count in the real process of selecting and recruiting public personnel. Having a more representative public personnel selection and recruitment team might help in this matter.

In terms of policy implications, findings conclude that the introduction of the 30 percent quota influences women's representation in senior positions and women's empowerment, at least in the public sector. It further suggests that quotas may have an effect on encouraging more women in to paid labour. However, quotas need to be seen as a complex set of strategies introduced by the government as they contradict the original Malay Privilege Act under the Malaysian constitution that favours Malays in Malaysia. As a result, this introduction of quotas may not suit all women in all circumstances. The outcomes may be useful in developing specific public policies directly or indirectly, to provide guidance to policy makers to encourage gender equality in the workplace. The policies can be observed as practical initiatives which are short-term measures, or as strategic initiatives which are more long-term measures. The practical initiative constitutes creating flexible working arrangements such as family-friendly workplaces and the Malaysian government should aim at these direct policy initiatives which can be implemented specifically in the private sector to benefit private sector senior women managers. It needs to provide in a more institutionalised way the provision of childcare centres that would allow women to make decisions based on possibilities, rather than limitations. This could also encourage the corporate sector to set up childcare centres near places of work.

To increase women's participation in the paid labour force involves a concerted effort by the ministries to incorporate the necessary measures in their efforts to have a more successful outcome. The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) Malaysia,

in its endeavour to encourage more women to participate in the labour force, is encouraging the setting up of childcare centres at the government offices, enhancing the availability of childcare in the community and the workplace and the training of skilled teachers and carers. The same Ministry is also trying to instill the value of Corporate Social Responsibility in the corporate sector to enhance family friendly policies such as the setting up of childcare facilities. However, this Ministry of Women needs to work together with the non-governmental bodies to align themselves to collaborate and provide a better system for childcare, so support mothers wanting to work in paid labour.

At present, there are many institutionalised childcare centres and crèches in the country. However, the system has to be more reliable and affordable to meet the objectives to encourage women to leave their children in trustworthy hands. To this end, the state should play a more important role in implementing and regulating childcare centres which provide quality care, especially in the private sector. This leads to the second initiative which needs to look at legislation which is more gender sensitive and family friendly, in step with changes in society, and this can be done, for example through tax incentives and rebates. A reform in the Employment Act 1955 needs to be addressed to ensure greater flexibility for full time employment, making clear provisions for part-time employment and considering protection for other non-standard employment such as working from home.

It is necessary and crucial for men to recognise women's position in society, their multiple capabilities, resilience and also to capitalise on their multifaceted talents and contribution in various fields instead of treating them as a threat. This includes changing the mindset on the traditional roles of men and women, eliminating discriminatory practices and working towards gender equality. There needs to be an emphasis that work-life balance should not be marginalised as a women's issue but should be viewed as a national issue. Although the men of today want women to work and participate in paid labour and to help with the household finance, in dual career families, child caring responsibilities and household chores still remain a woman's domain.

Public policies can address gender biases by instilling community awareness, with additional care taken by training programmes towards not highlighting women's roles as wives, mothers and sisters only but also as equal partners in life. These initiatives will lead to attitudinal changes which are a long-term measure to encourage men to share equally with women the household responsibility and realise that household chores and caring responsibilities are no longer just a woman's domain. Women in Malaysia are still perceived as secondary earners or supplementary earners and this idea needs to be minimised and diminished with orientation programmes initiated possibly through community service centres, places of worship and the educational system.

They can move towards not highlighting women's roles as wives, mothers and sisters only but also as equal partners in life. As for affirmative action to be implemented within the less-regulated private sector in terms of working arrangements and organisational reform at the workplace, there is a need to move away from the perception that work can only be done at one's desk and that working long hours are necessary to demonstrate one's worth. This action can only be successful if complemented with tax rebates, tax incentives and legislation giving recognition to companies that are doing their part for women.

9.4 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION

9.4.1 Research Limitations

This is an exploratory study and therefore inevitably has some limitations. First, the study concentrates on women senior managers in public and private sector organisations in Klang Valley, which is the central business hub of Malaysia. It focuses on the lived experiences of women from three different ethnic backgrounds: Malay, Chinese and Indian. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the majority of Malaysian citizens constitute *Bumiputeras* (sons of the soil), with Malays being the largest ethnic group, while the minority groups consist of Chinese and Indians. The sample population was limited where there were only five non-Malay senior women managers interviewed (three Chinese and two Indian). Critically, it was difficult to reach the non-Malay women, hence a small sample from which to find interviewees, limitations of time and resources madeu it unfeasible to recruit a wider sample. At the same time, a degree of caution should be taken in generalising these results to a wider population of senior female managers in Malaysia.

It is important to acknowledge that the findings of the study reflected the experiences of female senior managers who hold senior managerial roles. The issues investigated in the study were broad and diverse, given the fact that it has reflected the general experiences of Malaysian women senior managers from different aspects, ranging from their socio-economic background to an analysis of their career and family lives and an investigation of the possible impact of ethnicity on the experiences of Malaysian women in senior management. Nevertheless, the broad nature of this research is perhaps its biggest limitation, as most of the issues investigated in the study could be explored independently in greater depth. For instance, this study has enabled me to research a broad spectrum of factors influencing and affecting senior women's careers and later studies will enable me to return to some of these in more depth.

9.4.2 Recommendations for Further Research

The in-depth interviews from this study suggest that more research is needed to fully comprehend how the managerial experiences of Malaysian senior female managers differ from those of senior male managers. This thesis identifies four areas that would be fruitful for further

examination in the Malaysian context. The first of these is the experience of women senior managers, and I suggest that a particular focus on male and female Chinese and Indian senior managers is needed. By employing an intersectional approach as demonstrated in this study, this would enable analysis of the gender and ethnic diversity within public and private sector employment in Malaysia, that it was not possible to explore sufficiently here. It should also be qualitative in nature so as to enable an in-depth understanding and should look at the social impact and intersectionality on the career success of women in management. This could demonstrate whether there is much difference in the interest towards the intersection of gender and ethnicity in management. Future research should also look at different areas including women in the rural economy and lower paid industrial work and take into consideration different political and societal aspects, particularly for those who succeed but are living in rural areas.

A second area emerging from the thesis relates to the growing interest from those wishing to improve women's representation in decision making positions. This is in line with government initiatives on the introduction of gender quotas of having at least 30 percent women to achieve gender equality outcomes in management. While a number of articles evaluating the quotas debates have been published (see Broome, Conley, and Krawiec, 2010; Dahlerup, 1988; Davies Report, 2014; Durbin, 2016; Kanter, 1977; Terjesen and Sealy, 2016; Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003; Wang and Kelan, 2013), no academic research has been published in the Malaysian context. I believe it is an important area for researchers concerned with equality in employment to engage with for several reasons such as the potential contribution of such initiatives to addressing existing occupational gender segregation on the grounds of patriarchy and its links to critical mass. There is also the need for an evaluation of the effectiveness of such government policy interventions in producing employment outcomes for the under-represented women, especially the non-Malay women. This could be an opportunity to encompass analysis of the impact of the evolving legislative framework and to assess the potential for policy makers to engage with employers from both public and private sectors in progressing a joint equality agenda. I believe that the government should continue to implement this radical approach in order to increase the number of women representations in senior managerial positions in Malaysia.

This research may be regarded as a one-sided study as it focuses primarily on the perception of Malaysian senior female managers' career experiences in senior managerial positions. A third area for future research should focus on the impact of the organisational systems on these experiences such as HR policies and its supporting mechanism in recruitment and selection procedures, reward systems, training and development procedures and performance measurement systems, which may help to establish a greater understanding of the issues investigated in the study. Many more issues can be focused on which add to the knowledge and practical experience of senior women managers in Malaysia. It is important that male senior managers learn to recognise the valuable resource that women senior managers

represent in managerial positions. It is hoped that the partial answers supplied by this study will generate additional research to investigate a deeper understanding of the apparent prejudice against women in senior management and provide the means whereby such barriers and prejudice can be minimised or eliminated for future generations.

The last area for further investigation arises from the findings pointing to some confusion amongst the Malaysian senior women managers about networking and mentoring in organisations. For instance, the interviews indicate that women senior managers in the public sector regard mentoring (formal and informal) to be insignificant whilst this is not the case in the private sector. In terms of networking, some interviewees in the public sector regarded having a conversation through the WhatsApp application as part of networking whereas senior women in the private sector do not think the same way, just as they do not in the West. Without further extensive research on both matters exclusively, it is not possible to draw any conclusions on the issues of mentoring and networking or to explain why there was such disregard by some for these relationships.

All four areas would, I believe, benefit from the intersectional approach employed in this thesis, and developing a more explicit focus on the intersections of gender and ethnicity would be theoretically useful, although this may be challenging to achieve due to potential difficulties in accessing minority ethnic men and women participants in Malaysia. In short, more research is needed in Malaysia and it is hoped that this study will act as an impetus for numerous subsequent research studies to follow.

9.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The participants in this study were impressive in terms of their strength and determination in overcoming difficulties associated with being a minority in a ‘man’s world’, but also with their enthusiasm for their work and the change that it has brought to their lives. This study has demonstrated that there are no simple solutions to increasing women’s representation in senior management, with choices affected by the structural patriarchal system, state policies, all set within shifting economic, political, legal and social contexts. However, the intersectional perspectives presented in the thesis indicates clearly that to some extent, women’s employment in both public and private sectors has not come about without political will, supported by gender quota policies. Elements of Malay privilege have been highlighted here, but it is to be hoped that there remains the will, and resources, to continue in this direction so that women’s career choices and opportunities can be broadened, regardless of ethnic background.

Given the introduction of quotas to have at least 30 percent women in decision .making positions, and the impact of this on the experience of private sector and public sector senior women managers, I hope that this thesis will be one step on the road to greater inclusion of

minority women in ‘mainstream’ sociological analyses of equality and inequality at work. Although the thesis raises some specific methodological issues about researching non-Malay women, I believe that researchers should not be deterred by these, nor by arguments that only the insiders may reach this population. Instead, researchers should be convinced of the value gaining a more heterogeneous perspective on the processes that produce, sustain and challenge gender and ethnic inequality regimes in organisations.

REFERENCES

Abd Ghani, R. *et al.* (2001) *Salary and Wages in Malaysia*, *University Kebangsaan Malaysia*.

Abd Rahim, M. H. *et al.* (2013) 'A "memoryscape" Malayan Union 1946: The Beginning and Rise of Modern Malay Political Culture', *Asian Social Science*, 9(6), pp. 36–42. doi: 10.5539/ass.v9n6p36.

Abdullah, A. (2010) 'Themes and Issues in Research on Social Problems in the First Decade of the 21st Century in Malaysia', *Akademika*, 78(Jan.-April), pp. 3–14.

Abdullah, K., Noor, N. M. and Wok, S. (2008) 'The Perceptions of Women's Roles and Progress: A Study of Malay Women', *Social Indicators Research*, 89(3), pp. 439–455. doi: 10.1007/s11205-008-9242-7.

Abdullah, O. C. (2012) 'Unity and Harmony in Malaysia: Problems and Challenges', *British Journal of Science*, 6(July), pp. 20–26.

Abdullah, S. N. (2014) 'The causes of gender diversity in Malaysian large firms', *Journal of Management and Governance*, 18(4), pp. 1137–1159. doi: 10.1007/s10997-013-9279-0.

