

Chapter Seven

Findings from the Quantitative Data

The analysis of the quantitative data has three broad objectives. The first objective focuses on verifying whether the differences and similarities in the views and experiences of senior management women identified in the qualitative data are supported by data from a representative survey sample of senior management women. The second objective is to discover the significant differences between the views and experiences of women working in public service organisations compared to women working in private sector organisations and the nature and strength of those differences. Finally, the third objective is to examine the effects of demographic variables such as age, occupation, class, and educational level on the views and experiences of senior management women towards issues of gender equity.

The demographic profile of the sample will be presented first in order to graphically represent the characteristics of the sample. The first two objectives of the study will be addressed simultaneously by interpreting the responses of senior management women to the questions from the quantitative questionnaire and comparing the responses from women working in the private and public sectors. The analyses will be presented according to themes similar to those that emerged from the qualitative data reported in Chapter Six. Many of the cross-tabulation tables relating to the findings from the quantitative analysis are presented for completeness and reader reference in Appendix 6. Because of the number of significance tests undertaken in the analysis of the quantitative data, the level of significance adopted for any single test was set at the more stringent $p = .01$ level rather than the typical $p = .05$ level. Tests with resulting probabilities between $p = .01$ and $p = .05$ are considered to be marginally significant or suggestive of a trend in the context of the study. For all analyses exact p values will be reported where they are known from the SPSS output. Otherwise, the p value that is less than the smallest value that could be printed by SPSS will be shown.

7.1: Demographic Differences between Public and Private Sector Women

Age, political affiliation, social class of parents, educational level, income, length of time in current position, whether a woman is child-free or has children, all have a significant relationship with the categorisation of women as public and private sector women. Figures 1 to 6 show the differences between private and public sector women surveyed with regard to specific demographic variables.

Figure 1 shows the age distributions between women working in the public sector compared to those working in the private sector. The difference between the distributions highlight the fact that a larger proportion of women working in the private sector are in the older age brackets compared to those working in the public sector. The difference in average ages was statistically significant ($t(559df) = 6.52, p < 0.0001$). The mean age of public sector women in the sample was 50.959 (s.d. = 6.134) and the mean age for private sector women was 54.701 (s.d. = 7.442).

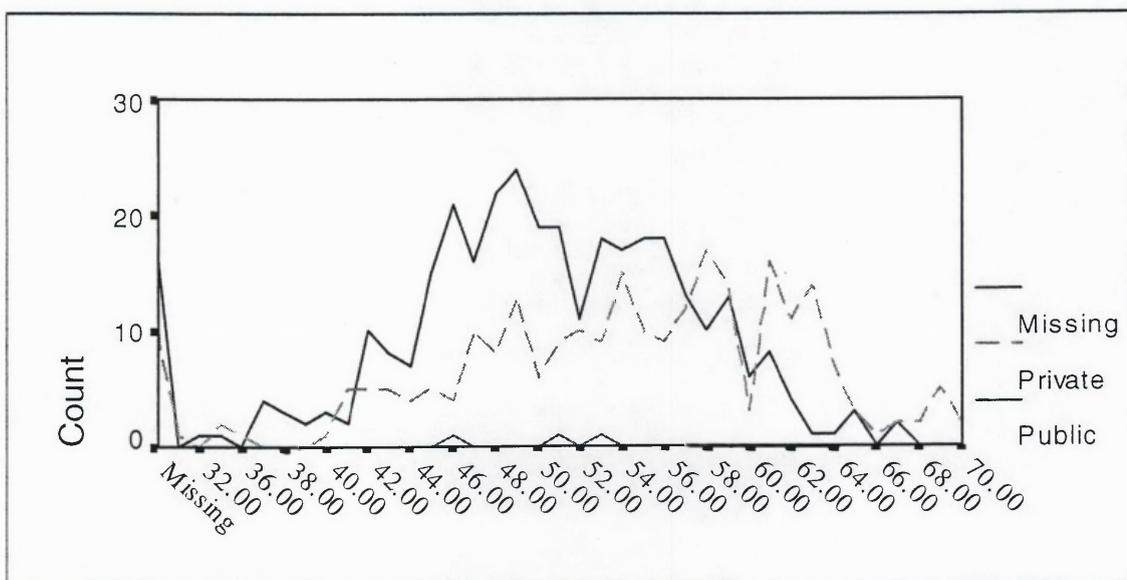


Figure 1: Age by Public/ Private

Figure 2 shows the comparison of women with and without children between the private and public sectors. The graph highlights the fact that there are significantly more women with children in the public sector than there are in the private sector whereas the proportion of women without children is approximately the same for both sectors. ($\chi^2(1) = 9.417; p = 0.00215$).

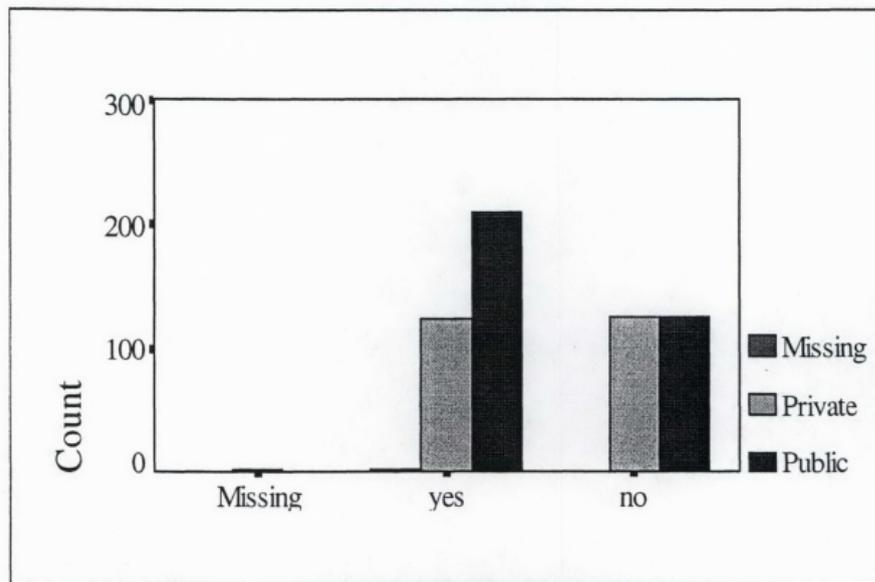


Figure 2: Motherhood by Public/ Private

The next graph, Figure 3, shows the differences between private and public sector women in terms of their political affiliation. The graph shows that women working in the private sector are much more likely to be 'Liberal' voters than public sector women who largely favour a 'Swinging' or 'Left wing' voting preference ($\chi^2(2) = 94.249; p < 0.0001$).

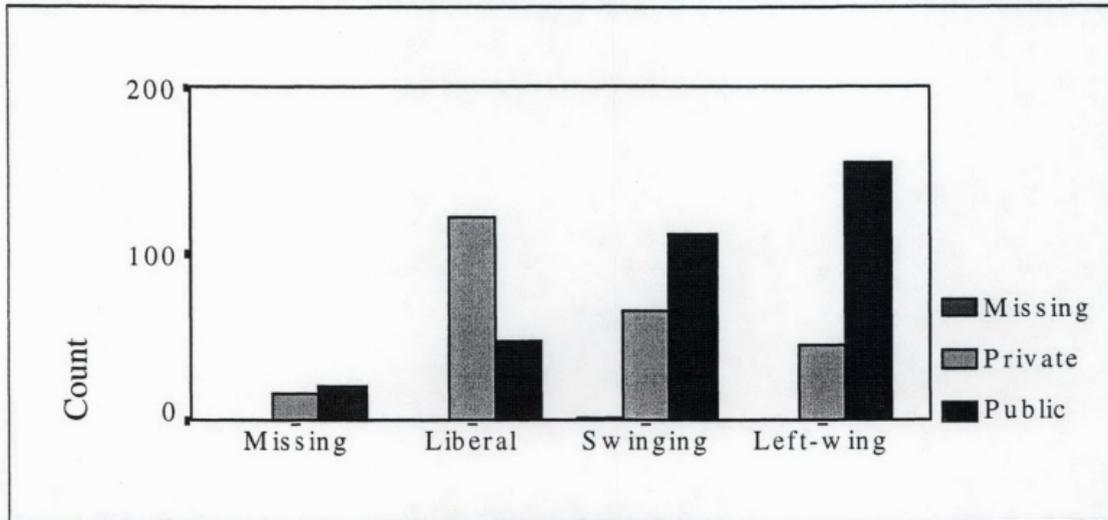


Figure 3: Political Affiliation by Public/ Private

Figure 4 displays the nominated social class of the parents of each respondent. The graph shows that significantly more public sector women come from middle class, lower middle class, and working class backgrounds ($\chi^2 (4) = 20.115; p = 0.00047$).

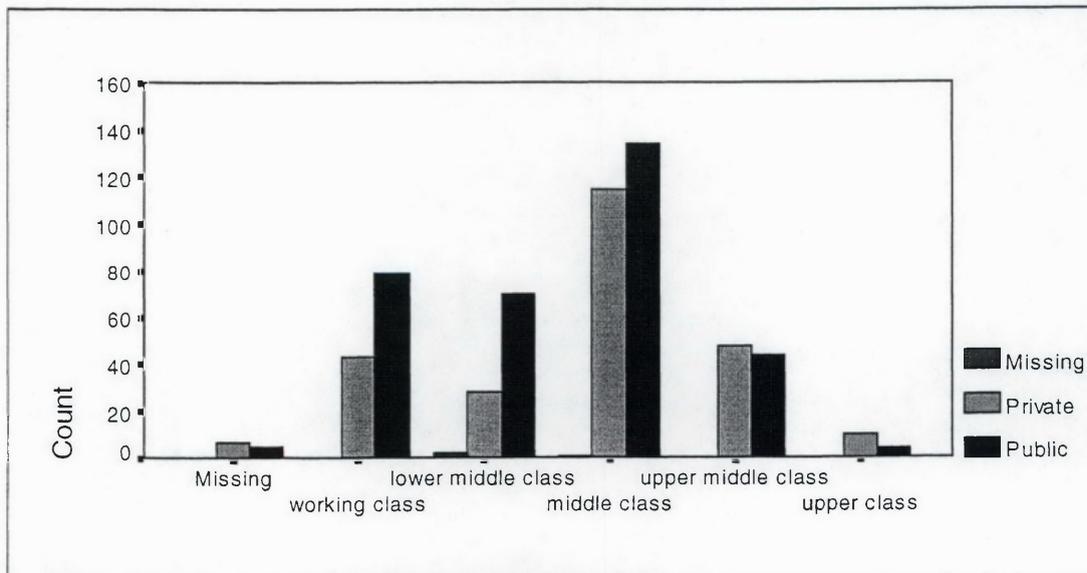


Figure 4: Class of Parents by Public/ Private

Figure 5 displays the highest educational level obtained by respondents in the private and public sectors. It shows that women working in the public sector tended to achieve significantly higher levels of educational attainment than private sector women ($\chi^2 (6) = 35.180; p < 0.0001$).

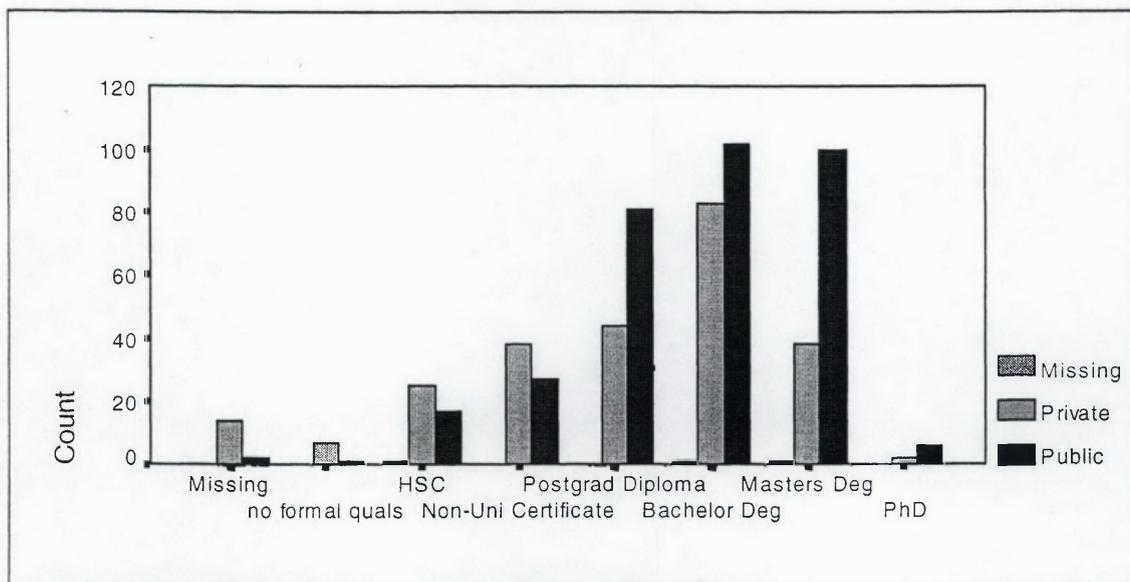


Figure 5: Educational level by Public/ Private

Figure 6 displays the differences in income levels between women working in the private and public sectors. The graph shows that the incomes of private sector women peak at between 100,000 – 150,000 AUDs per annum and the incomes of public sector women peak at between 60,000 – 80,000 AUDs per annum ($\chi^2 (4) = 56.638; p < 0.00001$).

