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# The Senior Female International Managerial Career Move: A Qualitative Study in a European Context

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**A Thesis Submitted for a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the National University of Ireland**

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**August 1998**

The author hereby declares that, except where duly acknowledged, this thesis is entirely her own work and has not been submitted for any degree in the National University of Ireland, or in any other University

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*To my husband, mother, and the memory of my father*

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# SUMMARY

Research investigating the position of women in management has, largely, been confined within national boundaries. Over the last fifteen years, empirical studies of women in international management have been undertaken, predominantly in North America. In this research field, many questions remain unanswered or have been only partially addressed. The particular focus of this study is on the *senior* female international managerial career move in Europe — a relatively unexplored area. Fifty senior female expatriate managers were interviewed, representing a wide range of industry and service sectors. The study, for the first time, assesses an exclusively *senior* sample of female managers who have made at least one international career move.

This study of senior females in international management makes a theoretical contribution, not only to the analysis of gender and international human resource management, but also to wider debates within the contemporary women in management and career theory literatures. The aims of the study were to develop an understanding of the *senior* female international career move in a European context in order to more fully understand both the covert and overt barriers that may limit women's international career opportunities.

The results of the study show that the senior international career move has largely been developed along a linear male model of career progression, a development which, taken together with gender disparity both in organisations and family responsibilities, frequently prevents women employees from reaching senior managerial positions. The study proposes a model of the senior female international managerial career move, thereby contributing primarily to the international human resource management literature. The implications of the study for research literatures in women in management and career theory are also explored and a future research agenda developed.

*Chapter One*

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

This study is an assessment of the international career move made by senior female managers in Europe. The perspective being explored is that of currently employed senior female managers in a wide range of organisations, who have made at least one international career move. Previous studies have established that, throughout Europe, women's advance into senior *domestic* management positions has been very slow, despite the increasing change in legislation, including the European Union's social protocol, to enforce issues related to equal opportunity such as equal pay and sex discrimination (Davidson and Cooper, 1993; Hammond and Holton, 1991). The number of female managers pursuing international management careers, however, remains considerably lower than those in domestic management. Harris (1995b) and Adler (1993b) estimate that only three per cent of expatriate managers are women. This study examines a number of explanations which have been put forward in the relevant literature and analyses the empirical data collected in order to develop a more complete model of the senior female international career move in Europe. This research is particularly relevant as existing European studies have not specifically addressed issues pertaining to the *senior* female expatriate manager.

This chapter provides an overview of the study. First, the changing role of women in management is discussed. Second, gaps in the international human resource management literature are identified which help justify the rationale for the study. Third, the theoretical contributions of the study

are presented. Finally, the research focus of the study is outlined and the methodological choices made are discussed.

## 1.2 The Role of Women in Management

One of the most significant features of the global labour market in the last half of the twentieth century has been the increasing labour force participation rate of women. In recent years, in particular, there has been an increase in the number of women pursuing managerial careers (Harris, 1995; Davidson and Cooper, 1993; 1992; Gordon and Whelan, 1998). According to Alimo-Metcalfe and Wedderburn-Tate (1993), however, in terms of the managerial population, it is difficult to establish accurate figures for the proportions of women in management since definitions of management used by different studies may vary (Alimo-Metcalfe and Wedderburn-Tate, 1993: 17). Despite these definitional difficulties, however, it is evident from the extant research that women are not progressing to senior management positions at comparable rates to their male counterparts (Harris, 1995; Smith and Hutchinson, 1995; Burke and Davidson, 1994; Izraeli and Adler 1994; Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993; Davidson and Cooper, 1992).

Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993) noted that, until the late 1970s, women managers were virtually invisible in most countries. In the mid-1980s, Ho observed that:

> *Statistics show that women represent one third of the world's workforce, do two-thirds of the world's working hours, but they earn only one tenth of the world's income and own one-hundredth of the world's goods . . . they hold less than one per cent of the world's executive positions* (Ho, 1984: 7).

Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993) reported that, during the 1980s, the under-representation of women in positions of power emerged as a 'problem', and became an item of high priority on the agenda of industrialised countries (Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993: 53). Adler and Izraeli (1988) highlighted globalisation, skill shortage, labour force participation and women's resources and commitment as the forces that contributed to this change. Adler and Izraeli believed that, first, the globalisation of competition created the need to encourage excellence and maximise the human potential in the work-force. Second, demographic forecasts indicated a shortage of qualified white men for top-level jobs. Third, the increased participation of women in the labour force contributed to the perception of women as an underused source of human resources. Finally, the continuing investment in education and training made by women themselves and their active searches for promotion made it more difficult to overlook them in recruitment and promotion decisions (Adler and Izraeli, 1988).

Despite the awareness of the under-representation of women in management in the 1980s, however, studies have indicated that the situation has not yet greatly improved. Research from the United States, Australia and Europe reports similar trends in the position of women in management, for example, statistics from the United States have established that women constitute nearly half of the labour force and occupy a significant and growing proportion of entry and mid-level managerial positions, but less than five per cent of executive positions are held by women (United States: Department of Labor, 1996). A 1995 United States census further revealed that while women accounted for ten per cent of corporate officers, they represented just 2.4 per cent of the highest ranks of corporate leadership, and held only 1.9 per cent of the most highly compensated officer positions in *Fortune 500* companies, and only four of the *Fortune 1000* CEO positions are held by women (Catalyst, 1996).

Research from Australia established that women constitute 42.3 per cent of the Australian workforce (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1994). Women, however, are still under-represented in middle and senior managerial positions, occupying an estimated 21.1 per cent of all management positions (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1993). According to Korn/Ferry International (1993), women are moving into middle management positions in industries such as banking and finance, but, only three per cent reach senior executive positions.

Statistics from Europe indicate that females make up 41 per cent of the working population (Eurostat, 1996: 146). Throughout all the European Union countries, however, there is still job segregation based on gender, and over half of women are employed in the service sector which includes trade, education, retail, health care and clerical duties (Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 3). Women in corporate environments tend to be at the lower end of the managerial hierarchy, even after being employed for a decade or more in management jobs, with fewer than five per cent in *senior* management positions (Davidson and Cooper, 1993: 13). Research by Davidson and Cooper (1992) concluded that, overall, women employed in European Union countries do not enjoy the same job conditions, pay, status and career opportunities as their male counterparts (Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 6).

As outlined, the figures given for women in senior *domestic* management positions in most industrialised countries remain negligible. The figures for the number of women pursuing *international* managerial careers, i.e., who relocate to a different country to work for an extended period, are even lower, remaining at between two and five per cent (Reynolds and Bennett, 1991; Brewster, 1988; Adler, 1984). Very little research has been carried out concerning female international managers, mainly due to their relative scarcity (Harris, 1995b: 243). The available research, however, on women international managers in the United States, Britain

and some Asian countries such as Japan, indicates that, of those organisations which promote women through their domestic managerial hierarchy, few are prepared to allow women to expand their career horizons via international placements (Adler, 1993; Adler and Izraeli, 1988).

The relative scarcity of women in international management — especially within a European context — has received little attention in the international human resource management literature. In particular, there is a dearth of empirical research which details the role and career moves of the *senior* female international manager. Arising from this lack of empirical data, a number of largely untested assumptions have been used in an attempt to explain the low participation rate of females in international management. This study (i) highlights a number of these assumptions, (ii) discusses and analyses both the covert and overt barriers faced by women in their progression to senior managerial positions and (iii) empirically tests the reasons which have been given in the literature in an attempt to explain the relative scarcity of female international managers.