Abdullah, S. N. and Ku Ismail, K. N. I. (2013) 'Gender, Ethnic and Age Diversity of the Boards of Large Malaysian Firms and Performance', *Journal of Management*, 38, pp. 27–40.

Abdullah Yusof, S. (2015) 'Household Decision-Making in Malaysia: The Ethnic Dimension', *Social Indicators Research*. Springer Netherlands, 124(1), pp. 283–293. doi: 10.1007/s11205-014-0782-8.

Abu Bakar, N. R. (2014) 'Factors influencing occupational segregation by gender in Malaysia', *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2(4), pp. 75–81. doi: 10.11114/ijsss.v2i4.507.

Acker, J. (1998) 'The Future of "Gender and Organizations": Connections and Boundaries', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 5(4), pp. 195–206. doi: 10.1111/1468-0432.00057.

Acker, J. (2006) 'INEQUALITY REGIMES Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations', *Gender & Society*, 20(4), pp. 441–464. doi: 10.1177/0891243206289499.

Acker, J. (2012) 'Gendered Organisations and Intersectionality: Problems and Possibilities', *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 31(3), pp. 214–224.

Adams, D. M. (2015) 'The Unbearable Lightness of Being White', *Women and Therapy*. 2015, 38(3–4), pp. 327–340. doi: 10.1080/02703149.2015.1059215.

Adams, R. B. and Ferreira, D. (2009) 'Women in the boardroom and their impact on governance and performance', *Journal of Financial Economics*, 94(2), pp. 291–309. doi: 10.1016/j.jfineco.2008.10.007.

Ahmad, A. (1998) 'Women in Malaysia', (December), pp. 1–81. Available at: http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/32552/women-malaysia.pdf.

Ahmad, A. (2009) 'Gender differences and trends in the participation of Malaysians in education: Implications on employment outcomes', *The Journal of International Management Studies*, 4(2), pp. 65–74.

Ali, S. (2008) *The Malays: Their problems and future*. Petaling Jaya: The Other Press.

Allen, T. D. and Eby, L. T. (2008) 'Mentor commitment in formal mentoring relationships', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, pp. 309–316. doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2007.10.016.

Alvesson, M. and Billing, Y. D. (2009) *Understanding Gender and Organizations*. London: Sage Publications.

Amin, S. (2004) 'Ethnic differences and married women's employment in Malaysia: do government policies matter?', *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, 33(3), pp. 291–306. doi: 10.1016/j.socec.2003.12.023.

Amin, S. and Alam, I. (2008) 'Women's employment decisions in Malaysia: Does religion matter?', *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, 37(6), pp. 2368–2379. doi: 10.1016/j.socec.2008.04.012.

Amos-Wilson, P. M. (1999) 'Some issues concerning women in senior management : a case study from Ghana', *Public Administration and Development*, 19, pp. 217–229.

Andaya, B. and Andaya, L. (2001) *A history of Malaysia*. 2nd2 edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Anker, R. (1997) 'Theories of occupational segregation by sex: An overview', *International Labour Review*, 136(3), pp. 315–339. doi: 10.3366/ajicl.2011.0005.

Arifeen, S. R. (2010) 'The Development of Managerial Women : An Exploratory Comparison of Malaysia and Pakistan', *Journal of Management Research*, IX(2), pp. 21–36.

Ariffin, R. (1997) 'Malaysian Women in the Modern Era', *Copenhagen Journal of*

Asian Studies, (12), pp. 69–88.

Atewologun, D. and Sealy, R. (2014) 'Experiencing privilege at ethnic, gender and senior intersections', *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 29(4), pp. 423–439. doi: 10.1108/JMP-02-2013-0038.

Azhari, C. H. (2001) 'Emancipation, Women and the State: A Competing Agenda in the 20th Century Malaysia', *Intellectual Discourse*, 9(2), pp. 127–144.

Aziz, A. and Shamsul, A. B. (2004) 'The religious, the plural, the secular and the modern: a brief critical survey on Islam in Malaysia', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 5(3), pp. 341–356. doi: 10.1080/1464937042000288651.

Azmi, I. and Barrett, M. (2013) 'Women on Boards And Company Financial Performance: A Study of Malaysian Smes', *Proceedings of 3rd Global Accounting, Finance and Economics Conference*, pp. 1–14.

Baharuddin, S. (2005) 'Making sense of national unitiy in Malaysia: Break-down versus break-out perspective', in *Readings on ethnic relations in a multicultural society*. Kuala Lumpur: COLLA Research Group, pp. 25–37.

Bahfen, N. (2011) 'Borderless Islam and the modern nation state', *Intellectual Discourse*, 19(1), pp. 147–160.

Baldez, L. (2004) 'Elected Bodies: The Gender Quota Law for Legislative Candidates in Mexico', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 29(August 2003), pp. 231–58. doi: 10.3162/036298004X201168.

Baruch, Y. and Reis, C. (2015) 'Global career challenges for women crossing international borders', *Handbook of gendered careers in management: Getting in, getting on, getting out*, p. 341. doi: 10.4337/9781782547709.00030.

Beatrice, F. Y. L. (2019) 'Women Left Behind? Closing the Gender Gap in Malaysia', in *Japan Labor Issues*, p. 22.

Becker, G. (1964) *Human Capital*. New York: Columbia University Press Berg.

Belkhir, J. A. (2001) 'Marxism Without Apologies: Intergrating Race, Gender, Class: A Working Class Approach', *Race, Gender, and Class*, 8(2), pp. 142–171.

Bevelander, D. and Page, M. J. (2011) 'Ms. Trust: Gender, Networks and Trust - Implications for Management and Education', *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 10(4), pp. 623–642. doi: 10.5465/amle.2009.0138.

Bhopal, K. (1997) *Gender, 'Race' and Patriarchy: A Study of South Asian Women*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Bhopal, M. and Rowley, C. (2005) 'Ethnicity as a Management Issue and Resource: Examples from Malaysia', *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 11(4), pp. 553–574. doi: 10.1080/13602380500135869.

Billing, Y. D. (2011) 'Are Women in Management Victims of the Phantom of the Male Norm?', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 18(3), pp. 298–317. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0432.2010.00546.x.

Blackburn, R. M. *et al.* (2002) 'Explaining gender segregation.', *British journal of Sociology*, 53(4), pp. 513–36. doi: 10.1080/0007131022000021461.

Bradley, H. (2013) *Gender*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bradley, H. and Healy, G. (2008) *Ethnicity and Gender at Work*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, pp. 77–101. doi: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

Brennan, R. T., Barnett, R. C. and Gareis, K. C. (2001) 'When She Earns More Than He Does: A longitudinal Study of Dual- Earner couples', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 63(19361), pp. 168–182. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2001.00168.x.

Broadbridge, A. (1999) 'Mentoring in retailing: a tool for success?', *Personnel Review*, 28(4), pp. 336–355. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/MRR-09-2015-0216.

Broecke, S. and Hamed, J. (2008) 'Gender Gaps in Higher Education Participation: An Analysis of the Relationship between Prior Attainment and Young Participation by Gender, Socio-Economic Class and Ethnicity', pp. 1–45.

Broom, A., Hand, K. and Tovey, P. (2009) 'The role of gender, environment and Individual biography in shaping qualitative interview data', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(1), pp. 51–65. doi: 10.1080/13645570701606028.

Broome, L. L., Conley, J. M. and Krawiec, K. D. (2010) 'Does Critical Mass Matter-Views from the Boardroom', *Seattle UL Rev.*, 34, p. 1049.

Brown, G. K. (2007) 'Making ethnic citizens: The politics and practice of education in Malaysia', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 27(3), pp. 318–330. doi: 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2006.12.002.

Brown, G. K. (2010) 'Legible Pluralism: The Politics of Ethnic and Religious Identification in Malaysia', *Ethnopolitics*, 9(1), pp. 31–52. doi: 10.1080/17449050903557401.

Browne, I. and Misra, J. (2003) 'The Intersection of Gender and Race in the Labor Market', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29(1), pp. 487–513. doi:

10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100016.

Bryman, A. (2004) ‘Social research strategies’, *Social Research Methods*, pp. 3–25.

Bryman, A. (2008) *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Budhwar, P. S., Saini, D. S. and Bhatnagar, J. (2005) ‘Women in Management in the New Economic Environment: The Case of India’, *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 11(2), pp. 179–193. doi: 10.1080/1360238042000291199.

Burgess, Z. and Tharenou, P. (2002) ‘Women Board Directors : Characteristics of the few’, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 37(1), pp. 39–49.

Cabrera, E. F. (2009) ‘Protean organizations: Reshaping work and careers to retain female talent’, *Career Development International*, 14(2), pp. 186–201. doi: 10.1108/13620430910950773.

Calás, M. and Smircich, L. (2006) ‘From the “Woman’s Point of View” Ten Years Later: Towards a Feminist Organization Studies’, in *Handbook of Organization Studies*. 2nd edn. London: Sage Publications, pp. 284–346.

Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (2004) *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organisational Research*. London: Sage Publications.

Catalyst (2018a) ‘Quick Take: Women in the Workforce UK’.

Catalyst (2018b) *Women on Corporate Boards*. Available at: https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-on-corporate-boards/.

Chan, C. . (1964) *The Development of British Malaya 1896 - 1909*. London, Kuala Lumpur, New York: Oxford University Press.

Chang-Da Wan (2018) ‘Student enrolment in Malaysian higher education: is there gender disparity and what can we learn from the disparity?’, *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. Routledge, 48(2), pp. 244–261. doi: 10.1080/03057925.2017.1306435.

Chattopadhyay, A. (1997) ‘Family migration and the economic status of women in Malaysia’, *International Migration Review*, 31(2), pp. 338–352. doi: 10.2307/2547223.

Cheung, F. M. and Halpern, D. F. (2010) ‘Women at the Top: Powerful Leaders Define Success as Work + Family in a Culture of Gender.’, *The American Psychologist*, 65(3), pp. 182–93. doi: 10.1037/a0017309.

Cho, Y. *et al.* (2015) ‘Asian women in top management: Eight country cases’, *Human Resource Development International*. Routledge, 18(4), pp. 407–428. doi:

10.1080/13678868.2015.1020717.

Choo, H. Y. and Ferree, M. M. (2010) 'Practicing Intersectionality in Sociological Research : A Critical Analysis of Inclusions , Interac ...', *Sociological Theory*, 28(2), pp. 129–149. doi: 10.1177/0038038515620359.

Chou, W.-C. G., Fosh, P. and Foster, D. (2005) 'Female Managers in Taiwan: Opportunities and Barriers in Changing Times', *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 11(2), pp. 251–266. doi: 10.1080/1360238042000291153.

Chua, V., Mathews, M. and Loh, Y. C. (2016) 'Social capital in Singapore: Gender differences, ethnic hierarchies, and their intersection', *Social Networks*. Elsevier B.V., 47, pp. 138–150. doi: 10.1016/j.socnet.2016.06.004.

Chugh, S. and Sahgal, P. (2007) 'Why Do Few Women Advance to Leadership Positions?', *Global Business Review*, 8(2), pp. 351–365. doi: 10.1177/097215090700800211.

Clifford, A. . (2001) *Introducing Feminist Theology*. New York: Orbis Books.