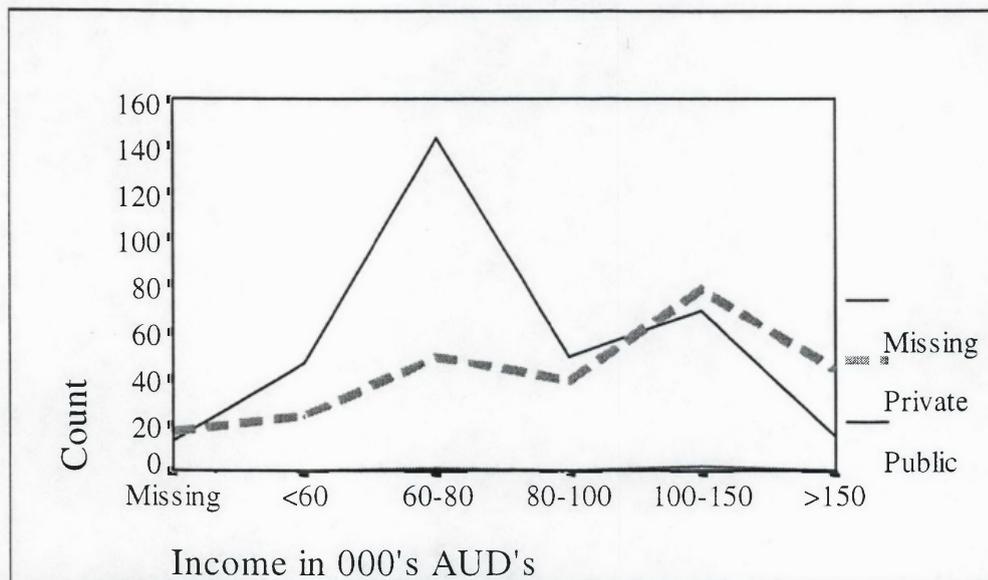


Figure 6: Income by Public/ Private

The preceding demographic charts show that there are a number of statistically significant differences between private and public sector women on the most basic demographic variables. These statistics show the broad differences between the basic experiences of these two groups. Public sector women in the sample tended to be younger, proportionally less child-free, more likely to vote 'Swinging' or 'Left-wing', more likely to come from working class, lower middle or, middle class backgrounds, more highly educated, and earn lower salaries than women working in the private sector.

7.2: A Comparison of the Views and Experiences of Public and Private Sector Women with Respect to Gender Equity

The comparison of the views and experiences between public and private sector women takes the form of descriptive bi-variate analyses. The tables in Appendix 6 show cross-tabulations of the private/public sector variable with all of the response variables of interest to the research objectives. The following seven specific objectives have been developed according to the results from the qualitative phase of the study.

1. Whether the majority of senior management women attributed their success to an upbringing based upon an achievement orientation.
2. Whether there was a low proportion of senior management women who perceived themselves as powerful individuals.
3. Whether approximately half of the senior management women surveyed identified themselves as feminists.
4. What proportion of senior management women were familiar with the meaning of the Affirmative Action legislation and how it is practiced in the workplace, especially the fact that it is based upon the merit principle.
5. Whether there was a very low proportion of senior management women who were against quota systems to redress the gender imbalance in senior management, and if so why.
6. Whether there was a high proportion of senior management women who perceived their management style to be different to that of their male colleagues.
7. Whether there was a high proportion of senior management women who believed women themselves were to blame for their low numbers in senior management positions.

The views and experiences of private sector women will be compared to public sector women for each of these objectives. Except where explicitly stated, the statistical significance of any difference between the two groups on any of the variables measured was assessed using the χ^2 contingency table statistic.

7.2.1: Backgrounds Based on Education and Achievement-Orientation

Respondents were asked about the factors from their backgrounds that they felt were important in assisting them to obtain their management position. The choice of factors available was based on the background factors mentioned most frequently by respondents in the qualitative study. As can be seen from Table 1 in Appendix 6 the features cited by individual senior management women as important in the quantitative study were very similar to those reported as important in the qualitative study by both private and public sector women equally. A good education was cited by two-thirds (67%) of women as an important background factor to their success. This was followed closely by the category of an achievement-oriented family (48.6%), then a tough, disciplined, or working class family (38.8%). The 'other' category was the next most cited

reason consisting of a selection of individual personality based factors (36.4%). The last three reasons in order of importance were a mother who worked outside of the home (28.4%), a father in management or business (20.3%), and parents who ran business or worked in management (13.5%).

To explore the significance of proportion differences in background factor choice between the two groups, a z-test for differences between independent proportions was employed (Ferguson & Takane, 1989). The z value, shown in column four in Table 1 of Appendix 6, compares the proportion of public and private sector women who reported the particular factor as important to their background. The *p* value, in column five in Table 1, shows the associated probability for the z statistic in the normal distribution assuming no differences in proportions in the population.

As can be seen from the *p* values there were only two factors where there was either a marginally significant or significant difference between the public and private sector. There was a marginally significant difference ($p = 0.0384$) between public and private sector women on the factor 'parents who ran a business', which suggested that the effect of socialisation into business practices tended to have been more emphasised or actually experienced by women working in the private sector (16.7%) compared to those in the public sector (11%). A statistically significant difference ($p = 0.003$), however, was found between private sector women and public sector women who attributed their position in senior management to the fact that they had fathers who were in management or business. Significantly more private sector women (25.9%) indicated that having a father in management or business was important than public sector women (16.1%). These were the only two factors on which private and public sector women differed significantly in terms of their attribution of specific background factors to their success.

With regard to the other background factors chosen, there were more similarities between the two groups than differences. Both groups reported similar trends on the following factors (listed in descending order): good education (65% to 68%), achievement-oriented family (48% to 49%), tough/disciplined/working class background (37% to 42%), and a mother employed outside of

the home (28% to 29%). A substantial proportion of women in both groups (36% to 37%) chose the open-ended 'other' category when asked about their backgrounds. They then mentioned aspects related to innate personality traits that gave them the drive to succeed. Only a small proportion (6% to 7%) of women in each group believed there were no special features of their backgrounds that led to their position in senior management.

These results show that senior management women chose a 'good education' as the precursor to their success in management more frequently than an 'achievement-orientated' family with the two aspects mentioned simultaneously by many of the respondents. This result varied from the qualitative study where the achievement-orientation of the family appeared to be predominant in the accounts of senior management women.

7.2.2: Perceptions of Power

When asked how they would describe a powerful person the responses were very similar to the responses from the qualitative data. The largest category of response (43%) was for the option of the person with the greatest influence (see Table 2, Appendix 6). A person who was a good leader and motivator also figured highly in the responses (38.4%). The differences between private and public sector women in these two categories of response were statistically marginal ($p = 0.035$ and $p = 0.024$ respectively).

The sample was divided when asked whether they themselves were powerful (see Table 3 in Appendix 6). The overwhelming majority (93.7%) said they were powerful at least to some extent. This overall result appears to contradict the findings from the qualitative study where many women were reluctant to classify themselves as powerful. The fact that a large proportion (34.8%) of women classified themselves as powerful per se without any caveats tends to reinforce this contradiction. However, a large proportion (58.9%) of those that said they were powerful said they were powerful in a limited sphere. Consequently, just as in the qualitative study, many women applied a caveat to their personal power by saying it was limited. There was no significant difference between the views of private sector women and public sector women in their responses to this question.

7.2.3: Identification with Feminism

There was a significant difference between public and private sector women when they were asked about feminism ($p < .00001$). Table 4 in Appendix 6 shows that private sector women were almost equally divided in their response to whether they call themselves feminists or not, whereas public sector women were much more likely to call themselves feminists (72%).

When asked what type of feminist they thought they were, the majority of women who called themselves feminists (78.3%) placed themselves in the category of Liberal feminists who believe in 'the right of women to gain equality with men in society' (see Table 5 in Appendix 6). However, the public/private sector breakdown of the sample was significantly related to nominated feminist type ($p < .00001$). Women working in the private sector were more likely to place themselves in the Liberal feminist category (87.3%) than those in the public sector (73.6%). Women working in the public sector were more likely than the private sector women to place themselves in either the radical (8.7% versus 1.6%) or socialist (5.1% versus 2.4%) feminist categories, although this was a minor difference. The respondents that placed themselves in the 'other' category (more public sector (12.6%) than private sector women (8.7%)) commented that they did not like the choices given in the survey and preferred to offer their own unique definitions of what type of feminist they were.

Table 6 in Appendix 6 shows that, of those women who did call themselves feminists, the majority (88.4%) said they had voiced feminist principles at work. A significantly greater percentage of public sector women (90.9%) had voiced feminist principles at work than private sector women (83.7%; $p < .00001$). Those who said they did voice feminist principles at work were then asked in what way they had voiced those principles. Many women had responded to sexist comments, made their feminist leanings known to all staff, or spoke of feminist principles selectively to certain staff. Some had voiced feminist principles to senior managers, some said they were known feminists and a very small proportion mentioned practical reforms, speaking to male colleagues, or verbally promoting women.

Table 7 in Appendix 6 shows that of the women who did call themselves feminists, significantly more public sector women reported the feeling that they had been discriminated against for voicing feminist principles (31.3%) than private sector women (19.3%; $p < .00001$). ‘Oppression by males’ and ‘put downs by men’ were cited as the major reasons for their feelings of discrimination.

When asked whether they thought the feminist movement had advantaged or disadvantaged women, Table 8 in Appendix 6 shows that a majority of both public (76.6%) and private (61.9%) sector women said it had been an advantage. However, overall there was a statistically significant difference between the views of public sector women compared to private sector women ($p = .00051$). As the figures above show, a much higher proportion of public sector women than private sector women said that the feminist movement had been an advantage to women. Conversely, 25% of private sector women compared to 14% of public sector women were equivocal about the movement and 13.1% of private sector women compared to 9.4% of public sector women felt that the feminist movement had disadvantaged women. These figures show that women working in the public sector were more positively predisposed to outcomes gained by the feminist movement.

Respondents were then asked why they had given their response. The reasons given were fairly evenly balanced between the private and public sector women. Almost half (42.5%) of private sector women compared to 46.8% of public sector women gave positive reasons for attributing advantages to the feminist movement, whereas 10.9% of private sector women compared to 7.8% of public sector women gave negative reasons for their answers. Those who thought the movement had advantaged women cited two main reasons: (1) it had raised the profile and awareness of issues relating to women, and (2) it had brought about practical changes for women. Those who thought that the feminist movement had disadvantaged women cited the ‘extreme views’ of the movement as the main reason for their response.

Table 9 in Appendix 6 shows that approximately one quarter of senior management women were members of women's groups. Membership mostly took the form of professionally-based women's groups such as Women in Law, Women in Banking, or Chief Executive Women. The difference between private and public sector women with regard to membership of women's groups was not statistically significant.

Table 10 in Appendix 6 shows that when asked whether being one of only a few women in senior management in an organisation had advantaged or disadvantaged them, the majority (73.4%) of senior management women said it had neither disadvantaged or advantaged their career. Public sector women (22.4%) were significantly more likely than private sector women (13.7%) to say the experience of 'tokenism' had disadvantaged their career, whereas private sector (10.7%) women were more likely than public sector women (5.8%) to say the experience of 'tokenism' had advantaged their career ($p = .00843$).

7.2.4: Glass Ceilings, Affirmative Action and Quotas

The following set of questions on issues such as the 'glass ceiling', Affirmative Action programs, and quota systems, were asked to measure the respondents' knowledge of, attitude towards, and commitment to, increasing the number of women in senior management.

Table 11 shows that an overwhelming majority of women (93%) believed that there should be more women in decision-making positions in Australia. The difference between public and private sector women on this issue was marginally significant ($p = 0.01961$). There was, however, a larger proportion of private sector women (7.7%) than public sector women (2.7%) who were undecided about aiming to have more women in decision-making positions, and a larger proportion of public sector women (96%) who felt there was a definite need to increase the number of women in senior management compared to private sector women (90.7%).

The 'Glass Ceiling': In order to gauge each respondent's awareness and knowledge relating to issues of gender inequality in the workplace, they were asked about the phenomenon of the glass ceiling and whether they had ever experienced the phenomenon. Table 12 in Appendix 6 shows

there was a marginally significant difference in the number of public and private sector women answering in the affirmative ($p = .01794$). Public sector women (69.8%) were more likely than private sector women (58.9%) to say they believed the phenomenon existed for women trying to get into senior management. However, private sector women (24%) were more likely to believe the 'Glass Ceiling' did not exist than public sector women (15.9%). Even though the majority of senior management women in both sectors believed the 'glass ceiling' existed, only a minority of senior management women had personally experienced the effects of the 'glass ceiling'. Table 13 shows that 23.7% of private sector women and 35.3% of public sector women had experienced a 'glass ceiling', a difference that was significant ($p = .00282$). An interesting point about the responses to these two questions concerns the wide gap between the respondent's direct experience with the phenomenon and their belief that it existed. One further finding is that a sizeable proportion of senior management women (38.7% overall) had seen other women experience the glass ceiling as shown in Table 14 of Appendix 6. What is interesting in this table is the significantly greater proportion of public sector women (46.6%) than private sector women (28.2%) who had seen other women experience the 'glass ceiling' ($p < .0001$).

Those women who had experienced a 'glass ceiling' were then asked what they had experienced. The following findings are based upon the collation of their open-ended comments. Many women attributed male hegemonic practices to their experience of the 'glass ceiling'. Similar percentages of private and public sector women mentioned that they were not considered for vacancies because they were women, that they were passed over for training opportunities, and that they were 'kept in the dark' by male colleagues and superiors which meant that some women had to leave positions to get ahead. Similar proportions of public and private sector women mentioned occupational sex-role stereotyping as a barrier to their further advancement, whereas a higher percentage of women in the public sector said they were passed over for promotion by male colleagues than women from the private sector.