## 1.3 The Participation of Female Managers in International Management: Some Perspectives

A review of the international human resource management literature indicates a lack of empirically-based European studies. As a result, much discussion relies on untested assumptions rather than rigorously-conducted social investigation. From a review of the women in management literature, which primarily reports on female managers in *domestic* management, together with an examination of mainly North American based studies of female expatriate managers, however, a number of perspectives can be identified. These perspectives are:

- The equating of successful management with characteristics associated with white male managers (Schein, 1994; Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993);
- Career theories which take the lives of men as their model for career planning and development (Woodall and Winstanley, 1998; White et al., 1992; Gutek and Larwood, 1989; Gilligan, 1979);
- Home-country male senior managers' assumptions regarding the requirements of international managers and the suitability of women in international management (Dallalfar and Movahedi, 1996; Harris, 1995a; Adler, 1993a);
- The effect of an organisation's formal policies on women's opportunities in international management (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995; Harris, 1995a; Izraeli and Adler, 1994);
- The effect of an organisation's informal processes on women's opportunities in international management (Harris, 1995a; Barham and Oates, 1991; Marshall, 1985);
- Home country male managers' perceptions of foreigners' responses to women as international managers (Smith and Still, 1996; Adler, 1994; Moran et al., 1988);
- Women's wishes and desires to partake in international management (Harris, 1995a; Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993; Adler, 1984).

The above perspectives can be broadly categorised into three main literature domains, (i) international human resource management, (ii) women in management, and (iii) career theory. For the purpose of the literature review to be conducted for this study, therefore, it is proposed to concentrate on the available literature and empirical studies in these three fields. The perspectives highlight the general difficulties women face in both *domestic* and *international* management, and these difficulties will be discussed and analysed in greater detail in the study. There is a need,

however, to isolate more precisely the specific problems and barriers faced by senior female international managers in order to (i) reduce these difficulties and to ensure that future opportunities for progression to senior management is equal to that of their male counterparts, and (ii) outline some of the methods which successful female international managers have used to progress to senior managerial positions. This study will attempt to identify both the existing covert and overt barriers faced by female managers in their efforts to reach senior management positions in their home and host countries. The study will also discuss and analyse the career strategies used by fifty senior female international managers who have achieved career and personal success. The primary findings from this study should contribute to the limited extant European literature on female managers participation in international management, and should also contribute to women in management and career theory.

## 1.4 Rationale For The Study

> *The option of limiting international management to one gender is an arm-chair 'luxury' that no company can afford* (Adler, 1993b: 55).

Recent years have seen rapid increases in global activity and global competition in all industrialised countries, which has resulted in more women entering lower-level managerial positions (Izraeli and Adler, 1994: 4). Despite women's increased investment in higher education, their greater commitment to management as a career, the shortages of international managers, and equal opportunity legislation, female managers in every country remain "only a tiny fraction of those in senior positions" (Adler and Izraeli, 1994: 7). Scullion's (1995) study of forty-five British and Irish international firms revealed that, despite the shortages of international managers, there was no evidence that British multinationals

were taking serious steps to increase the proportion of women in international management (Scullion, 1995: 370). Adler's (1987) North American research illustrated the success of women as expatriates, but home country senior male managers continue to be concerned about a woman's ability to function effectively in countries where her activities may be curtailed because of local customs and regulations. According to Davison and Punnett (1995), gender, race, religion and other distinguishing personal characteristics frequently arise in expatriate decisions, but, these issues are seldom specified by managers or researchers (Davison and Punnett, 1995: 412). These issues have been highlighted from research conducted in North America in an attempt to explain the low proportion of females partaking in international management, empirical work with *senior* female expatriate managers in Europe is now necessary in order to explain why international management is still generally reserved for the male manager.