Clutterbuck, D. (2004) *Making the most of informal mentoring A positive climate is key*. doi: 10.1108/14777280410544574.

Collins, P. H. (2015) 'Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41(1), pp. 1–20. doi: 10.1146/annurev-soc-073014-112142.

Conley, H. (2008) 'The nightmare of temporary work: A comment on Fevre', *Work, Employment and Society*, 22(4), pp. 731–736. doi: 10.1177/0950017008096744.

Conley, H. and Page, M. (2010) 'The Gender Equality Duty in Local Government : The Prospects for Integration', *Industrial Law Journal*, 39(3), pp. 321–325.

Cooke, F. L. (2010) 'Women's participation in employment in Asia: a comparative analysis of China, India, Japan and South Korea', *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 21(12), pp. 2249–2270. doi: 10.1080/09585192.2010.509627.

Cooper, H. (2002) 'Investigating socio-economic explanations for gender and ethnic inequalities in health', *Social Science and Medicine*, 54(5), pp. 693–706. doi: 10.1016/S0277-9536(01)00118-6.

Cornelius, N. and Skinner, D. (2008) 'The Careers of Senior Men and Women – A Capabilities Theory Perspective', *British Journal of Management*, 19(s1), pp. S141–S149. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8551.2008.00579.x.

Crenshaw, K. (1989) 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black

Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Policies', *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), pp. 139–167. doi: 10.1525/sp.2007.54.1.23.

Crenshaw, K. (1991) 'Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color', *Stanford Law Review*, 43(1241), pp. 1241–1299. doi: 10.2307/1229039.

Creswell, J. W. (2009) *Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, *Research Design qualitative quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications. doi: 10.1016/j.math.2010.09.003.

Crompton, R. (1997) *Women's Work in Modern Britain*. Oxford: Open University Press.

Cross, C. and Linehan, M. (2006) 'Barriers to advancing female careers in the high-tech sector: empirical evidence from Ireland', *Women in Management Review*, 21(1), pp. 28–39.

Crotty, M. (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research - Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Dahlerup, D. (1988) 'From a Small to a Large Minority: Women in Scandinavian Politics', *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 11(4), pp. 275–298.

Dahlerup, D. and Freidenvall, L. (2010) 'Judging gender quotas: predictions and results', *Policy & Politics*, 38(3), pp. 407–425. doi: 10.1332/030557310X521080.

Dannecker, P. and Mirror, A. (2006) '"Let's not rock the boat": women's organisations and democratisation in Malaysia', *International Quarterly for Asian Studies*, 37(3/4), pp. 297–322.

Davidson, M. J. and Burke, R. J. (2000) *Women in Management*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Davidson, M. J. and Burke, R. J. (2011) *Women in Management Worldwide: Progress and Prospects*. Farnham, UK: Gower.

Davidson, M. J. and Cooper, C. L. (1992) *Shattering the Glass Ceiling - The Woman Manager*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Davies Report (2014) *Women on Boards*.

Davis, K. (2008) 'Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful', *Feminist Theory*, 9(1), pp. 67–85. doi: 10.1177/1464700108086364.

Deloitte (2017) *Women in the boardroom: A global perspective - 5th edition*.

Denzin, N. . and Lincoln, Y. . (2000) *The handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.

Derks, B., Van Laar, C. and Ellemers, N. (2016) 'The queen bee phenomenon: Why women leaders distance themselves from junior women', *Leadership Quarterly*. Elsevier Inc., 27(3), pp. 456–469. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.12.007.

Drabble, J. . (2000) *An economic history of Malaysia 1800-1900: The transition to modern economic growth*. UK: McMillan Press.

Drew, E. and Murtagh, E. M. (2005) 'Work/life balance: senior management champions or laggards?', *Women in Management Review*, 20(4), pp. 262–278.

Duehr, E. E. and Bono, J. E. (2006) 'Men, Women and Managers: Are Stereotypes Finally Changing?', *Personnel Psychology*, 59, pp. 815–846.

Durbin, S. (2011) 'Creating Knowledge through Networks: a Gender Perspective', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 18(1), pp. 90–112. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0432.2010.00536.x.

Durbin, Sue (2016) *Women Who Succeed: Strangers in Paradise?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. doi: 10.1057/9781137328267.

Durbin, S. and Conley, H. (2010) 'Gender, labour process theory and intersectionality: Une Liaison Dangereuse?', in *Working Life:Renewing Labour Process Analysis*. Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 182–202.

Durbin, S. and Tomlinson, J. (2014) 'Female Part-Time Managers: Careers, Mentors and Role Models', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 21(4), pp. 308–320. doi: 10.1111/gwao.12038.

Eby, L. T. *et al.* (2000) 'The Protege's Perspective Regarding Negative Mentoring Experiences: The Development of a Taxonomy', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 57, pp. 1–21. doi: 10.1006/jvbe.1999.1726.

Eby, L. T. *et al.* (2010) 'Are bad experiences stronger than good ones in mentoring relationships? Evidence from the protégé and mentor perspective', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, pp. 81–92. doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2010.02.010.

Ehrich, L. C. (2008) 'Mentoring and women managers: Another look at the field', *Gender in Management*, 23(7), pp. 469–483. doi: 10.1108/17542410810908839.

Eirich, G. M. and Robinson, J. H. (2017) 'Does Earning More Than Your Spouse Increase Your Financial Satisfaction? A Comparison of Men and Women in the United

States, 1982 to 2012', *Journal of Family Issues*, 38(17), pp. 2371–2399. doi: 10.1177/0192513X16638384.

Ely, R. J. and Meyerson, D. E. (2000) *Theories of Gender in Organizations: A New Approach to Organizational Analysis and Change11We are grateful to Lotte Bailyn and our colleagues affiliated with the Center for Gender in Organizations, Simmons Graduate School of Management – Gill Coleman, Joy*, *Research in Organizational Behavior*. Elsevier Masson SAS. doi: 10.1016/S0191-3085(00)22004-2.

EOC, E. O. C. (2007) *Labourers of Love? The cost of undervaluing women's work*.

European Parliament (2013) *Legal Instruments for Gender Quotas in Management Boards*.

Evetts, J. (2000) 'Analysing change in women's careers: Culture, structure and action dimensions', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 7(1), pp. 57–67. doi: 10.1111/1468-0432.00093.

Experiences, C. and Kamenou, N. (2002) 'Ethnic Minority Women in English Organisations Career Experiences and Opportunities', (October).

Ezzedeen, S. R. and Ritchey, K. G. (2008) 'The Man Behind the Woman: A Qualitative Study of the Spousal Support Received and Valued by Executive Women', *Journal of Family Issues*, 29(9), pp. 1107–1135. doi: 10.1177/0192513X08315363.

Fearfull, A. and Kamenou, N. (2006) 'How do you account for it? A critical exploration of career opportunities for and experiences of ethnic minority women', *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 17, pp. 883–901. doi: 10.1016/j.cpa.2005.08.006.

Feeney, M. K. and Bozeman, B. (2008) 'Mentoring and network ties', *Human Relations*, 61(12), pp. 1651–1676. doi: 10.1177/0018726708098081.

Fenton, S. (1999) *Ethnicity, Racism, Class and Culture*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd.

Ferguson, A. (1998) 'Resisting the Veil of Privilege: Building Bridge Identities as an Ethico-Politics of Global Feminisms', *Hypatia*, 13(3), pp. 95–113. doi: 10.1111/j.1527-2001.1998.tb01372.x.

Fontaine, R. and Richardson, S. (2005) 'Cultural Values in Malaysia : Chinese , Malays and Indians Compared', *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 12(4), pp. 63–77. doi: 10.1108/13527600510798141.

Franceschet, S. and Piscopo, J. M. (2008) 'Gender Quotas and Women's Substantive Representation: Lessons from Argentina', *Politics & Gender*, 4, pp. 393–425. doi:

10.1017/S1743923X08000342.

Ganesh, A. *et al.* (2015) 'THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING AND COACHING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR', *Journal of Governance and Regulation*, 4(3), pp. 16–29.

Ghani, N. A. *et al.* (2017) 'Divorce Trends among the Malay Community in Perlis, Malaysia over a Ten Year Period (2006 - 2015)', *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 7(4), pp. 269–283. doi: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v7-i4/2805.

Gill, J. *et al.* (2008) 'I still wanna be an engineer! Women, education and the engineering profession', *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 33(May), pp. 391–402. doi: 10.1080/03043790802253459.

Ginn, J. *et al.* (1996) 'Feminist Fallacies: A Reply to Hakim on Women's Employment', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 47(1), pp. 167–174.

Glass, C. and Cook, A. (2016) 'Leading at the top: Understanding women's challenges above the glass ceiling', *Leadership Quarterly*. Elsevier Inc., 27(1), pp. 51–63. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.09.003.

Gomez, E. . (1998) 'Malaysia', in *Political party systems and democratic development in East and Southeast Asia*. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 226–88.

Grant Thornton (2013) *Women in senior management : setting the stage for growth*.

Grant Thornton (2018) *Women in business: beyond policy to progress*.

Greener, S. (2008) *Business Research Methods*. Ventus Publishing ApS.

Greenhaus, J. H. and Powell, G. N. (2006) 'When Work and Family Are Allies: A Theory of Work-Family Enrichment', *Academy of Management Review*, 31(1), pp. 72–92.

Gregory, A. and Milner, S. (2009) 'Editorial: Work-life balance: A matter of choice?', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 16(1), pp. 1–13. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0432.2008.00429.x.

Guba, E. . and Lincoln, Y. . (2000) 'Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences', in *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, pp. 163–188.

Hakim, C. (1979) *Occupational Segregation: A Comparative Study of the Degree and Pattern of the Differentiation between Men and Women's Work in Britain, the US and other countries*. London: Department of Employment.

Hakim, C. (1995) 'Five Feminist Myths about Women's Employment', *The British*

journal of sociology, 46(3), pp. 429–455. doi: 10.2307/591850.

Hakim, C. (2000) *Work-Lifestyle Choices in the 21st Century: Preference Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hakim, C. (2002) 'Lifestyle Preferences as Determinants of Women's Differentiated Labour Market Careers', *Work and Occupations*, 29(4), pp. 428–459. doi: 10.1177/073088802237558.

Hakim, C. (2006) 'Women, careers, and work-life preferences', *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 34(3), pp. 279–294. doi: 10.1080/03069880600769118.

Hancock, A.-M. (2007) 'When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition: Examining Intersectionality as a Research Paradigm', *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(1), pp. 63–79. doi: 10.1017/Si537592707070065.

Haque, M. S. (2003) 'The Role of the State in Managing Ethnic Tensions in Malaysia: A Critical Discourse', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(3), pp. 240–266. doi: 10.1177/0002764203256186.

Harding, S. (1989) *Is there a Feminist Method?*

Harding, S. (1997) 'Women' s Standpoints on Nature: What Makes Them Possible?', *Women, Gender, and Science*, 12, pp. 186–200.

Hashim, H. and Omar, R. (2004) 'Career, Family and Community: the Dilemma of Professional and Semi-Professional Malay Women', *Asian Women*, 19(January 2004), pp. 45–68.