Respondents were then asked about the frequency with which they encountered the 'glass ceiling' in their organisations. Table 15 in Appendix 6 shows that 40.3% of public sector women

and 21.3% of private sector women encountered the 'glass ceiling' phenomenon sometimes or frequently in the organisations in which they worked. This relationship was statistically significant ($p = .00002$).

Affirmative Action Legislation: A broad knowledge question was employed in an attempt to determine what the respondents believed was the general purpose of Affirmative Action legislation. As can be seen from Table 16 in Appendix 6, the majority of women in both public (84.8%) and private (84.7%) sectors chose definition two, which aligned itself well with the stated intention of the legislation. However, 15% of women from both private and public sectors were under the misapprehension that Affirmative Action legislation was a direct form of positive discrimination. There was no statistically significant difference between the views of public and private sector women on the meaning of the legislation.

Table 17 in Appendix 6 shows that public sector women (69.5%) were more positively disposed towards the legislation than private sector women (59.8%); 40.2% of private sector women were negative towards Affirmative Action compared to 30.5% of public sector women. These differences were marginally significant ($p = .01652$).

When asked whether the Affirmative Action program had improved the position of women the response was quite divided, as can be seen from Table 18 in Appendix 6. A large proportion of women in the sample (62.9%) believed that the program had done either not much or nothing at all to improve the position of women in society. There was no significant difference between the response patterns for public and private sector women. The reasons given for the responses on the effectiveness of Affirmative Action were varied. Private sector women were three times more likely than public sector women to say that appointments should be based on merit only (10.9% as opposed to 2.7%); they were also more likely to say that the legislation was too weak to change the status quo. If the positive comments are viewed separately from the negative comments towards Affirmative Action, half as many (12%) private sector women made positive comments about the Affirmative Action program compared to public sector women (23%).

Positive comments were: that discrimination had been 'named' so now something could be done about it, that these policies had raised awareness about sex discrimination, and that they had made employers more accountable. The negative comments showed the reverse pattern.

Negative comments about the Affirmative Action legislation were made by 25% of private sector women, whereas 13.5% of public sector women made negative comments. Some negative comments were: women are seen as 'lesser' or needing help when employed by Affirmative Action, that attitudes will take time to change therefore Affirmative Action is not needed, or that the policy creates resentment and division between men and women in the workplace.

Quota Systems: Questions were then asked about the introduction of a quota system to address the gender imbalance in senior management (see Table 19 in Appendix 6). Women working in the public sector were significantly more likely (70.2%) than private sector women (52.1%) to choose the more positive definition of a quota system (i.e., System 1, where the respondents agree that quota systems attempt to ensure the gender and race balance are correct by increasing the representation of women and minority groups in some areas of the workforce) as a strategy to address gender imbalances in senior management ($p < .0001$).

When asked whether a quota system should be put into the Australian workplace, Table 20 in Appendix 6 shows that significantly more private sector women (57.6%) than public sector women (46.2%) responded with a definite no ($p = .0002$). Although the majority of both groups chose the two options that preferred not to use quota systems, a larger percentage of public sector women (24.5%) compared to private sector women (13.9%) said quotas systems should be put in place with caveats or definitely put in place (6.4% for public sector women and 1.6% for private sector women).

The response patterns between public and private sector women on why quotas should not be used were significantly different ($p = .00187$). Table 21 in Appendix 6 shows that more public sector women (50.6%) than private sector women (42.6%) chose the threat to the merit principle as being their main reason for rejecting a quota system. Public sector women (29.7%) were more

likely than private sector women (20.2%) to be concerned that women would lose their credibility or respect when they were appointed via a quota system. Private sector women (15.0%) were more concerned than public sector women (7.8%) that the right person would not get the job. Many of those in the 'other' category chose a combination of two or all of the three reasons for not implementing a quota system.

Questions were then asked about whether they thought the merit system was working in their organisation. Table 22 in Appendix 6 shows that the majority of respondents (70.4%) felt that their colleagues had gained their positions on the basis of merit. As with many other responses, there was a significant difference between the responses of public and private sector women: public sector women (34.5%) were more reluctant to attribute merit to the appointment of their colleagues than private sector women (23.1%; $p = .00284$). There were varied reasons cited for colleagues not gaining their positions on the basis of merit. Public sector women cited networking and the subjectiveness of selection procedures more often than private sector women. Interestingly, seniority was cited as a reason for non-meritorious appointments in the private sector as often as in the public sector.

Although the majority of women surveyed were against the use of quota systems to increase the representation of women in senior management, the overwhelming majority (93.8%) agreed that there needed to be more women in senior management. The results of this survey showed that the majority were not personally undertaking practices to bring this about. Table 23 in Appendix 6 shows that 44.9% of women had actively lobbied to increase the proportion of women in senior management. Proportionally more public sector women (50.5%) than private sector women (37.5%) said they lobbied for an increased representation of women in the senior levels of their organisation, a difference which was statistically significant ($p = .00191$). Of those who said they did lobby to get an increased representation of women in senior management, most said they did it by way of practical initiatives such as mentor programs, creating flexible working arrangements, suggesting certain women be promoted or trained for promotion, and personally encouraging women.

7.2.5: Experiences of Sex Discrimination

On the question of a personal experience of sexual discrimination, Table 24 in Appendix 6 shows that 37.1% of women working in the private sector had experienced sex discrimination while 54.7% of those in the public sector had experienced such discrimination, a statistically significant difference ($p < .0001$). The extent of these differences in the experience of sexual discrimination was interesting because as discussed in Chapters Three and Four the public sector has more stringent regulatory controls to reduce discriminatory practices than the private sector. The statistics could be reflecting a difference in the personal views of public and private sector women, wherein public sector women may be more 'sensitised to', or knowledgeable about, discriminatory behaviour than women working in the private sector. Or they might be reflecting the fact that the more stringent regulatory controls in the public sector are not working or are being circumvented.

The respondents who had experienced sex discrimination were then asked an open-ended question to describe their experiences. Differences between the responses of public and private sector women again emerged and were significant ($p = .0003$). Public sector women (18%) were more than twice as likely than private sector women (7%) to cite specific responses such as 'the CEO oppressed women', male pressure in the form of women being excluded from the 'inner sanctum', exclusion from meetings, and being talked over at meetings by men. A similar percentage of private (12%) and public (16%) sector women mentioned having sexual innuendos and harassment as experiences of sexual discrimination.

7.2.6: Management Styles and Promotional Opportunities.

Table 25 in Appendix 6 shows that 94.1% of the women surveyed thought that their management style differed at least slightly from their male counterparts. Public sector women (58.7%) were more likely than private sector women (41.8%) to state that their management style was very different from their male counterparts, and 37.4% of public sector women compared to 49.6% of private sector women thought their management style differed slightly from their male counterparts ($p = .00014$).

Table 26 in Appendix 6 shows that 48.2% of women in the sample described their management style as consensual and communicative; 39.9% categorised their management style as democratic or fair; and 2.6% described their style as tough and uncompromising. A further 9.3% of women used some other description for their management style. The response differences between the management styles cited by public and private sector women were not statistically significant. Responses in the 'other' category for Table 26 were highly diverse. Responses were as follows, in descending order of percentage mentioned: 'people oriented', 'driven for results', 'drive my staff harder', 'different perspective to some issues', 'more open', 'not as one-eyed', 'individual style not gender difference', 'more straight forward and decisive', 'more willing to tackle problems', 'sense of humour', 'give others credit', 'open but can still make the hard decisions', 'don't tend to network like males', 'low-profile', 'hard-working', 'less confident', and 'need to raise voice to be heard then I look emotional'.

In order to check the managerial responsibility of each respondent, they were asked whether they were personally responsible for decisions about implementing human resource policy in their organisation. Table 27 shows that 46.6% of all respondents were responsible for human resource policy implementation in their organisations. Private sector women were proportionally more responsible for implementing Human Resource policy (49%) than public sector women (36%), although this difference was only marginally significant ($p = .01259$).

Two questions were asked about whether senior management women had ever personally turned down promotions or seen other women turning down promotions and if so for what reasons. The objective was to confirm the proportion of women rejecting opportunities for promotion and to find out why they were rejecting promotion.

Table 28 in Appendix 6 shows that the majority of women (76.5%) in both sectors had never turned down a promotion. A significantly larger proportion of public service women (27.8%) had, at sometime in their careers, turned down a promotion than private sector women (16.1%; $p = .0008$). Wide-ranging reasons were given for turning down promotions. The most frequent

reason given was personal choice or free will and the fact that the promotion may not have been good for their career. These three reasons were given simultaneously by some respondents. Constraints due to family reasons and an unwillingness to relocate were the next most cited reasons for not accepting a promotion. These results support the results of other studies (Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Homans, 1987; Brett & Stroh, 1994; Naff, 1995; Korabik & Rosin, 1995) cited in Chapter Two, which showed the main reasons women do not choose promotion are similar to the reasons males choose not to be promoted.

Table 29 in Appendix 6 shows that a significantly larger proportion of senior management women in the public sector (67.9%) compared to those in the private sector (49.8%) had seen other women avoiding promotional opportunities ($p = .00001$). The reasons given for other women refusing promotions (in order of importance) were: 'hours at work versus family commitments', 'women underestimating their own abilities', 'family', 'no confidence', 'stress', 'own choice', 'hours at work', 'not confident', 'organisational culture', and 'male culture'.

In comparison to the reasons the respondents gave for turning down promotion (which were mainly based on personal choice), the reasons attributed to other women whom they had observed turning down promotions were mainly family based. Lack of confidence or an inability to believe in their own abilities was cited as the second most salient reason for other women turning down promotions. However, this reason was not cited at all by private sector women and by only 1% of public sector women, as a personal reason for turning down a promotion.

Table 30 in Appendix 6 shows that although only 51.3% of respondents said they would like further promotion, many of those who said they were happy where they were also said that was because they could not be promoted further from their current position. A significantly higher proportion of public sector women (56%) than private sector women (44.9%) said they would like further promotion ($p = .00844$).

7.3 Multi-variate Analyses

7.3.1 Logistic Regression Analyses

The combined effect of independent variables on key dichotomous dependent variables was explored using logistic regression analysis. The independent variables for these analyses were public/private sector, feminism, highest educational level achieved, income, age, political affiliation, marital status, parental status, type of schooling, religion, experience with sex discrimination, and whether or not the respondent had a mentor. This set of independent variables was used to predict the following five behavioral variables in separate logistic regression analyses: lobbying for the increased representation of women at senior management level, belief in the Affirmative Action legislation, belief in the concept of a 'Glass Ceiling', membership of a women's group, and belief in the use of a quota system to increase the number of women in senior management. All independent variables were forced to enter the regression equation at the same time yielding 'simultaneous' regression models. The multi-categorical variables, educational level, political affiliation, and social class were 'dummy coded' as 0 and 1 so that they could be entered into the regression analysis (see the procedures outlined in Cohen & Cohen, 1983, pp183-185). The two resulting dummy-coded variables for educational level were labelled 'undergraduate' and 'high school' indicating which category of the variable received the coding of '1'. This coding created automatic contrasts between 'undergraduates' and 'postgraduates' (always coded '0') and between 'high school' and 'postgraduates'. Similarly, the dummy-coded variables for political affiliation were labelled 'conservative' and 'left-wing'. The dummy-coded variables for social class were labelled 'middle class' and 'working class'.

With regard to the dependent variable of 'lobbying to increase the representation of women at senior management level', Table 7.1 shows the independent variables in the equation that were significantly related to the dependent variable. The overall regression equation was significant ($p < .0001$) and 68.07% of category responses were correctly predicted. Identification with feminism was significantly predictive of lobbying responses ($p = .0003$). The regression coefficient indicated a positive relationship where women saying 'yes' to identifying with

feminism also tended to say ‘yes’ to having engaged in lobbying activities. Similarly, having experienced sexual discrimination ($p = .0035$) and having had a mentor ($p = .0009$) showed statistically significant and positive predictive relationships. Thus, having a mentor or having personally experienced sexual discrimination were more likely to be associated with engaging in lobbying activities.

Table 7.1: Logistic Regression Between Lobbying to Increase the Representation of Women and Independent Variables

| Variable | B | Wald | Sig | R |
|---------------|-------|--------|----------------|-------|
| Pubic/Private | -.021 | .006 | .9364 | .000 |
| Feminism | .845 | 12.847 | .0003** | .129 |
| High school | .081 | .047 | .8280 | .000 |
| Undergraduate | .192 | .751 | .3860 | .000 |
| Income | -.083 | .843 | .3585 | .000 |
| Age | .020 | 1.413 | .2345 | .000 |
| Conservative | .078 | .081 | .7765 | .000 |
| Left-wing | -.364 | 2.080 | .1493 | -.011 |
| Middle class | -.061 | .008 | .9291 | .000 |
| Working class | -.354 | .241 | .6236 | .000 |
| Partner | .057 | .058 | .8095 | .000 |
| Children | .350 | 2.451 | .1174 | .026 |
| Schooling | .042 | .038 | .8452 | .000 |
| Religion | -.334 | 1.696 | .1928 | .000 |
| Sex Discrim | .601 | 8.521 | .0035* | .010 |
| Mentor | .723 | 10.940 | .0009** | .117 |

χ^2 (16): 73.44
 p value: < **.0001** **
 Percent Correct: 68.07%

Table 7.2 shows the results for the logistic regression analysis for the dependent variable, ‘a belief in the Affirmative Action legislation’. The overall prediction equation was significant ($p=.0006$), correctly predicting 68.78% of category responses. However, none of the independent variables were individually significantly predictive of a belief in the Affirmative Action legislation at the criterion significance level of 0.01. However, whether or not a respondent had had a mentor to assist them in their career was marginally significantly predictive of a belief in the Affirmative Action legislation ($p = .037$). The regression coefficient suggested a positive relationship where women saying ‘yes’ to having a mentor also tended to say ‘yes’ to a

belief in Affirmative Action. This result suggests that prediction of Affirmative Action belief is based on the composite collective influence of all predictors rather than strong singular variable contribution.