From the limited research available on female international managers, primarily from North America, a number of explanations have been put forward in attempting to explain the very low proportion of female managers who partake in overseas assignments. European empirical research, however, has not been conducted with *senior* female international managers, presumably because of their relative scarcity. Adler (1993b) argued that home-country senior management question if women can succeed in international assignments, as it is estimated that only three per cent of expatriates are women. An examination of the literature for the explanation of the low participation rate of women in international management by Harris (1993) and Adler and Jelinek (1986), revealed that (i) stereotypical assumptions by home-country management which equate good management with characteristics associated with male managers, and (ii) assumptions regarding female managers availability, suitability and wishes to partake in international management have been cited frequently.

This study will empirically test these assumptions and investigate the difficulties female managers face in attempting to break into this male preserve. Burke and Davidson (1994), however, cautioned that in attempting to identify specific reasons for women's lack of advancement to senior management positions, it is important to remember that managerial and professional women live and work in a larger society that is patriarchal, a society in which men have historically had greater access to power, privilege and wealth than women (Burke and Davidson, 1994: 3). Burke and Davidson also noted that because the field of women in management has only gained research attention since the 1980s, many research questions remain unanswered or have been only partially addressed (Burke and Davidson, 1994: 6). In the international management field, however, the position of female managers has received far less attention than female managers in *domestic* organisations, which also means that many research questions remain unanswered. This study, therefore, proposes to address the following questions and issues, in three main categories, which should be important in furthering our knowledge of the senior female international career move:

***Women in Management***

- What are the barriers which prevent female managers from progressing to senior management positions?
- What strategies do female managers use to reach senior managerial positions?
- What aspects of covert and overt male organisational culture are problematic for female managers?

***Career Theory***

- Do female managers engage in career planning?
- Is there a model of career development which fits the experiences of female managers?
- What are the implications of career breaks and time out for child-bearing and child rearing?
- What responsibilities do female managers have in relation to home and family members?

***Women in International Management***

- Does the glass ceiling still exist in Europe?
- Are there additional barriers for female managers in international management?
- Are there additional difficulties for female international managers when the male partner is 'the trailing spouse'?
- What role do mentors have on the career of the senior female international manager?
- Does the lack of female role models have an impact on the senior female international manager?
- Are there additional difficulties for the female international manager as part of a minority group?
- What role do networking groups have on career of the senior female international manager?
- What managerial style do senior female international managers adopt?
- What characteristics do female managers require to make an international career move?
- Is the transfer cycle for international assignments for female managers similar to that of male managers?
- Do female managers want international management careers?
- Does gender have an impact on the international career of female managers?

This study proposes to address these questions to senior female international managers, whose practical experience should contribute to our understanding of the senior female international managerial career move, and also to report, discuss, and analyse other relevant issues which arise from the field work to be conducted.

## 1.5 Theoretical Contributions of the Study

Despite growing numbers of female managers in domestically-based organisations, the participation rates of women in international management from different continents remains very low. There has been little research on this situation in relation to *senior* female international managers, particularly in a European context. This study contributes to the research literature by extending the research in two areas, first, to *senior* female managers and, second, to female expatriates based in *Europe.*

Most research on women in management was conducted in the United States, with little attention given to this topic in other countries (Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993: 56). Analysis of the extensive research conducted in North America by Adler (1994; 1987; 1986; 1984) with female expatriate managers shows that none of the participants in her studies occupied her company's most senior position in North America or in any country. The majority were employed in *junior* managerial positions, supervising from zero to twenty-five subordinates, with the average falling just below five. Interestingly, research conducted by Izraeli et al. (1980) concluded that only exceptional expatriate women could succeed as heads of multinational corporations, as outstanding competence was necessary to overcome the additional barriers (1980: 61).

In the current study, different profiles of age, marital status, length of marriage, number and ages of children, and choice of occupation caused

subtle differences in the issues each female manager faced. For example, a female manager with pre-school children may have valued child-care support more than those with school-aged or older children. The study, however, focused on commonalities among the senior female international manager rather than on variations, as a way of highlighting major themes and issues. Quantitative statements of the number of managers maintaining views on the major themes and issues are presented, thus clarifying where minority views are also represented.