Hashim, R. S. (2006) 'Meniti duri dan ranjau: Pembikinan gender dan seksualiti dalam konteks dunia Melayu (Facing the Challenges: The Construction of Gender and Sexuality in Malay World Context)', *Sari*, 24(24), pp. 15–34.

Hassan, M. H. Bin (2007) 'Explaining Islam Special Position and The Politics of Islam in Malaysia', *Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Nanyang Technological University Singapore*, pp. 287–317.

Hassan, S. Z. . (1998) *Malaysian Women in the Wake of Change*. Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya.

Hatin, W. I. *et al.* (2011) 'Population genetic structure of peninsular Malaysia Malay sub-ethnic groups', *PLoS ONE*, 6(4), pp. 2–6. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0018312.

Healy, G., Bradley, H. and Forson, C. (2011) 'Intersectional Sensibilities in Analysing Inequality Regimes in Public Sector Organizations', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 18(5). doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0432.2011.00557.x.

Heath, A. and Cheung, S. Y. (2006) *Ethnic Penalties in the Labour Market: Employers and Discrimination*.

Hekman, S. (1997) 'Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited', *Chicago Journal*, 22(2), pp. 341–365. doi: 10.2307/3175275.

Hesse-Biber, S. . (2007) 'Holistic Reflexivity: The Feminist Practice of Reflexivity', in *Handbook of Feminist Research; Theory and Praxis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 493–514.

Hirschman, C. (2016) 'Gender , the Status of Women , and Family Structure in Malaysia', 53(1), pp. 33–50.

Hirschman, C. and Aghajanian, A. (1980) 'Women's Labour Force Participation and Socioeconomic Development: The Case of Peninsular Malaysia, 1957-1970', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, XI(March), pp. 30–49. Available at: http://faculty.washington.edu/charles/new PUBS/A24.pdf.

Hite, L. M. (2007) 'Hispanic Women Managers and Professionals : Reflections on Life and Work', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 14(1).

Hock Guan, L. (2002) 'Malay Dominance and Opposition Politics in Malaysia', *Southeast Asian Affairs*, pp. 177–195.

Hofstede, G. (2011) 'Dimensionalizing Cultures : The Hofstede Model in Context', *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2, pp. 1–26.

Holliday, A. (2007) *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*. 2nd edn. Sage Publications.

Holvino, E. (2008) 'Intersections: The Simultaneity of Race, Gender and Class in Organization Studies', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 17(3), pp. 248–277. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0432.2008.00400.x.

Holvino, E. (2010) 'Intersections: The Simultaneity of Race, Gender and Class in Organisation Studies', 17(3). doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0432.2008.00400.x.

Houben, V. J. H. (2003) 'Southeast Asia and Islam', *Social Science*, 588(1), pp. 149–170. doi: 10.1177/0002716203255394.

Howe, L. K. (1977) *Pink Collar Workers: Inside the World of Women's Work*. New York.

Huang, J. and Aaltio, I. (2014) 'Guanxi and social capital: Networking among women managers in China and Finland', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. Elsevier Ltd, 39, pp. 22–39. doi: 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2013.09.002.

Huse, M. and Solberg, A. G. (2006) 'Gender-related boardroom dynamics: How women make and can make contributions on corporate boards', *Women in Management Review*, 21(2), pp. 113–130. doi: 10.1108/09649420610650693.

Hussin, N. (2008) 'Geografi dan Perdagangan: Kepentingan Selat Melaka kepada Perdagangan Dunia, Asia dan Dunia Melayu 1700-1800', *Akademika*, 73, pp. 3–26.

Hutchings, K. (2000) 'Cultural Norms and Gender Inequality in Malaysia', *Race, Gender & Class*, 7(2), p. 122.

Ibarra, H. (1992) 'Homophily and Differential Returns: Sex Differences in Network ...', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 37(3), pp. 422–447.

Ibarra, H. (1993) 'Personal Networks of Women and Minorities in Management: A Conceptual Framework', *Academy of Management Review*, 18(1), pp. 56–87.

Ibrahim, R. (2007) 'Multiculturalism and Education in Malaysia', *An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 8(2), pp. 155–167.

Idea (2003) 'The Implementation of Quotas: Asian Experiences | International IDEA'. Available at: http://www.idea.int/publications/quotas_asian/index.cfm.

ILO (2017) *World Empoyment and Social Outlook - Trends for Women*. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_557245.pdf.

ILO, I. L. O. (2018) *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2018 – Global snapshot*. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_619577.pdf.

Inkson, K. *et al.* (2012) 'Boundaryless Careers: Bringing Back Boundaries', *Organization Studies*, 33(3), pp. 323–340. doi: 10.1177/0170840611435600.

Ismail, K. N. I. K., Mustapa, I. R. and Rahman, Intan Maiza Abd Abdullah, S. N. (2019) 'Gender Boardroom Quotas: A Survey of Malaysian Corporate Directors', *International Journal of Business & Society*, 20(3), pp. 968–983.

Ismail, M. and Ibrahim, M. (2008) 'Barriers to career progression faced by women: Evidence from a Malaysian multinational oil company', *Gender in Management : An International Journal*, 23(1), pp. 51–66.

Ismail, M., Mohd Rasdi, R. and Abdul Wahat, N. W. (2005) 'High-flyer women academicians: factors contributing to success', *Women in Management Review*, 20(2), pp. 117–132.

Ismail, K. N. I. K., Mustapa, I. R. and Rahman, Intan Maiza Abd Abdullah, S. N. (2019)

‘Gender Boardroom Quotas: A Survey of Malaysian Corporate Directors’, *International Journal of Business & Society*, 20(3), pp. 968–983

Izharuddin, A. (2019) *The 30% Hope: Securing the Electoral Success of Women in Malaysia Baharu*, *New Mandala Policy Paper*. Canberra: Australian National University.

Jamal, A. A. (2014) ‘Comparative Law, Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality: Reflections from Southeast Asia in Search of an Elusive Balance’, *Pluralism, Transnationalism and Culture in Asian Law: A Book in Honour of M.B. Hooker*, 9(1), pp. 197–211. doi: 10.1515/asjcl-2013-0063.

Jogulu, U. and Wood, G. (2011) ‘Women managers’ career progression: an Asia Pacific perspective’, *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 26(8), pp. 590–603. doi: 10.1108/17542411111183893.

Johari, H. *et al.* (2013) ‘Exploring Career Success Among Women Engineers : The Malaysian Case’, *International Journal of Education and Research*, 1(11), pp. 1–8.

Jomo, K. . (2004) ‘The new economic policy and interethnic relations in Malaysia’, *UNRISD Programme on Identities, Conflicts and Cohesion*, (7), p. 23. Available at: http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/A20E9AD6E5BA919780256B6D0057896B?OpenDocument.

Jones, G. W. (1981) ‘Malay marriage and divorce in Peninsular Malaysia: three decades of change’, *Population and Development Review*, 7(2), pp. 255–278.

Juhary, J. (2011) ‘Abstraction and Concreteness in Customary Practices in Malaysia: A Preliminary Understanding’, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(17), pp. 281–285.

Kadiresan, V. *et al.* (2015) ‘Workp;ace Gender Segregation: A Study from the Students’ Perspective of Private Higher Learning Institutions in Klang Valley, Malaysia’, *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 3(7), pp. 116–126. doi: 10.1080/12259276.2015.1133167.

Kahn, J. (2001) *Civilisational virtues in the Malay kampong*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Kamenou, N., Netto, G. and Fearfull, A. (2013) ‘Ethnic Minority Women in the Scottish Labour Market : Employers’ Perceptions’, *British Journal of Management*, 24, pp. 398–413. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8551.2012.00811.x.

Kang, H.-R. and Rowley, C. (2005) ‘Women in Management in South Korea: Advancement or Retrenchment?’, *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 11(2), pp. 213–231.

doi: 10.1080/1360238042000291171.

Kanter, R. M. (1977) *Men and Women of the Corporation*.

Kassim, H. and Ali, F. (2010) 'English communicative events and skills needed at the workplace: Feedback from the industry', *English for Specific Purposes*, 29, pp. 168–182. doi: 10.1016/j.esp.2009.10.002.

Kaur, M., Jauhar, J. and Mohaidin, Z. (2017) 'Factors Causing Female Inequality in Malaysian Organisations: A Conceptual Model', *Global Business & Management Research*, 9(4), pp. 361–373.

Kelan, E. (2012) *Rising Stars: Developing Millennial Women as Leaders*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Khoo, B. . (2003) *Beyond Mahathir: Malaysian Politics and Discontents*. London, New York: Zed Books Ltd.

Kim, S. N. (2004) 'Imperialism without empire: silence in contemporary accounting research on race/ethnicity', *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 15, pp. 95–133. doi: 10.1016/S1045-2354(03)00004-2.

King, D. K. (1988) 'Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 14(1), pp. 42–72. doi: 10.1086/494491.

Klerk, S. de and Verreynne, M. (2017) 'The networking practices of women managers in an emerging economy setting: negotiating institutional and social barriers', *Human Resource Management Journal*, 27(3), pp. 477–501. doi: 10.1111/1748-8583.12151.

Koenig, M. (2003) 'Pluralism and Multiculturalism in Colonial and Post-Colonial Societies', *International Journal on Multicultural Societies (IJMS)*, 5(2), pp. 1–91.

Korff, R. (2001) 'Globalisation and Communal Identities in the Plural Society of Malaysia', *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 22(3), pp. 270–283.

Koshal, M., Gupta, A. K. and Koshal, R. (1998) 'Women in management: a Malaysian perspective', *Women in Management Review*, 13(1), pp. 11–18. doi: 10.1108/09649429810369596.

Kram, K. (1985) *Mentoring at Work: Development Relationships in Organisational Life*. Scott Foresman.

Kramer, V. W., Konrad, A. M. and Erkut, S. (2006) 'Critical Mass on Corporate Boards: Why Three or More Women Enhance Governance', *Governance*, pp. 1–4. doi: 10.1007/s10551-011-0815-z.

Krishnan, H. A. and Park, D. (2005) 'A few good women—on top management teams', *Journal of Business Research*, 58(12), pp. 1712–1720. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2004.09.003.

Krook, M. L. and Norris, P. (2014) 'Beyond quotas: Strategies to promote gender equality in elected office', *Political Studies*, 62(1), pp. 2–20. doi: 10.1111/1467-9248.12116.

Kurebwa, J. and Ndlovu, S. (2017) 'The Critical Mass Theory And Quota Systems Debate', *International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications*, 1(1), pp. 48–55.

Landman, M. (2006) 'Getting quality in qualitative research: a short introduction to feminist methodology and methods.', *The Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 65, pp. 429–433. doi: 10.1017/S0029665106005180.

Lee, H.-A. and Abdul Khalid, M. (2016) 'Discrimination of High Degrees: Race and Graduate Hiring in Malaysia', *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy*, 21(1), pp. 53–76.

Lee, J. (2005) 'Perception of Women Managers in Singapore: A Media Analysis', *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 11(2), pp. 233–250. doi: 10.1080/1360238042000291162.

Lewis, P., Saunders, M. and Thornhill, A. (2007) *Research Methods for Business Students*. Fourth. London: Pearson Education Limited.

Lewis, P. and Simpson, R. (2017) 'Hakim Revisited: Preference, Choice and the Postfeminist Gender Regime', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 24(2), pp. 115–133. doi: 10.1111/gwao.12150.