Table 7.2: Logistic Regression Between A Belief in the Affirmative Action Legislation and Independent Variables

| Variable | B | Wald | Sig | R |
|---------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| Pubic/Private | -.041 | .024 | .8773 | .000 |
| Feminism | .392 | 2.832 | .0924 | .038 |
| High school | .554 | 2.180 | .1399 | .018 |
| Undergraduate | .238 | 1.024 | .3115 | .000 |
| Income | .030 | .106 | .7451 | .000 |
| Age | .011 | .419 | .5173 | .000 |
| Conservative | .260 | .929 | .3350 | .000 |
| Left-wing | -.509 | 3.447 | .0634 | -.050 |
| Middle class | -.157 | .054 | .8169 | .000 |
| Working class | .224 | .098 | .7547 | .000 |
| Partner | .051 | .046 | .8309 | .000 |
| Children | .245 | 1.129 | .2880 | .000 |
| Schooling | -.311 | 1.872 | .1713 | .000 |
| Religion | -.232 | .825 | .3638 | .000 |
| Sex Discrim | .223 | 1.046 | .3065 | .000 |
| Mentor | .464 | 4.353 | .0370m | .064 |

χ^2 (16): 40.872
p value: **.0006****
 Percent correct: 68.78%

Table 7.3 shows the result of the logistic regression analysis for the dependent variable ‘the implementation of quota system’. The overall prediction equation was significant ($p < .0001$), correctly predicting 74.95% of category responses. However, none of the independent variables were individually significantly predictive of a willingness to implement a quota system at the criterion level of 0.01. However, if the respondent had experienced sexual discrimination in their career then there was a marginally significant predictive likelihood that they would agree to the implementation of a quota system ($p = .0432$). This result suggests that prediction of a belief in a quota system is based on the composite collective influence of all predictors rather than strong singular variable contributions.

Table 7.3: Logistic Regression Between Implementing a Quota System and Independent Variables

| Variable | B | Wald | Sig | R |
|----------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| Public/Private | -.149 | .247 | .6194 | .000 |
| Feminism | .521 | 3.285 | .0699 | .049 |
| High school | .849 | 2.887 | .0893 | .041 |
| Undergraduate | .176 | .501 | .4792 | .000 |
| Income | .143 | 1.933 | .1645 | .000 |
| Age | .036 | 3.355 | .0670 | .050 |
| Conservative | .324 | .906 | .3412 | .000 |
| Left-wing | -.440 | 2.557 | .1098 | -.032 |
| Middle class | .310 | .156 | .6929 | .000 |
| Working class | .005 | .000 | .9948 | .000 |
| Partner | -.292 | 1.288 | .2564 | .000 |
| Children | .261 | 1.020 | .3126 | .000 |
| Schooling | -.467 | 3.744 | .0530 | -.057 |
| Religion | -.325 | 1.141 | .2854 | .000 |
| Sex Discrim | .476 | 4.087 | .0432m | .063 |
| Mentor | .147 | .359 | .5491 | .000 |

χ^2 (18): 62.29

P value: <.0001 **

Percent Correct: 74.95%

With regard to the dependent variable ‘belief in a ‘Glass Ceiling’, Table 7.4 shows the independent variables in the equation that were significantly related to the dependent variable. The overall significance of the logistic regression was significant ($p < .0001$) with 71.55% of category responses were correctly predicted. An identification with feminism ($p < .0001$), and an experience of sex discrimination ($p = .0005$) were both significant individual predictors. The regression coefficients indicated positive relationships where women saying ‘yes’ to being a feminist and also women who had experienced sex discrimination also tended to say ‘yes’ to a belief in the ‘Glass Ceiling’. The independent variable ‘high school’ was marginally significantly predictive of a belief in the ‘Glass Ceiling’ ($p = .0284$). The regression coefficient indicated a positive relationship where women whose highest level of educational attainment was high school tended to more strongly believe in the existence of a ‘Glass Ceiling’ for women in management compared to women having a postgraduate-level education.

Table 7.4: Logistic Regression Between A Belief in the ‘Glass Ceiling’ and Independent Variables

| Variable | B | Wald | Sig | R |
|---------------|-------|--------|----------|------|
| Pubic/Private | .225 | .708 | .4000 | .000 |
| Feminism | 1.191 | 25.622 | <.0001** | .197 |
| High school | .826 | 4.806 | .0284m | .068 |
| Undergraduate | .205 | .757 | .3842 | .000 |
| Income | .133 | 1.948 | .1628 | .000 |
| Age | -.004 | .041 | .8388 | .000 |
| Conservative | .047 | .029 | .8640 | .000 |
| Left-wing | -.226 | .676 | .4110 | .000 |
| Middle class | -.236 | .123 | .7262 | .000 |
| Working class | .256 | .130 | .7187 | .000 |
| Partner | -.308 | 1.51 | .2185 | .000 |
| Children | .021 | .008 | .9272 | .000 |
| Schooling | .117 | .270 | .6034 | .000 |
| Religion | -.207 | .636 | .4252 | .000 |
| Sex Discrim | .765 | 12.028 | .0005** | .128 |
| Mentor | .059 | .067 | .7958 | .000 |

χ^2 (16): 73.026

p value: <.0001**
Percent Correct: 71.55%

Table 7.5 shows the results of the logistic regression analysis for the dependent variable ‘membership of a women’s group’ with the nominated independent variables. The overall significance of the logistic regression was significant ($p = .006$) with 76.94% of category responses correctly predicted. The table shows a statistically significant predictive relationship with only one variable, a high school educational level ($p = .0092$). The regression coefficient indicated a positive relationship where women whose highest level of education was high school were more likely to be a member of a women’s group compared to a woman who had achieved a postgraduate university education.

Table 7.5: Logistic Regression Between Membership of a Women’s Group and Independent Variables

| Variable | B | Wald | Sig | R |
|---------------|--------|--------|---------------|--------|
| Pubic/Private | .1094 | .1445 | .7038 | .0000 |
| Feminism | .2054 | .5829 | .4452 | .0000 |
| High school | 1.7224 | 7.4956 | .0092* | .1021 |
| Undergraduate | .3427 | 2.0098 | .1563 | .0043 |
| Income | -.0266 | .0736 | .7862 | .0000 |
| Age | .0138 | .5334 | .4652 | .0000 |
| Conservative | -.0972 | .0950 | .7579 | .0000 |
| Left-wing | -.5263 | 3.5255 | .0604 | -.0538 |
| Middle class | 1.2087 | 3.4797 | .0621 | .0530 |
| Working class | 1.2271 | 3.1345 | .0767 | .0464 |
| Partner | .0725 | .0795 | .7780 | .0000 |
| Children | .0535 | .0468 | .8287 | .0000 |
| Schooling | .0129 | .0030 | .9562 | .0000 |
| Religion | .4399 | 2.6755 | .1019 | .0358 |
| Sex Discrim | -.0501 | .0478 | .8270 | .0000 |
| Mentor | -.0577 | .0581 | .8095 | .0000 |

χ^2 (17): 35.115

p value: **.006***

Percent Correct: 76.94%

7.3.2: Summary of Logistic Regression Analyses

The logistic regression analyses showed that only a few key independent variables were significantly predictive of certain behavioural dependent variables. In terms of lobbying to increase the proportion of women in management there were three independent variables significantly predictive of lobbying: whether the respondent was a feminist or not, whether they had experienced sexual discrimination in their career, and whether they had had a mentor assist them in their career. On the topic of Affirmative Action and Quotas there were no significant individual independent variables at the criterion level of 0.01, significant prediction was obtained from the entire collection of predictors simultaneously. However, there were two marginally significant independent variables, whether or not the respondent had a mentor, and whether or not the respondent had experienced sex discrimination. Being a feminist and having experienced sex discrimination were significantly predictive of a belief in the ‘glass ceiling’ and having a

high school education as your highest level of achievement was significantly predictive of membership in a women’s group.

7.3.3: Factor Analysis of Attitudinal Scale

Principal components factor analysis was performed on the items from the attitudinal scale (see page 19 in Appendix 5) in order to group together items that measured similar views or tendencies in the respondents. Four factors were chosen because their eigenvalues were all greater than 1.0. Oblimin rotation was employed to allow for correlated factors. Table 7.6 shows the structure matrix for the factor analysis which outlines the individual variable contributions to each factor. Factor one is defined by six variables, factor two is defined by four variables, factors three and four are each defined by two variables. The factor correlation matrix is shown in Table 7.7.

Table 7.6: Structure Matrix for Factor Analysis

| | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 |
|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| DISC | .767 | .408 | -.235 | .298 |
| OPPORT | .739 | .329 | -.139 | .080 |
| MEN | .723 | -.039 | -.154 | .161 |
| COMPETE | .662 | .148 | .034 | .144 |
| MEDIA | .657 | .201 | -.175 | .134 |
| COLLECT | .582 | .219 | -.263 | .123 |
| | | | | |
| FAMILY | .131 | .795 | .116 | .211 |
| LESB | .270 | .736 | -.195 | .131 |
| EFFORT | .270 | .562 | -.396 | .132 |
| ANGLO | .334 | .408 | -.316 | .158 |
| | | | | |
| COMBINE | -.042 | -.107 | .718 | .058 |
| GOOD | .227 | .087 | -.652 | .182 |
| | | | | |
| QUAL | .110 | .016 | -.000 | .873 |
| BLAME | .190 | .298 | -.122 | .560 |

(N.B: Variable labels for Table 6 will be discussed on the next page)

Table 7.7: Factor Correlation Matrix

| | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Factor 1 | 1.000 | | | |
| Factor 2 | .270 | 1.000 | | |
| Factor 3 | -.216 | -.176 | 1.000 | |
| Factor 4 | .208 | .180 | -.072 | 1.000 |

The variables that made up the four factors were related conceptually. For example, the first factor consisted of the following six variables from the attitudinal scale:

- ‘Our society discriminates against women’ (*Disc*)
- ‘Women have less opportunity than men to get the experience for top jobs’ (*Opport*)
- ‘Men, consciously or unconsciously, view themselves as superior to women’. (*Men*)
- ‘A woman has to be better than a male competitor to succeed in her career’ (*Compete*)
- ‘The media/advertising degrade women’ (*Media*)
- ‘Only if women organise and work together can anything really be done about discrimination’ (*Collect*)

These variables related to the ways in which women were treated differently to men and how the male stereotype was considered superior by many in society. This factor was labelled ‘Manpower’. The reliability of this scale, using Cronbach’s coefficient alpha, was 0.78.

Factor two was made up of four variables:

- ‘It is essential for the well-being of the society that the nuclear family be preserved’ (*Family*)
- ‘Lesbianism is an acceptable form of relationship’ (*Lesb*)
- ‘With effort anyone can succeed’ (*Effort*)
- ‘White men should accept fewer opportunities so that others may have a chance to succeed’ (*Anglo*)

These variables related to liberal attitudes towards social mores and folkways concerning merit and equality. Factor two was labelled 'Liberal' and showed a coefficient alpha reliability of 0.57, just below the accepted standard of 0.60.

Factor three was made up of two variables:

- 'It is possible for a woman to combine career and family without detriment to either' (*Combine*)
- 'I am more concerned with the overall social good than with my own personal advancement' (*Good*; the sign of the loading for this item indicated that it needed to be reverse-scored)

These variables related to how respondents relate to wider societal versus career issues in terms of gender. Factor three was tentatively labelled 'Career-focus' and showed a coefficient alpha reliability of 0.12, well below the accepted standard of 0.60.

Factor four was made of two variables:

- 'In general, men are more qualified than women for jobs that have great responsibility' (*Qual*)
- 'Women are partly to blame for their under-representation in positions of power in Australia' (*Blame*)

These two variables related to the way in which respondents think about women's position in gender relations. Factor four was labelled 'Women are their Own Worst Enemies' and showed a coefficient alpha reliability of 0.22, well below the accepted standard of 0.60.

Each woman in the sample was given a score for each factor found by averaging the individual item scores comprising the factor (a unit - weighted factor scoring scheme). Due to the unacceptably low reliability of the last two factors, respondents were not scored on the factors. Instead, the individual items were analysed separately using multiple regression to explore their relationship with the independent variables in the equation.

7.3.4 Multiple Regression Analyses

Standard multiple regression analyses were employed using the set of independent variables (as defined for the logistic regressions) to predict scores on each of the two factors as well as the four individual items not combined into factors. Thus, four separate multiple regression analyses were conducted; in each case all independent variables entered the equation simultaneously (yielding a 'simultaneous' regression model – see Cohen & Cohen, 1983).

Table 7.8 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis for the dependent variable 'Manpower' (Factor 1). This analysis revealed a significant ($p < .0001$) R squared of 0.300 indicating that 30% of the variance in 'Manpower' score could be explained by the set of independent variables. The independent variables 'feminism' and 'sexual discrimination' were positively and significantly predictive of scores on the factor 'Manpower'. Therefore, women who considered themselves feminists and women who had been sexually discriminated against in their career tended to more strongly agree with the fact that males have been favoured at the expense of women in the society than women who were not feminists or who had not been discriminated against in their career,. The variable 'high school' was also significantly correlated with the factor 'Manpower'. This meant that those women who had achieved high school as their highest level of education more strongly agreed with the statements that make up the 'Manpower' factor than those women having postgraduate qualifications. Variables that were marginally predictive of scores on the factor 'Manpower' were undergraduate level of education, age, and whether the respondent had a partner or not.