The literature review in Chapter Two, shows that research studies on women in management have tended to concentrate on the barriers which prevent women from gaining access to senior management positions. Research studies on women in international management have also highlighted the barriers which prevent women from taking part in international assignments. The participants in this study, however, are fifty senior female managers who have overcome these barriers both in their home and host countries. A previous study by White et al. (1992) concentrated on forty-eight women who had achieved extraordinary levels of career success in their *home* organisations. This study, therefore, broadens the existing corpus of empirical research to include career successes of senior female international managers.

Harris (1995) conducted research with female British expatriates, but only 20.5 per cent of the participants were in the *managerial* category and only ten per cent were based in western Europe. Harris suggested that further research might be conducted with female expatriates who are employed in cultures similar to those in their home countries, rather than concentrating on females being assigned to traditionally male dominated countries. This study also extends this research agenda by examining the experiences of female managers moving to countries with cultures similar to those in their home countries.

Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993) cautioned that researchers of cross-national studies have encountered difficulties in defining 'manager', as between countries there is generally no agreed definition of the tasks or level of responsibility at which one is deemed to be a manager (1993: 57). Furthermore, Blum and Smith (1988) pointed out that "jobs labelled management span a wide range of the job hierarchy within any organisation" (1988: 540). This study, however, has ensured in its field design that all fifty participating managers were employed in senior managerial positions, and this was clarified with participants after the initial letter requesting an interview.

McGee-Calvert and Ramsey (1992) suggested that the study of women in management has not experienced "any dramatic leaps forward in quite a while", because using men as a standard of comparison and 'adding' females to the sample has not really changed the nature of the research (1992: 80). This study has taken as its starting point the unique perspectives and experiences of *senior* female international managers. From these different perspectives and experiences, different assumptions about women in international management and female life-style choices are arrived at. McGee-Calvert and Ramsey also suggested that women's collective voice has been silenced in the field of management, because of pressures placed on women to conform to the existing norms of organisations and because of the rejection by women themselves of the notion that they are different, as difference has most often been defined as inferiority (1992: 83). This study has given women an opportunity to break the silence in the field of international human resource management. The findings from the study resonate with the description of women's voice put forward by Aptheker (1989):

> *Women have a distinct way of seeing and interpreting the world. This is not to say that all women have the same consciousness or share the same beliefs. It is to say that women of each particular culture or group have a*

> *consciousness, a way of seeing, which is common to themselves as women in that it is distinct from the way the men of their culture or group see things* (Aptheker, 1989: 83).

In summary, the primary theoretical contributions of this study are that (i) it is the first *European s*tudy to provide empirical evidence on *senior* female expatriate managers employed in a *range* of industry sectors, and (ii) it attempts to develop a model of the senior female managerial international career move.

## 1.6 Research Focus of the Study

This study is exploratory as there is little previous research specifically addressing the issue of *senior* female international managers employed in Europe. Woodall and Winstanley (1998) have defined a *senior* manager as one of those managers who is "responsible for the overall direction and operation of an organisation, developing appropriate policies and strategy and setting objectives for the rest of the organisation" (1998: 70). For the purpose of this study and following Woodall and Winstanley, a *senior* manager is defined as a manager with executive decision-making functions.

A semi-structured interview format was used to ensure that the interviews covered the same main questions, but allowed respondents to respond in a variety of ways and raise issues which were pertinent to the topics being investigated. In order to get a number of potentially different perspectives, interviews were conducted with fifty senior female international managers across a wide range of industry sectors. The general conclusions of the study are reported based on a summary of the interviews.