Lewis, S., Gambles, R. and Rapoport, R. (2007) 'The constraints of a "work-life balance" approach: An international perspective', *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(3), pp. 360–373. doi: 10.1080/09585190601165577.

Lewison, G. *et al.* (2016) 'The contribution of ethnic groups to Malaysian scientific output, 1982–2014, and the effects of the new economic policy', *Scientometrics*. Springer Netherlands, 109(3), pp. 1877–1893. doi: 10.1007/s11192-016-2139-3.

Liao, R. C., Loureiro, G. and Taboada, A. G. (2019) *'Women on Bank Boards: Evidence from Gender Quotas around the World'*.

Lim, L. (2001) 'Work-Related Values of Malays and Chinese Malaysians', *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 1(2), pp. 209–226. doi: 10.1177/147059580112005.

Lim, K. P. *et al.* (2019) 'Women Directors and Performance: Evidence from Malaysia',

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, 38(8), pp. 841–856. doi: 10.1108/EDI-02-2019-0084.

Linehan, M. and Scullion, H. (2008) 'The Development of Female Global Managers: The Role of Mentoring and Networking', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 83, pp. 29–40. doi: 10.1007/s10551-007-9657-0.

Linehan, M., 2019. *Senior female international managers*. Routledge.

Lopes, A. *et al.* (2015) 'Mentoring professional women in aviation and aerospace', *Centre for Employment Studies Research Review*, pp. 1–6. Available at: http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/25240.

Lotter, S. (2017) 'Gender Gap , Gender Trap : Negotiations of Intersectionality and Patriarchy amongst Women Elites in Nepal', 48, pp. 97–115.

Low, D. C. M., Roberts, H. and Whiting, R. H. (2015) 'Board gender diversity and firm performance: Empirical evidence from Hong Kong, South Korea, Malaysia and Singapore', *Pacific Basin Finance Journal*. Elsevier B.V., 35, pp. 381–401. doi: 10.1016/j.pacfin.2015.02.008.

Mackinnon, C. a (1982) 'Feminism, Marxism and the state: an agenda for theory', *Signs*, 7(3), pp. 515–544.

Mahdi, S. and Mohd Fauzi, Y. (2001) *Malaysian Studies*. Kuala Lumpur: Longman.

Malaysian Department of Statistic (2005) *Ninth Malaysia Plan 2006 - 2010: Woman In Development*.

Malaysian Department of Statistic (2010) *Tenth Malaysia Plan*.

Malaysian Department of Statistic (2017) *Statistics on Women Empowerment in Selected Domains*.

Malaysian Department of Statistic (2018) *Demographic Statistics First Quarter (Q1)*.

Malaysian Department of Statistics (2017a) *Labour Force Survey Report, Malaysia, 2016*. Available at: www.dosm.gov.my.

Malaysian Department of Statistics (2017b) *Labour Force Survey Report, Malaysia*.

Malaysian Department of Statistics (2019) *Marriage and Divorce Statistics*.

Mao, Y., Peng, K. Z. and Wong, C. (2012) 'Indigenous research on Asia: In search of the emic components of guanxi', *Asia Pac J Manag*, 29, pp. 1143–1168. doi: 10.1007/s10490-012-9317-5.

Marshall, J. (1984) *Women Managers: Travellers in a Male World*. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

Marshall, J. (1995) 'Working at senior management and board levels: some of the issues for women', *Women in Management Review*, 10(3), pp. 21–25. doi: 10.1108/09649429510085071.

Martin, P. and Barnard, A. (2013) 'The experience of women in male-dominated occupations: A constructivist grounded theory inquiry', *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 39(2), pp. 1–12. doi: 10.4102/sajip.v39i2.1099.

Mashral, N. and Ahmad, N. (2010) 'Women of the sandwich generation in Malaysia', *European Journal of Social Science*, 13(2), pp. 171–178.

Mason, J. (2002) 'Qualitative interviewing: Asking, listening and interpreting', in *Qualitative research in action*. London, UK: Sage Publications, pp. 225–241.

Masrek, M. N. *et al.* (2013a) 'Exploring the Relationship between Job Design and Knowledge Productivity: A Conceptual Framework in the Context of Malaysian Administrative and Diplomatic Officers', *IBIMA Publishing Journal of Organizational Knowledge Management Journal of Organizational Knowledge Management*, 2013(2013). doi: 10.5171/2013.128970.

Masrek, M. N. *et al.* (2013b) 'Exploring the Relationship between Job Design and Knowledge Productivity: A Conceptual Framework in the Context of Malaysian Administrative and Diplomatic Officers', *IBIMA Publishing Journal of Organizational Knowledge Management Journal of Organizational Knowledge Management*, 2013(2013). doi: 10.5171/2013.128970.

Mauzy, D. (2006) 'The Challenge to Democracy Singapore's and Malaysia's Resilient Hybrid Regimes', *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, 2(2), pp. 47–68. Available at: http://ezproxy.library.usyd.edu.au/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/59774390?accountid=14757.

Mavin, S. (2008) 'Queen Bees, Wannabees and Afraid to Bees: No More "Best Enemies" for Women in Management?', *British Journal of Management*, 19, pp. S75–S84. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8551.2008.00573.x.

Mavin, S. *et al.* (2015) '"Woman as a Project": Key Issues for Women Who Want to Get On', in *The Handbook of Gendered Careers in Management: Getting In, Getting On, Getting Out*, pp. 305–321. doi: 10.4337/9781782547709.

Maynard, M. (1998) *Feminists' knowledge and the knowledge of feminisms: Epistemology, theory, methodology and method*.

McBride, A., Hebson, G. and Holgate, J. (2015a) 'Intersectionality: are we taking enough notice in the field of work and employment relations?', *Work, employment and society*, 29(2), pp. 331–341. doi: 10.1177/0950017014538337.

McBride, A., Hebson, G. and Holgate, J. (2015b) 'Intersectionality: are we taking enough notice in the field of work and employment relations?', *Work, Employment & Society*, 29(2), pp. 331–341. doi: 10.1177/0950017014538337.

Mccall, L. (2005) 'The Complexity of Intersectionality', *Chicago Journals*, 30(3), pp. 1771–1800.

McCall, L. (2005) 'The Complexity of Intersecionality', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(3), pp. 1771–1800. doi: 10.1086/426800.

McIntosh, P. (1995) 'White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies', in Andersen, M. . and Collins, P. . (eds) *Race, class and gender: An anthology*. 2nd edn. Belmont: CA: Wadsworth.

McIntosh, P. (2012) 'Reflections and Future Directions for Privilege Studies', *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(1), pp. 194–206.

McIntosh, P. (2015) 'Extending the Knapsack: Using the White Privilege Analysis to Examine Conferred Advantage and Disadvantage', *Women and Therapy*. 2015, 38(3–4), pp. 232–245. doi: 10.1080/02703149.2015.1059195.

McKinsey (2012) *Women Matter : An Asian Perspective*.

Mclay, M. and Brown, M. (2000) 'The under-representation of women in senior management in UK independent secondary schools', *The Intenational Journal of Educational Management*, 14(3), pp. 101–106.

Meisenhelder, T. (2000) 'Toward A Field Theory of Class, Gender, and Race', *Race, Gender, and Class*, 7(2), pp. 76–95.

Melero, E. (2011) 'Are workplaces with many women in management run differently?', *Journal of Business Research*. Elsevier Inc., 64(4), pp. 385–393. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2010.01.009.

Mellstrom, U. (2009) 'The Intersection of Gender, Race and Cultural Boundaries, or Why is Computer Science in Malaysia Dominated by Women?', *Social Studies of Science*, 39(6), pp. 885–907. doi: 10.1177/0306312709334636.

Mincer, J. and Polachek, S. (1974) 'Family Investments in Human Capital: Earnings of Women', *Journal of Political Economy*, 82(April), pp. 76–110.

Ming Ng, P. T. (2012) 'Globalization and Religion: The Case of Malacca and the Work of Robert Morrison', *Religions*, 3(4), pp. 1075–1084. doi: 10.3390/rel3041075.

Ministry of Higher Education (2017) *Macro-Higher Education Institutions*.

Ministry of Women and Family Development (2003) *The Progress of Malaysia Women Since Independence 1957-2000*, *Ministry of Women and Family Development*. Available at: http://www.undp.org.my/uploads/ProgressOfMalaysianWomen.pdf.

Ministry of Women Family and Community Development (2013) *Statistics on Women, Family and Community*.

Ministry of Women and Family and Community Development (2014) *Study to Support The Development of National Policies and Programmes to Increase and Retain the Participation of Women in the Malaysian Labour Force*. doi: 10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004.

Mohamad, M. (2002) *At the centre and the periphery: the contributions of women's movements to democratisation*. Edited by C. Press. Surrey.

Mohamad, M. (2010) 'Making majority, undoing family: law, religion and the Islamization of the state in Malaysia', *Economy and Society*, 39(3), pp. 360–384. doi: 10.1080/03085147.2010.486218.

Mohamad, T. D. M. (2011) *A Doctor in the House - The Memoirs of Tun Dr mahathir Mohamad*. Selangor: MPH Group Publishing.

Musa, M. (2010) 'Wanita melayu, kesedaran pendidikan dan pembentukan masyarakat malaysia moden', *Malaysia Dari Segi Sejarah*, 28, pp. 1–24.

Mutalib, H. (1993) *Islam in Malaysia - From revivalism to Islamic State*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

Nash, J. C. (2008) 'Re-thinking Intersectionality', *Feminist Review*, 89, pp. 1–15.

Neale, J. and Özkanlı, O. (2010) 'Organisational barriers for women in senior management: a comparison of Turkish and New Zealand universities', *Gender and Education*, 22(5), pp. 547–563. doi: 10.1080/09540250903524113.

Ng, C. W. and Chakrabarty, A.-S. (2005) 'Women Managers in Hong Kong: Personal and Political Agendas', *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 11(2), pp. 163–178. doi: 10.1080/1360238042000291207.

Ng, S. H. (2005) 'Intergroup Behaviour and Ethnicity: A Social Psychological Perspective', *Asian Ethnicity*, 6(1), pp. 19–34. doi: 10.1080/1463136042000309026.

Noor, N. . and Mahudian, M. N. . (2005) 'Work, family and women's well-being: the influence of culture', in *Contemporary Issues in Malaysian Psychology*. Singapore: Thompson Learning.

Noor, N. M. (2006) 'Malaysian women's state of well-being: empirical validation of a conceptual model.', *The Journal of social psychology*, 146(1), pp. 95–115. doi: 10.3200/SOCP.146.1.95-115.

Norzareen, M. and Nobaya, A. (2010) 'Women of the Sandwich Generation in Malaysia', *European J Social Sciences*, 13, pp. 171–178.

O'Connor, V. J. (2001) 'Women and men in senior management - a "different needs"' hypothesis"', *Women In Management Review*, 16(8), pp. 400–404.

O'Neil, D. a., Hopkins, M. M. and Bilimoria, D. (2007) 'Women's Careers at the Start of the 21st Century: Patterns and Paradoxes', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 80(4), pp. 727–743. doi: 10.1007/s10551-007-9465-6.

O'Neil, D. a., Hopkins, M. M. and Sullivan, S. E. (2011) 'Do women's networks help advance women's careers?: Differences in perceptions of female workers and top leadership', *Career Development International*, 16(7), pp. 733–754. doi: 10.1108/13620431111187317.