Table 7.8: Multiple Regression between Factor ‘Manpower’ against Independent Variables

| Independent Variable | B | Beta | T | Sig T |
|----------------------|-------|-------|--------|----------|
| Public/ Private | -.062 | -.065 | -1.322 | .1869 |
| Feminist | .303 | .309 | 7.075 | <.0001** |
| High School | .197 | .124 | 2.902 | .0039* |
| Undergraduate | .104 | .110 | 2.547 | .0112m |
| Income | .025 | .067 | 1.545 | .1230 |
| Age | .007 | .097 | 2.139 | .0329m |
| Conservative | .002 | .002 | .032 | .9748 |
| Left Wing | -.060 | -.062 | -1.283 | .2000 |
| Middle Class | .152 | .137 | 1.220 | .2230 |
| Working Class | .199 | .173 | 1.518 | .1298 |
| Partner | -.089 | -.085 | -2.118 | .0347m |
| Children | .012 | .013 | .301 | .7638 |
| Schooling | -.009 | -.009 | -.223 | .8240 |
| Religious | -.059 | -.050 | -1.265 | .2067 |
| Discrimination | .194 | .208 | 5.112 | <.0001** |
| Mentor | -.020 | -.021 | -.515 | .6068 |

R²: 0.30004
P value: <.0001**

Table 7.9 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis for the dependent variable ‘Liberal’ (Factor 2). This analysis had an R squared of 0.351 ($p < .0001$) where 35% of the variance in ‘Liberal’ attitudes could be explained by all the predictors. Five independent variables, feminism, high school education, left-wing voters, whether or not the respondent had a partner, and whether or not the respondent was practicing a religion, were significantly predictive of scores on the factor ‘Liberal’. If the respondent was a feminist or her highest level of education was high-school then she would hold stronger positive views towards the statements that make up the ‘Liberal’ factor. However, if the respondent was a left-wing voter, had a partner, or was practicing a religion she would hold more negative views towards the statements

that make up the factor 'Liberal'. The variable 'undergraduate' was marginally significantly predictive of the scores on the factor 'Liberal'.

Table 7.9: Multiple Regression between Factor 'Liberal' against Independent Variables

| Independent Variable | B | Beta | T | Sig T |
|----------------------|-------|-------|--------|----------|
| Type | -.077 | -.077 | -1.628 | .1041 |
| Feminist | .302 | .295 | 7.019 | <.0001** |
| High School | .193 | .116 | 2.820 | .0050* |
| Undergraduate | .083 | .084 | 2.014 | .0446m |
| Income | -.008 | -.020 | -.472 | .6369 |
| Age | 4.508 | .006 | .147 | .8833 |
| Conservative | .088 | .083 | 1.772 | .0771 |
| Left Wing | -.191 | -.190 | -4.095 | <.0001** |
| Middle Class | .100 | .086 | .798 | .4254 |
| Working Class | .052 | .043 | .393 | .6943 |
| Partner | -.116 | -.107 | -2.743 | .0063* |
| Children | -.013 | -.013 | -.314 | .7540 |
| Schooling | -.056 | -.056 | -1.431 | .1532 |
| Religious | -.195 | -.160 | -4.182 | <.0001** |
| Discrimination | .058 | .059 | 1.517 | .1300 |
| Mentor | .017 | .016 | .412 | .6809 |

R²: 0.351

P value: <.0001**

Table 7.10 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis for the dependent variable statement 'It is possible to combine a career with family without detriment to either'. This analysis had an R squared of 0.065 ($p = .0129$) where 6.5% of the variance in attitudes towards combining family and career responsibilities could be explained by all the predictors. Two independent variables were marginally significantly and positively predictive of the scores on the dependent variable: having a partner, and having a child. This was an expected result because it showed that those who had partners and children more strongly agreed that work and family can be successfully combined.

Table 7.10: Multiple Regression between Item ‘Combine’ and Independent Variables

| Independent Variable | B | Beta | T | Sig T |
|-----------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|----------------|
| Public/Private | -.014 | -.009 | -.165 | .8687 |
| Feminist | -.147 | -.100 | -1.960 | .0506 |
| High School | -.029 | -.012 | -.244 | .8074 |
| Undergraduate | .086 | .060 | 1.208 | .2278 |
| Income | .002 | .004 | .072 | .9423 |
| Age | .009 | .091 | 1.741 | .0824 |
| Conservative | -.115 | -.076 | -1.332 | .1835 |
| Left Wing | -.036 | -.024 | -.442 | .6590 |
| Middle Class | -.024 | -.014 | -.112 | .9111 |
| Working Class | -.004 | -.002 | -.016 | .9874 |
| Partner | .158 | .101 | 2.147 | .0323 m |
| Children | .172 | .121 | 2.421 | .0159 m |
| Schooling | .009 | .006 | .133 | .8945 |
| Religious | -.078 | -.044 | -.958 | .3387 |
| Sex Discrimination | -.004 | -.003 | -.062 | .9502 |
| Mentor | .069 | .046 | .995 | .3203 |

R²: 0.065

p value: .0129**m**

Table 7.11 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis for the dependent variable statement ‘I am more concerned with the overall social good than with my own personal advancement’. This analysis had an R squared of 0.107 ($p < .0001$) where 10% of the variance in attitudes of being more concerned with the overall social good than personal advancement could be explained by all the predictors. One independent variable was significantly and positively predictive of the scores on the dependent variable: voting ‘conservative’ (Liberal or National Country Party). Being a feminist was very close to the marginally significant cut-off of 0.05 ($p = .0506$). This was an expected result meaning that those who voted for the Liberal or National Country Parties more strongly agreed with the idea that the social good is paramount to individual career success.

Table 7.11: Multiple Regression between Item ‘Good’ and Independent Variables

| Independent Variable | B | Beta | T | Sig T |
|----------------------|--------|-------|--------|---------------|
| Public/Private | .007 | .006 | .098 | .9219 |
| Feminist | .128 | .096 | 1.909 | .0569 |
| High School | -.0346 | -.016 | -.327 | .7437 |
| Undergraduate | .099 | .076 | 1.539 | .1244 |
| Income | .035 | .067 | 1.344 | .1797 |
| Age | .007 | .078 | 1.502 | .1337 |
| Conservative | .246 | .177 | 3.174 | .0016* |
| Left Wing | -.013 | -.010 | -.184 | .8544 |
| Middle Class | -.070 | -.046 | -.362 | .7175 |
| Working Class | -.036 | -.023 | -.179 | .8582 |
| Partner | -.086 | -.060 | -1.304 | .1930 |
| Children | .076 | .058 | 1.187 | .2359 |
| Schooling | .090 | -.069 | -1.460 | .1449 |
| Religious | .028 | .018 | .388 | .698 |
| Sex Discrimination | .089 | .069 | 1.483 | .1389 |
| Mentor | .015 | .011 | .239 | .8110 |

R²: 0.107

p value: <.0001**

Table 7.12 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis for the dependent variable statement ‘In general, men are more qualified than women for jobs that have great responsibility’. This analysis had an R squared of 0.059 ($p = .0313$) where 6% of the variance in attitudes of believing that men are more qualified than women for ‘top’ jobs could be explained by all the predictors. One independent variable was significantly and positively predictive of the scores on the dependent variable: having experienced sex discrimination. This meant that if the respondent had experienced sex discrimination in their career they would more strongly agree with the statement that men were more qualified for jobs that have great responsibility. Being a feminist, and having a partner were marginally significant ($p = .0431$ and $p = .0317$ respectively). This was an unexpected and interesting result suggesting that women who had experienced sex discrimination in their careers would more strongly agree that men were more qualified for top

jobs than women. However, a caveat should be placed upon the interpretation of these results due to the marginal significance of the overall regression equation in Table 7.12.

Table 7.12: Multiple Regression between Item ‘Qual’ and Independent Variables

| Independent Variable | B | Beta | T | Sig T |
|----------------------|-------|-------|--------|----------------|
| Public/Private | .004 | .003 | .045 | .9638 |
| Feminist | .153 | .104 | 2.028 | .0431 m |
| High School | 6.010 | 2.507 | .005 | .9960 |
| Undergraduate | .007 | .005 | .092 | .9269 |
| Income | .004 | .008 | .149 | .8819 |
| Age | -.006 | -.062 | -1.169 | .2430 |
| Conservative | -.024 | -.016 | -.273 | .7846 |
| Left Wing | -.101 | -.069 | -1.223 | .2222 |
| Middle Class | -.115 | -.069 | -.529 | .5974 |
| Working Class | -.087 | -.050 | -.379 | .7051 |
| Partner | -.161 | -.102 | -2.155 | .0317 m |
| Children | -.024 | -.017 | -.332 | .7400 |
| Schooling | -.056 | -.039 | -.808 | .419 |
| Religious | -.041 | -.023 | -.499 | .6177 |
| Sex Discrimination | .183 | .130 | 2.721 | .0068* |
| Mentor | -.069 | -.046 | -.981 | .3269 |

R²: 0.059

p value: .0313**m**

Table 7.13 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis for the dependent variable statement ‘Women are partly to blame for their under-representation in positions of power in Australia’. This analysis had an R squared of 0.060 (*p*= .0281) where 6% of the variance in attitudes towards blaming other women for their under-representation in positions of power could be explained by all the predictors. One independent variable was significantly and positively predictive of the dependent variable: voting ‘left-wing’ (ALP or Democrat) (*p*= .0042). This meant that if the respondent voted for the Labor Party or the Democrats they would more strongly agree with the statement that women were partly to blame for their under-representation

in positions of power. However, a caveat should be placed upon the interpretation of these results due to the marginal significance of the overall regression equation in Table 7.13.

Table 7.13: Multiple Regression between Item ‘Blame’ and Independent Variables

| Independent Variable | B | Beta | T | Sig T |
|----------------------|-------|-------|--------|----------------|
| Public/Private | -.038 | -.027 | -.462 | .6441 |
| Feminist | .115 | .078 | 1.541 | .1241 |
| High School | .181 | .076 | 1.513 | .1309 |
| Undergraduate | .044 | .031 | .616 | .5383 |
| Income | -.022 | -.039 | -.774 | .4392 |
| Age | -.002 | -.017 | -.319 | .7498 |
| Conservative | -.109 | -.072 | -1.269 | .2051 |
| Left Wing | -.234 | -.162 | -2.880 | .0042** |
| Middle Class | .303 | .183 | 1.402 | .1617 |
| Working Class | .177 | .103 | .777 | .4374 |
| Partner | .023 | .014 | .304 | .7611 |
| Children | -.029 | -.021 | -.409 | .6826 |
| Schooling | -.052 | -.036 | -.763 | .4458 |
| Religious | -.076 | -.044 | -.948 | .3436 |
| Sex Discrimination | .042 | .030 | .632 | .5275 |
| Mentor | .018 | .012 | .259 | .7957 |

R²: 0.060

p value: .0281m

7.3.5: Summary of Multiple Regression Results

The multiple regression analyses showed that in terms of the factor ‘Manpower’ the two variables that were the most significantly predictive were whether or not the respondent was a feminist and whether they had experienced sexual discrimination in their career. The next most significantly predictive variable was whether or not the respondent had achieved the level of a high school education. There were also three marginally significant variables, whether they had achieved an undergraduate level of education, how old they were, and whether or not they had a partner (negative relationship).

The factor 'Liberal' was significantly predicted by whether or not the respondent was a feminist, whether or not they were left-wing voters (negative relationship), and whether or not they were practicing a religion (negative relationship). Whether or not the respondent had achieved a high school education level or had a partner (negative relationship) were also variables significantly related to 'Liberal' scores at the criterion level of 0.01. Whether or not the respondent had achieved an undergraduate level of education was marginally significant.

Being a mother and having a partner were positively and significantly predictive of the dependent variable 'It is possible to combine a career and family without detriment to either'. Being a conservative voter (Liberal and National Country Party) was a positive and significant predictor of the dependent variable 'I am more concerned with the overall social good than with my own personal advancement'. The relationships shown by these regression analyses were not surprising. However, the fact that having experienced sex discrimination was a positive and significant predictor of the dependent variable 'In general, men are more qualified than women for top jobs that have great responsibility' was a surprising result. You would expect that women who had experienced sex discrimination in their career to be critical of males and disagree that they were more qualified than women for top jobs. Another surprising result was that being a left-wing voter (ALP or Democrat) was a positive and significant predictor of the dependent variable 'Women are partly to blame for their under-representation in positions of power in Australia'. Surprising because you would expect that women who vote for left-wing parties recognise the structural barriers that prevent women from reaching senior levels of management and be sympathetic towards other women than women who vote liberal.

7.4: Miscellaneous Correlations

Apart from the differences between public and private sector women, two other relationships arose from the qualitative phase that needed to be explored in the quantitative phase.

1. Whether there was a relationship between experience of sexual discrimination and a willingness to implement forms of positive discrimination, such as quota systems, to overcome that discrimination.
2. Whether there was a relationship between self-identification with feminism and likelihood of attributing ‘masculine cultural barriers’ within organisations as the major cause for women’s inability to progress in management roles.

The first relationship was explored in Table 7.14 below. It shows that women who had experienced sexual discrimination in their careers were significantly more likely than those who had not to say, at least in a qualified way, that quota systems needed to be introduced (58% versus 40.4% respectively).