None of the managers selected for inclusion in the study refused to be interviewed. The interviewees were all eager to participate, indicating that, because there were relatively few women expatriate managers, topics and issues which were specifically relevant to their situations had received very little attention in the international human resource management literature. They believed that it was timely for organisations to face and address the difficulties female managers encounter in their progression to senior managerial positions, because currently there were relatively few women expatriates, but they expected this to change in the future. The findings suggest that taking a proactive approach to female expatriate managers could give organisations a competitive advantage in the international environment. As all fifty participants had been employed in senior management positions, both in their home and host organisations, 76 per cent of participants believed that articulating their concerns and highlighting their successes could provide other European female managers with role models.

The study takes as its unique focus, therefore, the perceptions of *senior* expatriate managers in relation to the female international managerial career move. The particular perspectives explored in this study are those of presently employed senior female expatriate managers in Europe. In order to support these perspectives, an interview guide was developed by the author and used for conducting all fifty semi-structured interviews. In summary, the study extends work primarily in the international human resource management literature, while also contributing to the research literatures on women in management and career theory, focusing on senior female expatriate managers in Europe and assessing in particular their perceptions of the difficulties and opportunities in relation to their international career moves.

In Chapter Two international human resource management models are examined, European human resource management practices are reviewed, a profile of expatriate managers is presented, the senior international career move is outlined, and the literature in relation to women in international management is reviewed. Women in management literature, focusing primarily on the barriers which prevent women from achieving senior managerial positions, is also reviewed in this chapter.

In Chapter Three some of the philosophical issues involved in choosing a qualitative approach to research are presented. The steps associated with developing and carrying out a research project using in-depth interviews as a research approach are discussed. A detailed description of the selection of appropriate participants, gaining access to the participants, conducting the interview, and the process of reducing, organising and coding the interview data for this study is also presented.

In Chapter Four the main findings from the research are presented. The field research based on data from the interviews conducted with the fifty senior female expatriate managers is detailed. A cross section of organisations was selected to ensure representation from a variety of industries. The interview excerpts are organised thematically from the interview transcripts arising from questions which were based on a review of the relevant literature. The thematic areas are as follows:

- breaking the glass ceiling;
- the trailing spouse;
- international career versus relationship and child-bearing conflicts;
- mentors;
- tokenism and lack of female role models;
- networking;

- male/female/individual style of management;
- characteristics of an international manager;
- career planning;
- the international transfer cycle;
- whether or not female managers want international careers;
- the impact of gender on female managers' international careers.

These thematic areas provided a structured process of engaging the research, and open questions were placed at both the beginning and the end of the interview schedule in order to provide respondents with opportunities to raise and explore other issues of relevance.

In Chapter Five the implications of the empirical findings, presented in Chapter Four, are discussed. The discussion of the data confirms, challenges, or adds to earlier published literature. The thematic areas introduced in Chapter Four are used to structure the discussion throughout the chapter. The study has added to research literature in the areas of: (i) women in international management, (ii) the role of women in management, and (iii) career theory are also highlighted in this chapter.

In Chapter Six the conceptual contributions of the research are presented. Arising from the interview data, a model of the senior female international managerial career move is developed and presented. Feldman and Tompson (1993) noted that, although research on international human resource management has progressed in generating descriptive and theoretical models, there is minimal empirical research testing these models (Feldman and Tompson, 1993: 507). The present research builds upon and expands our knowledge about international human resource management in two ways. First, although a series of research studies over the past ten years have examined the impact of female expatriate managers, this study exclusively concentrates on the *senior* female international manager. The study has empirically examined the

commonly cited reasons which have been put forward in the international human resource management literature in an attempt to explain the paucity of female international managers. The study has revealed that some of these postulated reasons can now be considered outdated. Second, this study provides, for the first time, empirical data based on interviews with female expatriate managers based in *Europe.* Previous studies on female expatriate managers have primarily focused on transfers between countries which were culturally very different from managers' home countries, for example, from North America to Asia. This study establishes that female expatriate managers experience more difficulties than their male counterparts when transferring to countries whose organisational and social cultures are relatively similar to those of the home country.