Oakley, A. (1981) 'Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms', in *Doing Feminist Research*. London: Routledge Kegan Paul.

Oliveira, M. *et al.* (2013) 'Thematic Content Analysis: Is There a Difference Between the Support Provided by the MAXQDA (R) and NVivo (R) Software Packages?', *Proceedings of the 12th European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies*, pp. 304–310.

Omar, A. and Davidson, M. J. (2001) 'Women in Management : A Comparative Cross-Cultural Overview', *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 8(3).

Omar, A. and Davidson, M. J. (2004) 'Women in Management in Malaysia', in *Women in Management Worldwide: Facts, Figures and Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.

Omar, R. and Hamzah, A. (2003) *Women in Malaysia: Breaking Boundaries*. Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications and Distributors Sdn Bhd.

ONS, O. for N. S. (2017) *UK labour market: December 2017*.

Ose, S. O. (2016) 'Using Excel and Word to Structure Qualitative Data', *Journal of Applied Social Science*, 10(2), pp. 147–162. doi: 10.1177/1936724416664948.

Pande, R. and Ford, D. (2011) 'Gender Quotas and Female Leadership: A Review:

Background Paper for the World Development Report on Gender', *World Development Report 2012*, pp. 1–44. doi: 10.1002/1521-3757(20010316)113:6<10113::AID-ANGE10113>3.3.CO;2-V.

Parise, M. R. and Forret, M. L. (2008) 'Formal mentoring programs: The relationship of program design and support to mentors' perceptions of benefits and costs', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, pp. 225–240. doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2007.10.011.

Parker, S. J. (2017) *A Report into the Ethnic Diversity of UK Boards*.

Parker, V. A. and Kram, K. E. (1993) 'Women Mentoring Women: Creating Conditions for Connection', *Business Horizons*, 36(2), pp. 42–51. doi: 10.1016/S0007-6813(05)80037-0.

Permarupan, P. Y., Al-Mamun, A. and Ahmad Saufi, R. (2013) 'Quality of Work Life on Employees Job Involvement and Affective Commitment between the Public and Private Sector in Malaysia', *Asian Social Science*, 9(7), pp. 268–278. doi: 10.5539/ass.v9n7p268.

Pong, S. (1993) 'Preferential Policies and Secondary School Attainment in Peninsular Malaysia', *American Sociological Association*, 66(4), pp. 245–261.

Pong, S. (1995) 'Access to Education in Peninsular Malaysia: Ethnicity, Social Class and Gender', *Compare*, 25(3), p. 239.

Pounder, J. S. and Coleman, M. (2002) 'Women – better leaders than men? In general and educational management it still "all depends"', *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 23(3), pp. 122–133. doi: 10.1108/01437730210424066.

Powell, A., Bagilhole, B. and Dainty, A. (2009) 'How Women Engineers Do and Undo Gender: Consequences for Gender Equality', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 16(4), pp. 411–428. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0432.2008.00406.x.

Powell, G. N. and Graves, L. M. (2003) *Women and Men in Management*. 3rd Editio. London.

Prime Minister's Department (2016) *Eleventh Malaysia Plan 2016 - 2020*. doi: 10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004.

Prime Minister's Department, M. (1990) *Sixth Malaysia Plan 1991 - 1995: Woman In Development*.

Prime Minister's Department, M. (1995) *Seventh Malaysia Plan 1996 - 2000: Woman In Development*.

Prime Minister's Department, M. (2000) *Eight Malaysia Plan 2001 - 2005: Woman In*

Development.

Puspanita (1983) *Puspanita*. Available at: https://www.forestry.gov.my/en/puspanita.

Raman, S. R. and Sua, T. Y. (2010a) 'Ethnic segregation in Malaysia's education system: enrolment choices, preferential policies and desegregation', *International Journal of the History of Education*, 46(1–2), pp. 117–131.

Raman, S. R. and Sua, T. Y. (2010b) 'Ethnic segregation in Malaysia's education system: Enrolment choices, preferential policies and desegregation', *Paedagogica Historica*, 46(1–2), pp. 117–131. doi: 10.1080/00309230903528496.

Ramasamy, B. *et al.* (2007) 'Corporate Social Performance and Ethnicity. A Comparison between Malay and Chinese Chief Executives in Malaysia', *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 7(1), pp. 29–45. doi: 10.1177/1470595807075169.

Ramaswami, A., Huang, J.-C. and Dreher, G. (2014) 'Interaction of gender, mentoring, and power distance on career attainment: A cross-cultural comparison', *Human Relations*, 67(2), pp. 153–173. doi: 10.1177/0018726713490000.

Ramli, M. A. and Jamaludin, M. A. (2011) 'The 'Urf of Plural Society: The Concept and Its Practices in Malaysia', *Journal of Fiqh*, 8, pp. 45–64.

Rana, B. K. *et al.* (1998) 'British South Asian women managers and professionals: experiences of work and family', *Women in Management Review*, 13(6), pp. 221–232.

Rasdi, R. M., Garavan, T. N. and Ismail, M. (2012) 'Networking and managers' career success in the Malaysian public sector: The moderating effect of managerial level', *European Journal of Training and Development*, 36(2/3), pp. 195–212. doi: 10.1108/03090591211204715.

Reinharz, S. (1992) *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: University of Oxford.

Renshaw, J. R. (1999) *Kimono in the Boardroom: The Invisible Evolution of Japanese Women Managers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rickne, J. (2015) 'Gender Quotas and Ethnic Minority Representation : Swedish Evidence from a Longitudinal', 11(028746), pp. 345–381. doi: 10.1017/S1743923X15000069.

Riley, M. (1989) *Transforming Feminism*. Kansas City: Mo, Sheed and Ward.

Rodriguez, J. K. *et al.* (2016) 'The Theory and Praxis of Intersectionality in Work and Organisations: Where Do We Go From Here?', *Gender, Work and Organization*,

23(3), pp. 201–222. doi: 10.1111/gwao.12131.

Ropers-Huilman, R. and Winters, K. T. (2011) ‘Feminist Research in Higher Education’, *The Journal of Higher Education*, 82(6), pp. 667–690. doi: 10.1353/jhe.2011.0035.

Ruslan, Z., Mohamadee, M. . and Zaini, O. (2005) *Kenegaraan Malaysia*. Shah Alam: Fajar Bakti Sdn Bhd.

Saad, S. (2012) ‘Re-building the concept of nation building in Malaysia’, *Asian Social Science*, 8(4), pp. 115–123. doi: 10.5539/ass.v8n4p115.

Sabharwal, M. (2015) ‘From Glass Ceiling to Glass Cliff: Women in Senior Executive Service’, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 25(2), pp. 399–426. doi: 10.1093/jopart/mut030.

Saw, S. . (2007) *The Population of Peninsular Malaysia*. Singapore: Institute of SEA Studies.

Schein, V. E. (1973) ‘The relationship between sex role stereotypes and requisite management characteristics’, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 57, pp. 95–100.

Schein, V. E. *et al.* (1996) ‘Think manager – think male: a global phenomenon?’, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 17, pp. 33–41.

Schein, V. E. (2001) ‘A Global Look at Psychological Barriers to Women’s Progress in Management’, *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), pp. 675–688. doi: 10.1111/0022-4537.00235.

Schein, V. E. and Davidson, M. J. (1993) ‘Think manager, think male’, *Management Development Review*, 6(3), pp. 24–8.

Schönfelder, W. (2011) ‘CAQDAS and Qualitative Syllogism Logic — NVivo 8 and MAXQDA 10 Compared’, *Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 12(1), p. Art. 21.

Schwandt, T. A. (2003) ‘Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism’, in *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 292–331.

Schwartz-Ziv, M. (2015) ‘Gender and Board Activeness: The Role of a Critical Mass’, *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis*, 52(2), pp. 751–780. doi: 10.1017/S0022109017000059.

Sealy, R. (2010) ‘Changing perceptions of meritocracy in senior women’s careers’,

Gender in Management: An International Journal, 25(3), pp. 184–197. doi: 10.1108/17542411011036392.

Sealy, R. H. V. and Singh, V. (2009) 'The importance of role models and demographic context for senior women's work identity development', *International Journal of Management Reviews*. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2370.2009.00262.x.

Sealy, R. H. V. and Singh, V. (2010) 'The Importance of Role Models and Demographic Context for Senior Women's', *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 12(3), pp. 284–300. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2370.2009.00262.x.

Seierstad, C. (2016) 'Beyond the Business Case: The Need for Both Utility and Justice Rationales for Increasing the Share of Women on Boards', *Corporate Governance (Oxford)*, 24(4), pp. 390–405. doi: 10.1111/corg.12117.

Selvarajah, C. and Meyer, D. (2008) 'One nation, three cultures: exploring dimensions that relate to leadership in Malaysia', *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 29(8), pp. 693–712. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/MRR-09-2015-0216.

Shamsul, A. . (2001) 'A History of an Identity, an Identity of a History: The Idea and Practice of "Malayness" in Malaysia Reconsidered', *Source Journal of Southeast Asian Studies Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32(323), pp. 355–366. doi: 10.1017/S0022463401000194.

Shome, A. (2002) *Malay political leadership*. London: Routledge Curzon.

Shore, L. M. *et al.* (2009) 'Diversity in organizations: Where are we now and where are we going?', *Human Resource Management Review*. Elsevier Inc., 19(2), pp. 117–133. doi: 10.1016/j.hrmr.2008.10.004.

Showunmi, V., Atewologun, D. and Bebbington, D. (2016) 'Ethnic, gender and class intersections in British women's leadership experiences', *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 44(6), pp. 917–935. doi: 10.1177/1741143215587308.

Singh, V., Bains, D. and Vinnicombe, S. (2002) 'Informal Mentoring as an Organisational Resource', *Long Range Planning*, 35, pp. 389–405.

Singh, V., Vinnicombe, S. and James, K. (2006) 'Constructing a professional identity: how young female managers use role models', *Women In Management Review*, 21(1), pp. 67–81. doi: 10.1108/09649420610643420.

Singh, V., Vinnicombe, S. and Kumra, S. (2006) 'Women in formal corporate networks: an organisational citizenship perspective', *Women In Management Review*, 21(6), pp. 458–482. doi: 10.1108/09649420610683462.

Smith, N., Smith, V. and Verner, M. (2006) 'Do women in top management affect firm performance? A panel study of 2,500 Danish firms', *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 55(7), pp. 569–593. doi: 10.1108/17410400610702160.

Smith, P. (2012) 'Women' s beliefs about breaking glass ceilings', in *Handbook of gendered careers in management: Getting in, getting on, getting out*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, pp. 194–207.

Squires, J. (2003) *Gender Quotas in Britain: A Fast Track to Equality?*, *The Research Program on Gender Quotas*. Available at: http://www.legislationline.org/download/action/download/id/2878/file/Gender Quotas in Britain_ A fast track to equality 2004.pdf.

Staines, G., Travis, C. and Jayerante, T. . (1974) 'The Queen Bee Syndrome', *Psychology Today*, 7(8), pp. 55–60.

Staunæs, D. (2003) 'Where have all the subjects gone? Bringing together the concepts of intersectionality and subjectification', *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, 11(2), pp. 101–110. doi: 10.1080/08038740310002950.