Table 7.14: Experience of Sexual Discrimination by Implementing Quota Systems

| Implement Quota System | Experienced Sexual Discrimination (%) | Have Not Experienced Sexual Discrimination (%) | Total(%) |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|------------|
| Yes, definitely | 19 (7) | 6 (2) | 25 (4.4) |
| Yes, but with caveats | 70 (25.9) | 45 (15.3) | 115 (20.4) |
| Only if no improvement | 68 (25.2) | 68 (23.1) | 136 (24.1) |
| No, never | 113 (41.9) | 176 (59.7) | 295 (52.2) |

Missing observations: 25

χ^2 (3): 24.870

p value: <.0001**

The second relationship was explored in Table 7.15 below. It was found that feminists were significantly more likely than non-feminists to attribute male attitudes as a major barrier to women’s progress in management. However, it should be noted that the overall percentage of women saying yes to this question was very low (12%).

Table 7.15: Barriers to Women by Feminism

| Male Attitudes | Feminist(%) | Non-feminist (%) | Total(%) |
|----------------|-------------|------------------|----------|
| Yes | 45 (14.9) | 11 (6.6) | 56 (12) |
| Other | 257 (85.1) | 155 (93.4) | 412 (88) |

Missing Observations: 122

χ^2 (1): 6.961

p value: .0083**

7.5 Summary of Quantitative Results

The demographic variables, age, political affiliation, social class of parents, educational level, and motherhood, all had a significant bearing upon the differences between the views and experiences of private compared to public sector women. Public sector women in the sample were younger, more highly educated, were more likely to have children, were less likely to vote for the Liberal and National Country Parties, and were more likely to come from working, lower middle or middle class families than private sector women.

Demographic differences between the two groups reflected the differences in their values that ran consistently throughout the data. The responses of public sector women on issues such as Affirmative Action, quotas and feminism reflected more left-wing collectivist forms of social values. On the other hand, the responses given by the private sector women on the same issues reflected more liberal, individualistic, achievement-oriented values. The differences could also be a reflection of the type of organisations in which these women have chosen to work. That is, the majority of public sector women have chosen to work in occupational areas such as education, health and welfare. Such occupation types would automatically attract more social justice-minded individuals than the occupations that dominate in the private sector sample, such as advertising, finance, or marketing.

The quantitative data showed that there were consistent statistically significant differences in the views and experiences of women working in the public sector compared to those working in the private sector on many of the variables measured. Women who worked in the public sector were more likely than women who worked in the private sector to be in favour of changes and strategies required to assist other women into senior management positions such as Affirmative Action and quotas. Public sector women were much more likely to regard themselves as feminists, to voice feminist principles at work, and to have experienced being discriminated against for doing so. They were also more likely than private sector women to say that the feminist movement had advantaged women overall.

On the subject of feminism, private sector women were almost equally divided with half saying they were feminists and the other half saying they were not. On the other hand, two-thirds of public sector women regarded themselves as feminists. Public sector women were also more likely to speak up on feminist issues at work, and more likely to feel discriminated against for doing so, than private sector women. A statistically significant higher proportion of public sector women was also more likely to say that the feminist movement had advantaged women. Feminists were also more likely than non-feminists to attribute male attitudes as the major barrier to women's progress in management.

The differences in the views of public and private sector women could not directly be attributed to differences in their backgrounds. This is because women working in either sector attributed similar background features to their management careers. A large proportion of women from both sectors highlighted a good education as the predominant antecedent factor in their career in management. The achievement-orientation or tough, disciplined, working-class character of their families rated almost as highly as a good education. For a quarter of the women in the sample having a mother who worked outside of the home was also a contributing factor. Women working in the private sector and those working in the public sector showed no significant differences in these choices. These results supported the findings from the qualitative data where the achievement orientation of their family figured highly in the attribution of antecedent factors to their success as a manager. Statistically significant differences were found between private and public sector women on only one background factor, that of having a father who was in business or management, to which a higher proportion (25.9%) of private sector than public sector (16.1%) women attributed their success.

On the subject of power, a high proportion of women chose the description of a powerful person as 'the person with the most influence' - a finding that supported the qualitative data. However, on the question of whether they were personally powerful the results contradicted the qualitative results. The majority of women in the quantitative survey believed they were powerful, even if

the majority of those felt they were powerful within a limited sphere. Private and public sector women did not differ significantly on the subject of power.

A difference in the experience of private and public sector women was also reflected in the fact that a higher proportion of public sector women believed that being only one of a few women in senior management had negatively effected their career, whereas a slightly higher proportion of private sector women felt that the experience of 'tokenism' had advantaged their career. Even though public sector women were in general more positively predisposed towards the feminist movement than private sector women, this did not make them more active when it came to joining women's groups. One in four women from either the public or private sectors were members of a women's group.

The majority of women from both groups believed that the phenomenon of the 'Glass Ceiling' existed for women in management. However, a much smaller proportion had personally experienced the 'Glass Ceiling'. Public sector women were more likely than private sector women to believe in the existence of a 'Glass Ceiling', experience it in their careers, and see the phenomenon experienced by other women.

The overwhelming majority of women in both sectors believed there should be more women in decision-making positions. However, they differed in supporting the methods used to increase the numbers of women in senior positions. A large majority of both private and public sector women chose the more accurate of the two definitions provided of the Affirmative Action legislation. There was a relatively small percentage from each sector that believed Affirmative Action was a direct form of positive discrimination. Public sector women were relatively more positive than private sector women in their assessment of the Affirmative Action legislation. However, these differences were only marginally significant.

Public sector women were also more likely than private sector women to take a positive view of quota systems to address the gender imbalance in senior management, although the majority of

both groups were reluctant to introduce quota systems. Proportionally more public sector women than private sector women said they actively lobbied for the increased representation of women in senior management, however, only half said they did actively lobby. There were no statistically significant different responses between public and private sector women on the questions relating to the Affirmative Action legislation. However, the differences between public and private sector women were statistically significant for all of the responses on questions relating to the quota system.

Significantly more public sector women than private sector women believed they had experienced sexual discrimination in their careers. Public sector women were more likely than private sector women to cite pressure from males in the workplace as a reason for their experience of discrimination. There was also a statistically significant relationship between those women who had experienced sexual discrimination and those who believed quota systems needed to be implemented to address gender inequity in senior management.

Public sector women were also statistically significantly more likely than private sector women to say their management style differed from their male colleagues. However, the two groups described their management styles as being predominantly consensual and communicative or democratic and fair. The fact that a smaller proportion of public sector women were responsible for implementing Human Resource policy than private sector women was concerning due to the fact that public sector women held views that were more sympathetic to legislative initiatives that could assist women in gaining senior management positions. Public sector women were also more likely to speak out about issues concerning the gender imbalance at senior management level, and these differences between private and public sector women proved to be statistically significant.

Most women from either sector had not turned down a promotion, although there was a slightly higher proportion of public sector women who had turned down promotion. The reasons given for turning down a promotion were diverse, with personal choice or free-will being the most

often cited reason. This result supports the research discussed in Chapter Two. Many more public sector than private sector women had seen other women turning down promotions for reasons relating to the dilemmas between work and family and lack of confidence in their own abilities.

The logistic regression analyses explored the combined affects of independent variables on a set of specific dichotomous dependent variables. The dependent variables chosen were variables that indicated the willingness of senior management women to actively engage in behaviour or implement programs to assist other women in management. The results showed that if senior management women were feminists, had experienced sexual discrimination, and had had a mentor they were more likely to actively lobby for an increased representation of women at senior management level in their workplace. A belief in the 'Glass Ceiling' was significantly related to whether the respondent was a feminist and whether they had been sexually discriminated against. Membership of a woman's group was significantly related to the level of education a woman had attained. These findings showed that an experience of gender domination or oppression made a woman more likely to hold values or behave in ways that showed a commitment to gender equity.

The factor analysis and subsequent multiple regression analyses showed that certain independent variables were significantly related to scores on the attitudinal factors. Again an experience of sexual discrimination and identification with feminism were the two important predictors related to the factor 'Manpower', and consequently an agreement with statements that males have been favoured at the expense of women in the society. Women who had achieved high school as their highest level of education more strongly agreed with the idea that men are favoured in society than those with postgraduate university qualifications.

The statements that made up the factor 'Liberal' were significantly predicted by five independent variables: feminism, sexual discrimination, left-wing voters, high school education, and the marital status of the respondent. Consequently, respondents who voted for the ALP or the

Democrats, who were not practising a religion, considered themselves to be a feminist, had a high school education, and were single more strongly agreed with social diversity and radical change mechanisms than those who were not in those categories.

The two factors 'Career-focus' and 'Women are their own worst enemies' did not display an alpha reliability score high enough to support their internal consistency as factors. Consequently, separate multiple regressions were conducted on each item contained within those two factors to see whether any interesting predictive relationships could be found with the independent variables in the equation. Two of these analyses showed predictive relationships that were not surprising and two showed surprising results. The two less surprising results were: Firstly, that women with children and partners more strongly agreed that women could combine motherhood and career without detriment to either than women without children and partners. Secondly, women who voted for the Liberal and National Country Parties (conservative voters) more strongly agreed that they put the overall social good before their individual career goals than those who did not vote conservatively. The two surprising relationships were: Firstly, that women who had experienced sex discrimination more strongly agreed with the statement that men are more qualified for 'top' jobs than those who had not. Secondly, women who considered themselves left-wing voters more strongly agreed that women were partly to blame for their under-representation in positions of power than women who did not vote left-wing. Due to the marginal significance of the overall regression equations for these latter two analyses the interpretation of the results is not heavily emphasised.

The analyses of the quantitative data held few surprises. Most of the independent variables measured were not statistically significantly predictive of the values, norms and practices of women in the private and public sector regarding gender equity issues. On the other hand, there were some independent variables that were significantly predictive of certain behaviour. The significance of these predictions is based upon the fact that the sample size in the study was large enough to find small effects significant, and even though these patterns are significant, they are only explaining small amounts of variance. Feminists, left-wing voters, and women who had

experienced sex discrimination were consistently more willing and committed to holding values and behaving in ways that could bring about change for women in management. The consistency with which the more predictive independent variables, such as being a feminist and experiencing sex discrimination, aligned themselves to the values from the attitudinal scale shows a degree of convergent validity in the data. The surprising findings were the following significantly predictive relationships:

- Women who were not university educated were much more likely than those who were university educated to become members of a women's group
- Women who had experienced sex discrimination were more likely than those who had not to attribute superior job qualifications to men.
- Women who were left-wing voters were more likely than those who were not to blame women for their under-representation in positions of power.

A full discussion of these results and their implications for future research will be undertaken in the concluding chapter.

Chapter Eight

Discussion of Results and Conclusion

A plethora of social values, norms and practices constantly reproduced in an organisational and social context have restricted improvement in the proportion of women occupying senior management positions in Australia. Due to their persistence over time, these causal factors are not challenged because they appear 'normal' and 'natural'. In order to speed up the progress towards gender equity in senior management, however, these causal factors need to be challenged. Challenging these values, norms and practices calls into question the stereotypical relations between the sexes along with the profound economic, political and social forces at the most powerful levels of society.

Senior management women were chosen as a special group to study due to the attendant status that their position acquires. It was the contention of this thesis that they are in a particularly unique position in society to be a 'force for change' with regard to gender equity issues operating in an organisational context. This study has set out to discover the willingness of senior management women to address gender inequity through explorations of the following:

- The experiences and views of senior management women towards the dominant culture of their workplaces. Their experience with the use of power and whether they view themselves as powerful people.
- The experiences and views of senior women managers with programs to increase gender equity in the Australian workplace, such as Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and quota systems.
- A comparison of the views and experiences of women working in the private and public sector in order to highlight the differences and similarities between the two groups. The aim behind comparing the public and private sectors was to explore the effects of differing organisational cultures on women's values, norms and practices regarding gender equity.
- The backgrounds of women senior managers, including how their background has defined their status as a senior manager and their individual views on gender equity.

- The effects of independent variables on the values, norms and practices of women in senior management with regard to issues of gender equity.

I will discuss each of these aims in relation to the research questions of the thesis (outlined on pages 10-11 of Chapter One) and in terms of both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the research. The last two sections in this chapter will cover the implications of the research and the possibilities for future research.

The contribution of the study to sociological method and theory for researching senior management women was undertaken according to the three levels of analysis informed by the theoretical paradigm and outlined in Chapter One (p18). These levels were: a focus on both the constraining and enabling forces senior management women experience in their workplaces; the specific cultural practices embedded within organisations that exclude women; and the individual values, norms and practices that affect the ability of senior management women to bring about strategic action that may increase the proportion of women at their level. These three analytical levels were explored by allowing the women in the study to speak for themselves and define the parameters of their experiences as suggested by Smith (1979, p135).

8.1: What type of experiences have senior management women had with the dominant culture of their workplaces? How have these experiences effected their working lives?

The analysis of the qualitative phase showed that senior management women's expression of their values, norms and practices regarding the dominant culture of their workplaces was highly diverse. The within-case analysis revealed that individuals who had experienced gender barriers of any kind in their career were much more vocal about the negative effects of the dominant culture on their career. Women who had experienced sex discrimination were more likely to believe in the 'Glass Ceiling' and the continued existence of an 'Old Boy's Network'.

Interestingly, even though the majority of women agreed with the concept of the 'Glass Ceiling', only a minority had personally experienced it themselves. Therefore, actually experiencing the 'Glass Ceiling' was not a necessary precondition for a belief in it.

The between-case analysis of the qualitative data revealed four broad categories of senior management women with similar values, norms and practices regarding gender equity: Definite

Feminists, Reluctant Feminists, Moderates, and Conservatives. The Definite Feminist group was the largest of the four groups. They were more likely than women in the other groups to have experienced sex discrimination and to be contemplating leaving large organisations or setting themselves up autonomously within their organisations. They felt they needed to do this to avoid the insurmountable resistance they encountered from the dominant masculine culture of their organisations. Marshall's (1995) research has highlighted the extensiveness of, and complex reasons behind, the need for women in management to redefine their career and life choices.