In Chapter Seven, the final chapter, a conclusion to the study is presented. Some recommended changes which organisations could adopt in order to encourage and facilitate the number of females partaking in international management are highlighted. Finally, an agenda for future research, which can build on the findings of this study, is also outlined.

# *Chapter Two*

# LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter has six sections. In the first section, a review of international human resource management literature is presented. In the second section recent findings and trends in European human resource management are examined. In the third section, the international career move is outlined. The female international career move is outlined in section four. Section five is a review of women in management literature and the barriers preventing women from reaching senior management positions are outlined. In the sixth section, the limited research which has been carried out in the area of women in international management is reviewed. The studies reviewed in this section have been chosen after conducting database searches of doctoral and masters theses and published research in the relevant fields, and from detailed reviews of journal articles and books in international human resource management, women in management, and career theory literatures.

## 2.1 International Human Resource Management

> *Successful international managers, whether mobile, or non-mobile, must be able to act locally, but to plan and think strategically and globally* (Barham and Rassam, 1989: 149).

According to Torrington (1994), in order to examine what international human resource management is, it is important to first of all consider two things that is not. First, international human resource management is *not* copying the practices from the Americans, the Germans, the Taiwanese, the Koreans or the Japanese. Torrington suggests that whereas technical

and financial operations may transfer across all countries, people-management methods do not necessarily transfer from one culture to another. Second, international human resource management is not a matter of managers learning the cultures of every country in which they have to deal with and modifying their own behaviour when dealing with those nationals. Torrington cautions that cultures are both robust and subtle and "we have great difficulty in achieving more than a modest level of behaviour adaptation" (Torrington, 1994: 4). Torrington suggests that:

> *In many ways international human resource management is human resource management on a larger scale; the strategic considerations are more complex and the operational units are more varied, needing co-ordination across more barriers* (Torrington, 1994: 6).

Dowling (1988) similarly summarises that the difference between domestic and international human resource management is that international human resource management is more complex than domestic human resource management. He further adds that in practice many organisations are still coming to terms with the human resources issues associated with international operations. Scullion (1995) defines international human resource management as:

> *The human resource management issues and problems arising from the internationalisation of business, and the human resource management strategies, policies and practices which firms pursue in response to the internationalisation process* (Scullion, 1995: 352).

Tung (1984) argues that, in the international arena, the quality of management seems to be even more critical than in domestic operations. The effective management of human resources has increasingly being recognised as a major determinant of success or failure in international

business (Tung, 1984: 129). According to Morgan (1986), this is primarily because the nature of international business operations involves the complexities of operating in different countries and employing different national categories of workers. Morgan suggests that these are the main factors which differentiate domestic and international human resource management, rather than any major differences between the human resource management functions performed (1986: 44).

In 1991, Boyacigiller and Adler noted that most of international human resource management research has been conducted by American researchers, has been primarily concerned with American expatriates, and was written from an American rather than an international perspective (1991: 262-90). Brewster (1993) also commented that most of the research data available on expatriation is from the United States, with fewer data existing on European expatriates. Brewster noted regarding research on expatriation within Europe, that, Sweden and Britain are the two most studied countries (Brewster, 1993: 52).

Scullion (1995) suggests that the research on international human resource management has focused on two general areas. The first is international staffing, which primarily deals with the problems of selecting and managing expatriate managers. The second is international management development (1995: 376). Brewster and Tyson (1991), conclude that the reasons research has focused on these two areas are because, in all countries, organisations have to address the same human resource management issues: how to obtain and keep people to perform relevant tasks; how to develop them to be able to fulfil such tasks; how to resolve the dilemma of control and commitment. Brewster and Tyson also suggest, however, that the means found in each country to resolve these issues will be based on and be part of the culture of that country (1991: 5). Studies have shown that national cultures affect organisation structures and policies as well as the work-related values and attitudes of

employees. National cultures also influence the process of organisation decision-making and the relationships between people in organisations (Tayeb 1988; Schneider, 1987; Hofstede, 1980). Brewster and Tyson suggest that because of the different cultural, political, economic and social conditions that impinge on organisational variables the human resource management agenda is reinterpreted locally, so that there are different models of human resource management in evidence (Brewster and Tyson, 1991: 257). Laurent (1986) suggests that corporate cultures may also have a profound behavioural effect and points out that "international human resource management may only be international in the eyes of the designers" (Laurent, 1986: 93).