Stivens, M. (2003) *Framing women's rights claims in Malaysia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Subramaniam, G. (2011) 'Flexible Working Arrangements in Malaysia and the Participation of Women in the Labour Force', p. 285.

Suisse, C. (2012) *Gender Diversity and Corporate Performance*.

Sullivan, S. E. and Mainiero, L. (2008) 'Using the Kaleidoscope Career Model to Understand the Changing Patterns of Women's Careers: Designing HRD Programs That Attract and Retain Women', *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 10(1), pp. 32–49. doi: 10.1177/1523422307310110.

TalentCorp (2017) *Talent Diversity: The Way Forward*.

TalentCorp, M. (2014) *Engaging and Developing Female Leaders*.

Tatli, A. and Ozbilgin, M. (2012) 'Surprising Intersectionalities of Inequality and Privilege: The Case of the Arts and Cultural Sector', *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 31(3), pp. 249–265.

Terjesen, S., Aguilera, R. V. and Lorenz, R. (2014) 'Legislating a Woman's Seat on the Board: Institutional Factors Driving Gender Quotas for Boards of Directors', *Journal of Business Ethics*, (June 2012), pp. 1–19. doi: 10.1007/s10551-014-2083-1.

Terjesen, S. and Sealy, R. (2016) 'Board Gender Quotas: Exploring Ethical Tensions From A Multi-Theoretical Perspective', *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 26(January 2016), pp. 23–65. doi: 10.1017/beq.2016.7.

Terjesen, S., Sealy, R. and Singh, V. (2009) 'Women Directors on Corporate Boards: A Review and Research Agenda', *Corporate Governance: An International Review*, 17(3), pp. 320–337. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8683.2009.00742.x.

Tey, N. P. (2006) 'Gender Differentials in Educational Attainments', in *Statistics in Action*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, pp. 101–119.

Tomlinson, J. and Durbin, S. (2010) 'Female part-time managers: Work-life balance,. aspirations and career mobility', *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 29(3), pp. 255–270. doi: 10.1108/02610151011028859.

Tong, J. K.-C. and Turner, B. S. (2008) 'Women, piety and practice: A study of women and religious practice in Malaysia', *Contemporary Islam*, 2(1), pp. 41–59. doi: 10.1007/s11562-007-0038-3.

Torchia, M., Calabrò, A. and Huse, M. (2011) 'Women Directors on Corporate Boards: From Tokenism to Critical Mass', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 102(2), pp. 299–317. doi: 10.1007/s10551-011-0815-z.

Travers, C., Pemberton, C. and Stevens, S. (1997) 'Women's networking across boundaries: recognizing different cultural agendas', *Women In Management Review*, 12(2), pp. 61–67.

United Nations Statistic Division (2010) *The World's Women 2010*.

Vinnicombe, S., Doldor, E. and Sealy, R. (2018) *The Female FTSE Board Report 2018*.

Vinnicombe, S. and Singh, V. (2003a) 'Locks and keys to the boardroom', *Women in Management Review*, 18(6), pp. 325–333. doi: 10.1108/09649420310491495.

Vinnicombe, S. and Singh, V. (2003b) 'Women-only management training : An essential part of women's leadership development', *Journal of Change Management*, 3, pp. 294–306.

Wacjman, J. (1998) *Managing Like a Man*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Walby, S. (1986) *Patriarchy at Work*. Cambridge: Polity.

Walby, S. (1990) *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Walby, S. (1991) *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Cambridge, USA: Basil Blackwell Inc.

Walby, S. (2002) ‘Feminism in a global era’, *Economy and Society*, 31(4), pp. 533–557. doi: 10.1080/0308514022000020670.

Walby, S. (2009) *Globalization and Inequalities Complexity and Contested Modernities*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Wang, M. and Kelan, E. (2013) ‘The Gender Quota and Female Leadership: Effects of the Norwegian Gender Quota on Board Chairs and CEOs’, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 117, pp. 449–466. doi: 10.1007/s10551-012-1546-5.

Wariya, C. (2010) *Asas Pembinaan Negara Bangsa Institusi Pemerintahan Lambang Kebangsaan*. Kuala Lumpur: Matrix Media Global.

Weber, L. (2001) *Understanding Race, Class, gender, and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework.* Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Weeks, A. C. and Baldez, L. (2015) ‘Quotas and qualifications: the impact of gender quota laws on the qualifications of legislators in the Italian parliament’, *European Political Science Review*, 7(1), pp. 119–144. doi: 10.1017/S1755773914000095.

Westmarland, N. (2001) ‘The Quantitative/Qualitative Debate and Feminist Research: A Subjective View of Objectivity’, *Forum Qualitative Social Research*, 2(1).

White, B., Cox, C. and Cooper, C. L. (1992) *Women’s career development: a study of high flyers*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

White, J. (1992) *A Few Good Women: Breaking the Barriers to Top Management*. London: Prentice-Hall.

Wichert, I. (2011) *Where have all the senior women gone? 9 critical job assignments for women leaders*. Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wichert, I. C. (2011) *Where Have All the Senior Women Gone? 9 Critical Job Assignments for Women Leaders*. Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

Woo, K. H. and Teng, K. T. (2019) ‘Public Sector or Private Sector Employment? Perspectives of Students of a Private College in Penang’, *Kajian Malaysia*, 37(1), pp. 1–25.

Wood, G. (2003) ‘What does it take to get to the top: do middle and senior managers agree?’, *Women in Management Review*, 18(3), pp. 122–131. doi: 10.1108/09649420310471082.

Wood, G. (2008) ‘Gender stereotypical attitudes: Past, present and future influences on women’s career advancement’, *Equal Opportunities International*, 27(7), pp. 613–628. doi: 10.1108/02610150810904319.

Woodhams, C., Lupton, B. and Cowling, M. (2015) 'The Presence of Ethnic Minority and Disabled men in Feminised Work: Intersectionality, Vertical Segregation and the Glass Escalator', *Sex Roles*, 72(7–8), pp. 277–293. doi: 10.1007/s11199-014-0427-z.

World Economic Forum (2017) *Global Gender Gap Report 2017*. Available at: http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2017/closing-occupational-gender-gaps/.

Xiaolei, W. *et al.* (2013) 'Rising Women's Status, Modernisation and Persisting Son Preference in China', *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 20(1), pp. 85–109. doi: 10.1177/0971521512465938.

Yeoh, J. P. . and Yeoh, P. . (2015) 'Competitiveness between Ethnic Malays and Ethnic Chinese in Malaysia', *GSTF Journal of Psychology*, 2(1), pp. 8–15. doi: 10.5176/2345-7872.

Yerkes, M. A. and Javornik, J. (2019) 'Creating Capabilities: Childcare Policies in Comparative Perspective', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 29(4), pp. 529–544. doi: 10.1177/0958928718808421.

Yih, Y. . *et al.* (2017) 'What Lead to Divorce? Perspectives from a Malaysian Chinese Wife of an Adulterous Husband.', *Advanced Science Letters*, 23(3), pp. 2163–216.

Yin, R. K. (2011) *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Young, R. A. and Collin, A. (2004) 'Introduction: Constructivism and social constructionism in the career field', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 64(3), pp. 373–388. doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2003.12.005.

Yuki, M. (2003) 'Intergroup Comparison versus Intragroup Relationships: A Cross-Cultural Examination of Social Identity Theory in North American and East Asian Cultural Contexts', *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 66(2), pp. 166–183.

Yukongdi, V. (2005) 'Women in Management in Thailand: Advancement and Prospects', *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 11(2), pp. 267–281. doi: 10.1080/1360238042000291144.

Yukongdi, V. and Benson, J. (2005) 'Women in Asian Management: Cracking the Glass Ceiling?', *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 11(2), pp. 139–148. doi: 10.1080/1360238042000291225.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006a) 'Intersectionality and Feminist Politics', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13(3), pp. 193–209. doi: 10.1177/1350506806065752.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006b) ‘Intersectionality and Feminist Politics’, *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, 13(3), pp. 193–209. doi: 10.1177/1350506806065752.

Zaaba, Z. *et al.* (2010) ‘English as a Medium of Instruction in the Public Higher Education Institution : A Case Study of Language-in-Education Policy in Malaysia’, in *9th WSEAS International Conference on Education and Educational Technology*, pp. 188–196.

Zahid, M., Rahman, H.U., Ali, W., Khan, M., Alharthi, M., Qureshi, M.I. and Jan, A., 2020. Boardroom gender diversity: Implications for corporate sustainability disclosures in Malaysia. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *244*, p.118683

Zainuddin et al (2010) *Kenegaraan Malaysia*. Shah Alam: Oxford Fajar Bakti Sdn Bhd.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THE NATIONAL POLICY FOR WOMEN (NPW) FROM SIXTH MALAYSIA PLAN (1991 – 1995) TO ELEVENTH MALAYSIA PLAN (2016 – 2020)

No	Women and Development Period of Plan	Prospects and Strategies
1	Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991 – 1995)	The challenging of dual-career families and work-life balance Gender discrimination in schools that may contribute to occupational segregation, and restrict women's flexibility in the labour force later The societal expectations pertaining to women's roles in the society and the labour market Stay-at-home-mothers (SAHM) who have lack of managerial skills that may hinder them from securing alternative income The perception that women are likely to be considered as home-makers or secondary earners rather than as breadwinners of the family The lack of training, workshops or seminars on appropriate management and leadership skills for women in particular The absence of implementation on family-friendly working environment such as fixed working hours and less time off provision for child rearing and the like
2	Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996 – 2000)	Promoting greater female participation in the labour market by providing more flexible working and support facilities Providing more educational and training opportunities Improving the health status of women Reviewing laws and regulations Strengthening the institutional capacity for the advancement of women Operationalizing the NPW through the implementation of an action plan Forging closer linkages at the international level through effective participation at international for implementation of commitments for the advancement of women

3	Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001 – 2005)	Increasing female participation in the labour market Providing more education and training opportunities for women to meet the demands in the labour market Enhancing women's involvement in business Reviewing laws and regulations on women's advancement Improving further the health status of women Reducing the incidence of poverty among female-headed households Strengthening research activities to increase participation of women in development Strengthening the national machinery and the institutional capacity for the women's movement
4	Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006 – 2010)	Promoting greater female participation in the labour force Increasing education and training opportunities Enhancing participation in business and entrepreneurial activities Improving the health status and well-being of women Reducing violence against women Reducing incidence of poverty and improving quality of life Strengthening national machinery and institutional capacity Advancing issues pertaining to women at the international level
5	Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011 – 2015)	Increasing women's participation in the labour force Increasing the number of women in key decision-making positions Improving provision of support for women in challenging circumstances such as widows, single mothers and those with lower incomes Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women Increasing the number of community-based nurseries and day care centres under JKM – improve work-life balance Implementing flexible working hours and work from home policies in the public and private sectors to encourage a more family-friendly workplace

6	Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016 – 2020)	Enhancing the role of women in development Creating a more conducive working environment Increasing the number of women in decision-making positions

Source: (Prime Minister's Department, 1995, 2000, 2016, Malaysian Department of Statistic, 2005, 2010)

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

INTERVIEW CONSENT

WOMEN IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT WITHIN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYMENTS IN MALAYSIA

Dear Miss / Mrs / Madam / Datin / Puan Sri _____,

I am presently doing a PhD research at Bristol Business School, University of the West of England (UWE) under the supervision of Professor Hazel Conley, Professor Sue Durbin and Professor Harriet Bradley, on the topic of *'Women in Senior Management within Public and Private Employment Sectors in Malaysia'*.