This study showed that Definite Feminists expressed very few, if any, contradictory or confused statements about their values, norms and practices regarding gender equity. They were quite sure that they had been personally oppressed by the experience of sex discrimination and could describe in detail how the dominant masculine culture manifested in their lives.

At the other end of the spectrum was a small cohort of women who expressed values, norms and practices that could be described as the 'Queen Bee Syndrome' (Staines *et al.*, 1974). These women, the Conservatives, were as certain as the Definite Feminists about their values, norms and practices regarding gender equity. They did not see any problems with the dominant culture and practices of their workplaces and felt that women who could not achieve success in the current culture did not deserve success. Those women who expressed 'Queen Bee' values made up only a small proportion of the women in the study but nevertheless, they did exist.

There was also a large proportion of women who were neither 'Queen Bees' nor Definite Feminists. These women, the Moderates and the Reluctant Feminists, were the two groups that displayed the most contradictory and confused comments regarding the dominant culture of their workplaces. On the one hand, many of these women would say they did not think the dominant culture adversely effected their careers, then afterwards they would recount stories that were examples of gender barriers that they or their female colleagues had experienced. These contradictions showed the lack of a shared understanding about the experience of gender inequity amongst the women within these two groups. These contradictions and inconsistencies were an example of an experience of 'dual consciousness' (Waters, 1990, p114) because in many cases the women in these two groups did not recognise these events as constraining forces associated with the dominant culture in their workplace.

Discussions about the existence of an 'Old Boys Network' showed that again the women were divided. Many thought these networks were declining because of the changes in language and practices at the senior management level. However, just as many women in the qualitative study described very strong male networks that were still operating to exclude women from the 'circles of power' at senior management level.

The quantitative data supported the findings from the qualitative data regarding the experiences of senior management women with the dominant culture of their workplace. Feminists and women who had experienced sex discrimination were significantly more likely to agree with the existence of a 'Glass Ceiling', the dominance of an 'Old Boys Network', and the need for legislative intervention such as Affirmative Action and quota systems to hasten the pace of change towards gender equity.

The descriptive quantitative data showed significant differences between women working in the private sector compared to those working in the public sector on many of the issues explored. With regard to the dominant culture of their workplace, their views significantly differed on issues such as: experiencing the 'Glass Ceiling'; the experience of being the only woman in senior management; observing other women experiencing the 'Glass Ceiling'; believing their colleagues gained their positions on merit; actively lobbying to increase the number of women in management; experiencing sex discrimination; comparing their management style to men's; turning down promotions; observing other women turning down promotions; and wanting to be promoted. On all of these issues public sector women were more inclined than private sector women to see the dominant male culture as a distinct problem for them. A detailed discussion of all of the differences between public and private sector women will be undertaken later in this chapter.

Even though there were significant differences between public and private sector women in terms of these individual issues, this difference did not translate into significantly predictive differences between the two at the level of inferential statistics. There were only two variables, namely, being a feminist or having experienced sex discrimination, that could predict whether a woman was more likely to agree that the dominant male culture in the workplace was oppressive.

Therefore, having personally experienced the constraining forces of the dominant culture of an organisation made women more aware of those forces and more willing to identify with feminist principles.

Both phases of the research showed that most women did not find the experience of being a 'token' woman, or only one of a few women in senior management, as a personal stress. A minority of women saw their 'token' status as a disadvantage and an equally small minority saw it as a competitive advantage over men due to their increased visibility. The majority had also never encountered contradictions between their personal values and the values of their organisations and those who had, did not believe that these contradictions had effected them personally. These findings tend to contradict the research reported in Chapter Two (Davidson & Cooper, 1992) that highlights personal dilemmas that can translate into stress and role confusion for token women in management positions.

The experiences of senior management women with the use of power were again diverse. In the qualitative research, most discussed the fact that they did not see themselves as powerful and in fact preferred the term influential. In both the qualitative and quantitative phases the majority defined themselves as powerful, but within a limited sphere. There were no significant differences between private and public sector women in their responses to questions on their experience of power or their use of authority.

8.2: What do senior management women think about the gender inequity in senior decision-making roles of Australian organisations?

Senior management women were reasonably united in believing something needed to be done about the low numbers of women in senior management. This result was observed at both the qualitative and quantitative levels of the study. However, as a group they displayed very few 'shared understandings' of how the proportion of women in power could be increased. As I shall discuss in the next two research objectives, they were evenly and consistently divided in their belief in Affirmative Action programs and quota systems. The senior management women in both phases of the study lacked any shared understanding or collective displays of behaviour that would assist in increasing the pace of change towards gender equity. The types of changes that women were making in terms of gender equity were individually based methods of change such

as, speaking up about feminist issues or addressing sexual harassment on an individual basis. These individual actions are important but, as discussed in Chapter Four, not enough to challenge or change the entrenched gender practices within organisations.

8.3:How knowledgeable and supportive are senior management women of the Affirmative Action legislation?

Both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study showed that the values, norms and practices held by senior management women regarding the Affirmative Action legislation were evenly and firmly divided into three main groups: those for the legislation, those against the legislation and those who were equivocal about the legislation. Those who were against the legislation tended to lack a detailed understanding of the legislation, believing it to be a form of positive discrimination. Similarly, those who were equivocal lacked a detailed understanding of the legislation and misunderstood the merit-based philosophy that underpins it. Those women who were supportive of Affirmative Action accepted that something needed to be done about the gender imbalance and were more informed in terms of the details of the legislation. There was a similar proportion of all three of these groups who believed Affirmative Action had not achieved much for women.

These results mirror the results from previous reviews of the legislation which show that the legislation tends to polarise opinion (Taylor, 1991; Employment Research Group, 1992). Consequently, senior management women as a group cannot be relied upon to promote or implement the Affirmative Action policy within their organisations. This is because even though a sizeable proportion (about one-third) say they believe in the legislation, not all of those believe it has been effective in challenging or changing the status quo and therefore are loath to support it. Considering the high level of support Affirmative Action legislation requires to be successful in organisations (Affirmative Action Agency, 1992a, p71), these results have negative implications for the future success of programs such as these when under the management of the women in this study.

8.4: What proportion of senior management women are supportive of programs of positive discrimination, such as quota systems, to address the gender imbalance at senior management levels?

The proportion of senior management women supportive of quota systems was relatively low. The tension between the opposing value paradigms of legislative initiatives such as quota systems and the liberal individual achievement model was evident when comparing the four categories developed in the qualitative study. Due to a focus on achievement in their upbringing, the dominant value paradigm for most senior management women was the liberal achievement-oriented paradigm. However, for many women the value paradigm of achievement appears to compete in their mind with the value paradigm of the need for gender equity. The confusion and hesitancy about equity issues that arose in their discussions about quota systems reveals their lack of commitment to pro-active or challenging methods to redress the gender imbalance at management level.

For example, some women expressed their 'disgust' at measures such as quota systems to redress gender inequity, opinions that align with the 'backlash' against the current legislative practices. At the other end of the spectrum, some women expressed their frustration with the painfully slow pace of change and the fact that the current legislative practices were not effective in changing the gender balance. Most women, however, were in the middle of these two positions believing that because the legislation was in place there was very little else that could be done about gender inequity and that therefore the process was out of their hands. But others in this equivocal group felt frustrated that nothing was being achieved with the current legislative processes, yet could not or would not envisage more innovative or pro-active measures.

The quantitative data confirmed that senior management women were divided on the subject of quotas. Women working in the private sector tended not to see the need for quota systems, described the quota system in a negative light, and had more reservations about a quota system than public sector women. The majority of women from both sectors believed that the threat of not getting the right person for the job was the main reason to reject the notion of quota systems. This finding aligns with other findings that highlight the importance of the liberal philosophy of achievement and the merit principle to the respondents. There were a small proportion of women, however, who unlike the achievement oriented women believed that the central concern

in implementing a quota system was that individual women would be at a disadvantage in terms of credibility and respect if they were hired through a quota system.

8.5: What do senior management women think of feminism, and how do they view themselves in relation to feminism?

In the qualitative phase of the research, the subject of feminism evenly divided the group. Approximately half of the women in the study were happy to call themselves feminists, a finding that again highlights the broad divisions between the group. Although half regarded themselves as feminists, they were generally disengaged from the practical activities of feminism such as membership of feminist groups or networks, acting as mentors for other women, or implementing organisational change policies or procedures that would address gender inequity. These women voiced their feminist principles as individuals within their workplace, did not fully agree with Affirmative Action or quotas systems, and were not defining alternatives to the current dominant practices. The values, norms and practices undertaken by women happy to call themselves feminists were largely ineffective, considering the profound challenges required to change the entrenched gendered practices within organisations discussed in Chapter Four. Because as we have seen, consistent effort across the individual, organisational and social levels is required to challenge and change the gender balance.

There were statistically significant differences between private and public sector women in terms of being a feminist; what type of feminist; voicing feminist principles at work; feeling victimised for voicing feminist principles at work; believing that the feminist movement had advantaged or disadvantaged women. Women in the private sector were more evenly divided (50/50) on the issue of feminism than women in the public sector, where the majority (72%) were happy to call themselves feminists. However, even though a sizeable proportion in each sector are happy to call themselves feminists, most describe themselves as 'liberal' feminists. These are feminists who see equality with men as their ultimate goal. Wacjman (1999, p160) discusses the fact that the answer to women's exclusion from positions of power and status is not simply to get more women to enter management, because the norm for the managerial occupation remains male. In fact, Wacjman argues that ironically it is a male model of equality that women have had to adopt in order to challenge the status quo. Liberal feminists are more likely than any other type of feminist to agree with and use the 'male model of equality' as their standard of equality per se.

Liberal feminists do not share an understanding of the profound challenges that need to be mounted against the dominant masculine culture to change the systemic gender imbalance in management.

8.6: Do independent variables such as organisational type, identification with feminism, age, education, family background, political affiliation, income, marital status, parental status, religion, experience of sex discrimination, and experience with mentors effect the propensity of senior management women to assist other women in the workplace?

The pre-eminence of an achievement-orientation in the background factors they attributed to their success, preclude many of these women from ever holding values and norms that would allow them to support forms of positive discrimination to address gender inequity. Their achievement-orientation made them extremely loyal to the liberal principle of merit. Both the qualitative and quantitative study revealed the pre-eminence of the achievement-oriented model in the minds of senior management women with little or no difference between women from either sector.

The logistic regression showed that three independent variables were significantly related to lobbying to increase the representation of women: feminism, sex discrimination, and the assistance of a mentor. This shows that an awareness of the need to actively intervene to increase the numbers of women in management is heightened if a woman identifies with feminist principles, has experienced sex discrimination, or has been assisted by a mentor.

The logistic regression also showed that none of the independent variables were significantly correlated with a belief in the Affirmative Action legislation. This meant that a belief in the Affirmative Action legislation could not be predicted according to any of the independent variables in the regression equation.

Two independent variables were significantly correlated with a belief in the 'Glass Ceiling': feminism and sex discrimination. Consequently, similar to the regression equation for actively lobbying to increase women, those women who were feminists or had experienced sex discrimination were also those who were more likely to believe in the 'Glass Ceiling'. Only one variable was significantly related to membership of a woman's group, namely a high school

education. Therefore, those women whose highest level of education was high school were more likely than those who had attained university qualifications to join women's groups.

The multiple regression showed that similar independent variables as those in the logistic regression were predictive of particular attitudinal statements. For example, the independent variables namely, feminism, high school education, and sex discrimination were significantly predictive of the factor 'Manpower', a factor made up of attitudinal statements agreeing that women are treated differently to men because of the advantages of the male stereotype. The independent variables, namely, feminism, high school education, left-wing voter, whether or not the respondent had a partner, and whether or not they were religious were significantly predictive of the factor 'Liberal', a factor made up of attitudinal statements that agree with values supporting merit, equality and anti-discrimination. Not surprisingly, women who voted for the Liberal/National Country Party were more likely than those who did not to agree that they were more concerned with the overall social good than with their own personal advancement.

The independent variable public/private did not show a statistically significant relationship with any of the variables in any of the regression equations. This meant that taking all of the independent variables together, one cannot predict whether a woman working in either sector would be more willing to support measures to increase gender equity. On the other hand the multi-variate analyses showed that if a woman was happy to call herself a feminist or had experienced sex discrimination then one could reliably predict that she would support measures to increase gender equity. It is worth noting that the significant predictors identified from the regression analyses in this study represent relatively small effect sizes. Thus, while the sample size of the study permitted the detection of such effects, it must be acknowledged that only small amounts of variance in attitudes are being explained.

8.7: What are the extent of differences and similarities between the values and experiences of senior management women employed in the public sector compared with the private sector?

There were more significant differences between the individual values, norms and practices of women working in the private and public sectors than there were similarities. The views of women in either sector differed significantly on the following issues,

- Approximately half of the women working in the private sector regarded themselves as feminists, compared to more than two-thirds of the women in the public sector.
- Public sector women were more likely to speak up about feminist issues at work, feel victimised for voicing feminist concerns, and believe that the feminist movement had advantaged women compared to private sector women.
- Public sector women were more likely to have experienced and to have observed other women experiencing the 'Glass Ceiling', and to have observed it operating more frequently in their organisation than private sector women.
- Public sector women described the operation of a quota system in a more positive light, were more likely to agree with the implementation of such a system, and had fewer reservations about quotas compared to private sector women.
- Public sector women were more likely to say they actively lobby to increase women in senior positions, to say they had experienced sex discrimination, and that their management style is very different to men's than private sector women.
- Public sector women were more likely to have observed other women avoiding promotional opportunities than private sector women.
- Private sector women were more likely to agree with statements saying that their colleagues had gained their positions on the basis of merit, and more likely to say they were happy with their present position than public sector women.