In line with the recent introduction of 30 per cent quotas in the private sector, the research focuses on senior women's career in Malaysia covering aspects ranging from socio-economic background to an analysis of how their current career and personal lives differ from other women senior manager from different ethnic backgrounds. I wish to assure you that this research is not designed to incriminate any individual, personnel or company.

I would like to talk to you about your experiences as someone who holds senior positions in the organisation. Questions will cover three themes: 1) demographic information, such as childhood, family and educational backgrounds; 2) career as a senior manager. This would include working history prior to being promoted as a senior role, current organisational background, present job and managerial skills; 3) motivation, including career challenges and future career aspirations. Notes will be written, an audio tape will be recorded during the interview and the session will last approximately 45 - 60 minutes. I wish to assure you that the following conditions will be strictly adhered to:

- All interview information will be treated in strict confidence,
- Information obtained in this research will be used only in this study, related follow-up studies and any resulting publications,

- Extracts from interviews may be used in the final report of the research but no references will be made to the specific origin of that information,
- All interview materials will remain in my personal ownership,
- No names will be taken or used.

I hope the above conditions would be sufficient to negate any fears or doubts you may have about participating in this research. If you still do not wish to participate, that decision is entirely yours. Moreover, you are free to withdraw from the interview should you wish to do so at any point of time. Thank you for your time, consideration and co-operation.

Sincerely,

AJLAA SHAZWANI MOKHTAR

Doctoral Student, Centre for Employment Studies Research (CESR)

Bristol Business School, University of the West of England (UWE)

Frenchay Campus, Bristol BS16 1QY

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

WOMEN IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT WITHIN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS EMPLOYMENT IN MALAYSIA

I agree to take part in the interview conducted by Ajlaa Shazwani Mokhtar for her PhD research project from Bristol Business School. ☐

My participation in this research is voluntary and I will not be paid for it. ☐

I am aware that I may withdraw at any time, without penalty. ☐

I agree that the researcher will record the interview session and she will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from the interview and my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. ☐

I have read and understand the information provided to me. ☐

Participant Name :

Organisation :

Position :

Date :

Signature :

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A. INTRODUCTION

Personal and family background

1. So shall we start this session by telling me about your family background?

Probe: If you don't mind, can you tell me about your age, marital status, how many children you have or anything that you would like to share?

Prompt: What about your family? How many siblings do you have? Is your family supportive of your career? What are your father's and mother's occupations? Which parent is the most influential? In what way?

Educational Background – tell me about your experience of schooling and education

2. May I know what type of school did you attend? Was it a national school or a national type school (Chinese / Indian) or a private school?

Probe: How was your schooling experience? Did it affect your present life? If yes, why?

Prompt: Has anything changed since then? Was it good or bad?

3. Can you tell me what your highest educational attainment is? Is it Diploma / Degree / Masters / PhD?

Probe: Where did you obtain your highest education? Local university or oversea? Why did you choose that institution?

Prompt: What about your subject area? Has someone influenced you in terms of your subject choices or you chose it with a career in mind?

Career History

Can you talk briefly through all the jobs you have had since you completed your education?

4. Have you joined other companies before working with the current one? If yes, how many companies were there? Were there public or private organisations?

Probe: What was your position when you first recruited? Can you tell me a bit about your job experiences? Did you like that job? Why?

Prompt: What are your reasons for leaving the previous companies? Do you think that moving from one company to another is good for your career projection? Why?

B. CAREER IN A SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Now, let's talk about your career as a woman who holds senior managerial positions in public / private sector organisations.

Current Career

5. Can you share with me about your current career such as how long have you been working in this company, your current position and job scopes?

Probe: How was the recruitment process like? Did you have to attend several stages of interviews? Are you the first woman to hold this position? If yes, how did you manage to be promoted? If no, why is that happened? Any problems getting to the top? Did anybody help you?

Prompt: In your opinion, what factors do you feel have been important to your success in your current senior positions? If you were from another ethnic group, do you think you would hold the same position? If yes / no, what makes you say that?

What about job satisfaction? Anything needs to change?

Managerial Skills

6. As someone who already succeed, can you tell me what are the skills / attributes should senior managers have (e.g confidence, independence, and aggression)?

Probe: How do you think you measure against these criteria?

Prompt: Do you have any professional qualification? When did you obtain them? What extra qualification would you need if any?

Organisational Background

7. Generally speaking, can you tell me about the nature of business in your current organization?

Probe: Do you have any idea how many numbers of workers in this company? Is this company predominantly male-dominated at management level or overall?

Prompt: What are the numbers of male and female superiors, colleagues and subordinates in your workplace / department?

8. What kind of facilities does the company provide you?

Probe: Can you give me some examples? Parking, daycare, family-friendly facilities?

Prompt: Do you think the company should provide additional facilities for female employees? If yes, what are there?

9. As a female boss, are you aware of the introduction on 30% quota for women in public and private sectors in Malaysia?

Probe: Have government's policies on quota affected your situation as a woman in this company? Can you tell me about the training opportunities this organisation has to offer?

Prompt: Honestly speaking, what is your personal view on quota? Do you agree or disagree? Why? Can you expand a little on this?

Career Challenges

Mentoring

10. Do you have a mentor in the workplace? If you do, can you tell me about how did your mentor guide you?

Probe: Do you mentor anyone in your current organisation?

Prompt: Do you think is it necessary for women to have a mentor in the workplace? Why do you think so?

Networking

11. Do you engage in networking? Is it important for senior women to network?

Probe: Do you network with men or women or both? How do you describe the attitudes of your male superiors, colleagues, subordinates or clients be like towards senior women? Is it the same for all women?

Prompt: What about the attitudes of your female superiors, colleagues, subordinates or clients towards senior women? Is it the same for all women?

Mobility

12. Would you agree to accept a role that required you to travel? Can you tell me why?

Probe: Would you bring your spouse or children if you have to work outstation?

Prompt: Is your superior okay with this?

Work-life balance

13. We understand that it is not easy to juggle dual-roles as a wife (if she is married) and a career woman. So from your own experiences, what are the impacts of being a married woman in your career?

Probe: What roles do you and your spouse assume at home (house chores / childcare)? How do you feel about that? Do you have to take work home?

Prompt: Which partner usually deals with any emergency that arises at home or at school (if she has child / children)? Are you okay with that? Do you have help with childcare (nursery, nanny, grandparents)? Have you had to make sacrifices to get where you are? (E.g. not having children, not having holidays)

14. Between you and spouse, may I know who earns more and have higher status? Is he okay with that?

Probe: Would you mind to tell me what your monthly income is?

Prompt: Are you satisfied with what you have earned today? If yes / no, can you tell me why? Would you work if you have other options? What are the options you might have if there is any?

Cultural / Societal Expectations

15. From your point of view, does society accept women in power like you?

Probe: Do you think that your religious beliefs have influenced your career? How?

Prompt: Would your cultural beliefs advantage or disadvantage your career development? Why?

C. ASPIRATION

16. As a woman who holds senior role, how do you feel about your career development?

Probe: What would you advise women out there who want to be succeed like you? Do you have short time goals? What are your ambitions for the future?

Prompt: Do you have anything else to say? Is there anything important that I have not asked you about?

APPENDIX D: LIST OF INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS IN MALAYSIA

NO	PSEUDONYM	JOB TITLE	AGE	ETHNICITY	MARITAL STATUS, CHILDREN AND AGE	HIGHEST QUALIFICATION
1	Melati	Principal Assistant Secretary	31 - 35	Malay	Married, two children, aged five and one	Masters
2	Cempaka	Senior Assistant Director	36 - 40	Malay	Married, four children, eldest aged ten and youngest aged five	Degree
3	Mawar	Principal Assistant Director	36 - 40	Malay	Married, two children	Masters
4	Kemboja	Principal Assistant Director	31 - 35	Malay	Married, three children, aged seven, four and one	Degree
5	Tulip	Assistant Director	46 -50	Malay	Married, four children, aged seventeen, sixteen, fourteen and eleven	Masters
6	Teratai	Business Analysis & Reporting General Manager	46 -50	Malay	Married, four children, aged twenty-one, seventeen, fourteen and five	Degree
7	Sakura	Assistant Director	41 - 45	Malay	Married, seven children, eldest aged fifteen and youngest aged one year	Masters
8	Dahlia	Head of Unit, Commercial Sector	51 - 55	Malay	Married, four children, aged twenty-four, twenty-one, sixteen and thirteen	Masters
9	Orked	Deputy Under Secretary	41 - 45	Malay	Married, three children, aged twenty-two, seventeen and fifteen	Masters
10	Anggerik	Principal Assistant Secretary	31 - 35	Malay	Married, two children, aged six and four	Degree
11	Azalea	Principal Assistant Secretary	41 - 45	Malay	Married, four children	Masters
12	Rose	Chief Executive Officer	46 -50	Malay	Married, two children, aged seventeen and fourteen	Degree
13	Nona	Vice President	51 - 55	Malay	Married, two children, aged twenty-nine and twenty-four	Masters

14	Akasia	Deputy Secretary General	56 - 60	Malay	Married, four children, aged thirty-four, thirty-three, twenty-nine and twenty-four	PhD
15	Melur	Director	51 - 55	Malay	Re-married, four children, aged thirty, twenty-seven, twenty-one, and ten	Degree
16	Kekwa	General Manager	46 -50	Malay	Married, three children, aged twenty, eighteen and fifteen	Degree
17	Shanti	Senior Assistant Director	41 - 45	India	Married, three children, aged fourteen, eleven and nine	PhD
18	Xiu Ying	Assurance Leader	41 - 45	Chinese	Married, triplets, aged ten	Degree
19	Kenanga	Head of Portfolio, Management & Growth	36 - 40	Malay	Married, one child, aged six months	Degree
20	Seroja	Managing Director	51 - 55	Malay	Married, one child, aged twenty-three	Masters
21	Lily	General Manager	51 - 55	Malay	Married, three children, aged twenty-five, twenty-one and sixteen	Masters
22	Kamelia	Vice President of Treasury	51 - 55	Malay	Married, four children, eldest aged twenty-seven, youngest aged fourteen	ACCA
23	Ramlah	Senior Vice President	46 -50	Malay	Single, none	Degree
24	Zaleha	Senior Vice President	41 - 45	Malay	Married, one child, aged nine	Degree
25	Mei Feng	Group Financial Controller	46 -50	Chinese	Married, two children	Degree
26	Madhuri	Director	51 - 55	India	Married, three children,	Certificate
27	Daisy	Chief Finance Officer	41 - 45	Chinese	Married, none	Degree
28	Iris	Head of Strategy Implementation	46 -50	Malay	Married, two children, aged twenty-one and twenty	Masters
29	Kuntum	Secretary General	56 - 60	Malay	Married, three children	Masters
30	Widuri	Senior Assistant Director	46 -50	Malay	Married, four children	Masters
31	Jasmin	General Manager	46 -50	Malay	Married, two children, aged twenty-three and twenty	Degree

Source: Senior Women Managers Interviewed