These significant differences show that on most of the issues measured, public sector women were more likely to question the status quo and be cognisant of the need for gender equity programs that could bring about structural and systemic organisational change. However, as discussed earlier, these individual differences did not translate into strong predictive differences when combined in a regression equation with all of the important independent variables measured.

The views of women in either sector were similar on the following issues:

- They attributed very similar background factors to their success as senior managers.
- They described powerful people and their relationship to power in similar ways.
- They had similar low levels of membership of women's groups.
- Most public and private sector women who identified themselves as feminists, described themselves as 'liberal' feminists.

- The description of their management styles were similar.

Other research has shown the similarities between women's experiences as managers. Sinclair's (1998) research has shown the effects of similar background features on women's success as managers such as, male mentors, hardship leading to self-reliance, and the influence of fathers and mothers. Wacjman (1999) and Still (1993) have also discussed the similarities between women's management styles. In this study, the individual differences between women working in the private and public sectors on issues regarding gender equity are more extensive than the similarities between the two groups.

8.8 Discussion and Implications of Results

The qualitative data served two main purposes: it showed that there were large differences in the values, norms and practices of senior management women as individuals and as a group, and it showed the ways in which these women differed from one another on issues relating to the values, norms and practices of gender equity. The qualitative phase also highlighted connections between different experiences and variables in the lives of these women, for example, the pre-eminence of the achievement-orientation of their background and the connection between the experience of sex discrimination and an allegiance to feminist principles.

Only women who were feminists, or had experienced sex discrimination, and therefore acknowledged the male-gender-system as a problem for women, were undertaking individual actions that might assist other women. However, this group of women were not 'defining alternatives' to the current methods of addressing gender inequity at senior management level as suggested by Smith (1987, p78). The ability to define alternatives is a necessary condition for the profound changes required to challenge the operation of the male-gender-system in management, but senior management women are not engaged in such practices. It is not my contention that senior management women should be solely responsible for these profound changes. But it is my contention that due to their organisational status, they are in a better social position than many other women to enact cultural change in organisations. Unfortunately, this study shows that as a divided group, their lack of shared understanding of the needs for increased gender equity makes it unlikely they will be a significant force for social or organisational change.

Most women in this study were experiencing, or had experienced, their gender as more of a constraining than enabling factor in their career. At the same time, a minority of senior

management women, predominantly in the private sector, use the token status of their gender as an enabling factor. For a large proportion of women, however, experiencing their gender as a constant constraining factor did not have the effect of making them more likely to identify with feminism. For these women, the confusion and uncertainty in their responses about the dominant male culture of their workplaces appeared as a form of 'dual consciousness' similar to that identified by Waters (1990, p114).

One consistent finding in both phases of the research was the importance of the achievement-orientation of the upbringing of women in both the private and public sectors. Either through an emphasis upon a good education or the attribution of an achievement orientation to their parents, these women had developed a strong personal affinity with achievement. In many cases this was not achievement aligned with privilege but with the desire and ambition to achieve per se. This is one reason why the liberal philosophy underpinning the merit principle is highly appealing to these women. As discussed in Chapter Three, a personal philosophy based upon liberal principles such as merit and individual based models of achievement becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy in the context of the bureaucratic organisation, particularly at management level. Weber recognised the autonomous role of ideas in the origin of modern capitalism. He suggested that the institution of modern capitalism required a certain type of personality. This personality type, in turn, was psychologically construed as a result of belief in a set of ideas that unwittingly resulted in the development of those specific traits useful in capitalist conduct (Weber,1948, p63).

The following points reveal the high level of division and difference between senior management women that undermine their potential as a 'force for change' in terms of gender inequity in senior management.

- Their values, norms and practices are significantly and profoundly divided and cannot be stereotyped into certain patterns of values, norms and practices regarding gender equity.
- The achievement-oriented backgrounds that they attribute to their success partly preclude the probability that they will support measures of positive discrimination to change the culture of their organisations and make them more 'woman friendly'.
- Senior management women who do take action to assist other women in the workplace are more constrained than enabled by structural, ideological, and individual factors

embedded in the culture of their organisations, factors of which they are largely unaware or which they accept as inevitable.

- Due to the diversity of their views, senior management women in Australian organisations are not part of the problem with regard to gender equity in senior management, however, neither are they part of the solution.
- Senior management women working in the public sector respond more positively to programs that support women, and forms of positive discrimination, than their equivalents in the private sector. However, it is not possible to predict whether a woman is willing to support equity programs solely on the basis of whether she works in the private or public sector.
- Senior management women who identify themselves as feminists and who have experienced sex discrimination are much more likely to be willing to assist other women in an individual rather than collective fashion, regardless of whether they work in the private or public sector.

Contradictions within the individual views and beliefs of senior management women further reinforce the fact that the shared understandings and consistent concerted effort required to redress gender inequity is unlikely to emerge from this social group. The women in this study who had personally experienced and observed sex discrimination had been self-reflective about the experience (a necessary requirement for social change developed by Connell [1987, p95]) and had then made some attempt to start networks that helped other women. However, changes such as increased networking with other women are based upon the individual model of change and do not bring about the profound changes required to dismantle the structures of extended patriarchy (Waters, 1990) or patriarchal hegemony (Cockburn, 1991) that reproduce male advantage at senior management level. Only a very small number of senior management women believed in the power of collective action and those who did had rationalised to themselves that this would never occur. On the whole, the women in this study are against forms of positive discrimination to address gender inequity and many are sure that 'it is only a matter of time' before women gain senior management positions in great numbers.

The pre-eminence of values, norms and practices based upon an achievement-orientation precludes these women from holding values or displaying norms and practices that would challenge the dominant masculine culture of management in organisations. The implication of this for structural organisational change is that the thesis of 'critical mass' developed by Kanter (1977) is not a guarantee that profound changes will be brought about in the practices relating to gender equity in organisations. For even if an increase of the numbers of women at senior management level allows individual women to feel more 'comfortable' with their position the results of this study show it will not guarantee that the new women will be the type to enact change that assists other women.

Wacjman's (1999, p160) research shows that to achieve positions of power, women must accommodate themselves to the organisation, not the other way around. Consequently, they pay a high price for venturing into male-dominated territory. However, this study has shown that most women who are already in senior management positions do not believe they have compromised their personal beliefs or accommodated themselves at all and therefore have either not paid any 'price' for their entry into senior management. Most are certain that their values and norms align with those of the organisation.

The finding that for most women there is a direct relationship between having a working mother and being inspired to achieve in terms of a management position has implications for the numbers of women aspiring to management positions. Due to the steadily increasing numbers of married women entering the workforce over the last twenty years, the numbers of women aspiring to positions of power in the workplace should also steadily increase.

The implication of the finding that women working in the public sector hold significantly greater positive attitudes toward the changes required for gender equity than private sector women has ramifications for the pace of change. This is because the public sector employs a much smaller number of management women than the private sector. In June 1966, there were 322 women in the Senior Executive Service ranks of the Commonwealth Public Service, whereas, in August 1996 there were 3589 women classified as managers and administrators overall (Australian Women's Yearbook, pp129-130). These figures show that the proportion of senior management women employed in the public sector as opposed to the private sector is approximately 10%. However, the values, norms and practices of the private sector women in this study are clearly

less supportive of any of the measures required to bring about gender equity than those of public sector women. The statistics in Chapter One also show the higher proportion of women in senior management in the public sector (19%) compared to the private sector (12%). Consequently, the need for supportive attitudes towards equity programs and senior management endorsement of equity programs is more urgently required in the private sector.

Still (1993, p178) contends that managerial women need to continue to effect change in the male managerial culture and that while external legislative reform can assist women's progress, it is the internal developments that effect 'real' change. I tend to disagree suggesting that both endogenous and exogenous change mechanisms are required in equal measure to bring about real and lasting change in gender equity. However, both endogenous and exogenous change mechanisms for gender equity are weak in the private sector. For example, as discussed in Chapter Three, the powers of the Affirmative Action Agency (the only exogenous change mechanism) have been decreased and the attitudes of the women in this study in the private sector (an endogenous change mechanism) are significantly less committed and practical than those of women in the public sector.

There is no evidence to suggest that the women in this study are considering, discussing, or implementing anything like the 'radical' changes Hearn (1992, pp6-7) suggests are required to increase gender equity. Even though half of the senior management woman in the study are feminists, have experienced sex discrimination and are willing to make changes in the workplace that would assist other women, the other half are not feminists and do not agree with challenging the status quo. Furthermore, the fact that a senior management woman is a feminist and has experienced sex discrimination does not guarantee that she will be sympathetic towards the more 'radical' measures required to challenge the dominant masculine culture in management. Most feminists in this study are 'liberal' feminists, and undertake individual actions that are not effective in challenging systemic gender inequity. Wacjman (1999, p160) recognises this in arguing that 'ironically it is a male model of equality that women have had to adopt in order to challenge the status quo'. The co-option of senior management women into the very models of behaviour that constrain them is a major reason why exogenous change mechanisms such as Affirmative Action programs are critical to increasing gender equity.

The divisions between senior management women on the issue of Affirmative Action show that they cannot be relied upon as a group to support the implementation and progression of the legislation in an organisational context. There were no independent variables that related significantly to a belief in the legislation. Consequently, it is not possible to predict what type of individual will support the legislation. The implications of these findings for the future of the legislation are difficult to gauge. Due to the fact that the legislation divides rather than galvanises opinion it is unlikely that a consensus can be reached in the implementation of policies relating to Affirmative Action. As discussed in Chapter Three (page 84), the shared understandings between organisational members about equity policy are crucial to their successful implementation. However, in the case of Affirmative Action the research shows only a low level of shared understanding amongst women in senior management.

As a group, senior management women need to experience a heightened awareness of the entrenched gender barriers faced by other women before they can reach a level of shared understanding about the need for radical reform mechanisms to increase gender equity in organisations. This could possibly be achieved through the implementation of formal endogenous change mechanisms such as mentor programs, or women's networks that engage in consciousness-raising forums. Training programs for this group on Affirmative Action targets or quota systems could prove fruitless due to the strength of their achievement-oriented values. Equity practitioners could also consider developing ways of retaining senior management women who identify as feminists within the senior management levels of mainstream corporate organisations.

8.9: Possibilities for future research

The difficulty in suggesting further research on gender equity in management is that increasing the quantity or quality of research does not seem to inform policies and practices within organisations as the results are largely ignored by individuals, both men and women, in the circles of power. At times even policy makers in government ignore the weight of evidence for the stronger measures required to bring about change as seen in the recent reforms to the Affirmative Action Agency discussed in Chapter Three. This is particularly the case in the private sector where few changes are supported or instigated that treat gender equity as a serious business objective. With the advent of the rapidly increasing shareholder base in Australia, many large

organisations are now accountable to both Boards of Directors and shareholders for increased profit. Consequently, management is being increasingly driven almost exclusively by the 'bottom line' and equity issues are increasingly losing priority. With those difficulties noted, there are a few extensions of this research that could prove interesting.

Firstly, the study could be repeated to see what changes have occurred over time. This sort of longitudinal analysis is rare in this field and could provide results that could be compared more reliably with the exogenous changes in equity policies and procedures, and changes in feminist philosophy outlined in Chapter Three. For example, the effects of particular equity policies and programs could be measured against the attitudes of senior management women over time. The level of commitment and willingness of senior management women to gender equity within specific organisational types could also be measured using longitudinal data. The effect of traditional and non-traditional sex-typed organisational contexts on women's values regarding gender equity could then be explored. In other words, are senior management women in the mining sector less supportive of measures to increase gender equity than those in the education sector? This could provide information on the nature and strength of gender equity policies and programs required in the different industry sectors.

Secondly, the study could be replicated with males and compared to the results from the study with women. This suggestion is contentious due to the methodological difficulties that arise when comparing male and females in management. A direct comparison was avoided in this study due to the contradictory and inconclusive nature of the comparative research reviewed in Chapter Two. It was decided that the differences between men and women on the subject of gender equity was too great to support a direct comparison.

A final suggestion for future research could be an exploration of the views of the personal assistants and/or subordinates of senior management women and men. The difficulties, discussed in Chapter Two, with perceptual versus real impressions of the management style of men versus women could still prevail with such a study. However, the emphasis could centre on the resistance contained in the working relationships of management women and their subordinates, much as it did in Pringle's (1989) study on secretaries and their male managers. This could

explore the constraining and enabling factors in relationships between women with different class-based hierarchical statuses.

In conclusion, Zweigenhaft (1987, pp59-60) discusses how critical the external 'pressure' applied by governments is to bring about a change in the gender balance in management. Currently, this external pressure is weak in Australia due to the lack of commitment and sanctions in the Affirmative Action Act. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Three (p77), the limited powers of the Affirmative Action Agency have been recently further reduced in terms of their ability to profoundly challenge the dominant masculine culture in management. A decreasing emphasis on the importance of government bodies such as these together with the competing values and lack of collective commitment from women in senior management does not bode well for correcting the gender imbalance in the circles of power currently and historically dominated by males in Australia.

The research in this study has shown how the force of viriarchal hegemony discussed by Cockburn (1991) leads to a state of 'dual consciousness' for a large proportion of senior management women. The dominance of the achievement value-paradigm in the minds of these women has proved a doubled-edged sword for their commitment to policies and programs designed to challenge the dominance of the masculine culture in organisations and redress the gender imbalance. Gordon's (1991) description of management women as 'prisoners of men's dreams' and Marshall's (1984) description as 'travellers in a male world' are accurate descriptions of the condition of women senior managers. It is unfortunate that only a very few individual women were making brave personal journeys into hostile territories by displaying resistance to the dominant male culture and becoming 'visionaries for change'.