Holden (1994) suggests that:

> *The creation of international human resource models poses almost insurmountable problems within the paradigms of normal social science research. Such factors as national and regional cultural values and working practices as well as legal frameworks add considerably to the complexity of model building* (Holden, 1994: 609).

Despite the difficulties involved in building models of international human resource management, as suggested above by Holden, examples of two such models have been developed by Poole (1990) and Brewster and Bournois (1991). These models are outlined below.

### 2.1.1 Poole's model of international human resource management

The Poole model of international human resource management owes its origins to the Harvard model of human resource management developed by Beer et al. in 1984. The authors titled their model *The Map of the HRM Territory* (1984: 16), which recognised that there were various stakeholders in the corporation, which included shareholders, various groups of employees, the government and the community. The Harvard model recognises the legitimate interests of various groups. The creation of human resource management strategies would have to recognise these interests and blend them as much as possible into the human resource strategy and ultimately the business strategy. According to Beardwell and Holden (1994), the acknowledgement of these various interest groups has made the model much more agreeable to 'export' as the recognition of different legal employment structures, managerial styles and cultural differences can be more easily accommodated within it (Beardwell and Holden, 1994: 18). Poole (1990) suggests that the Harvard model is useful in the study of comparative human resource management because of its pluralist nature, it accepts differing approaches and attitudes to employment relationships (1990: 3-5).

Poole, however, acknowledges that some of the features of the Harvard model reflect its North American origin and three key modifications are necessary to adapt the model to accommodate international human resource management, these are:

- the global development of business;
- the *power* of different stakeholders;
- the more specific links between corporate and human resource strategies (Poole, 1990: 3).

Poole also emphasises four areas of strategic human choice in comparative international human resource management. These are:

- employee influence
- human resource flow
- reward systems
- work systems.

Poole suggests that first of all employee influence has taken many forms in national and organisational cultures, for example, quality circles, job enrichment, union representation and self-management. Poole notes that not all of these forms of employee participation will fit into human resource management frameworks, but, “most are (i) relevant and (ii) are the subject of vibrant comparative research” (Poole, 1990: 5).

Second, Poole divides human resource flow into

- *Inflow:* which includes recruitment, assessment and selection, orientation and socialisation;
- *Internal flow:* which includes evaluation of performance and potential, internal placement, promotion and demotion, education and training;
- *Outflow:* which includes termination, outplacement and retirement.

Poole cautions that each of these policies are governed by government legislation, educational institutions, unions, societal values and public policy of each national and regional context. Third, Poole suggests that reward systems would not only include in the framework the traditional methods of rewards such as pay, but intrinsic rewards such as employee satisfaction and motivation to work. Fourth, Poole suggests that the aim of all organisations is to gain high commitment from employees and the various ways of achieving this reflect work-related value systems which need to be recognised and integrated.

In addition to the above adaptations to the Harvard model, Poole emphasises the necessity of recognising the role of globalisation, power and strategy in the evolution of international human resource management. Poole further suggests that the transcendence of national boundaries by multinational corporations may conflict strategically and politically at company, country or regional level. Poole summarises this process by quoting Adler and Ghadar (1989) who suggest that the central issue of multinational corporations is not to identify the best international human resource management policy *per se,* but rather to find the best fit between the firm's external environment, its overall strategy, and its human resource management policy and implementation.

Poole suggested that his model aimed to be "the most influential and most familiar approach so far as the international scholarly and business communities are concerned" (Poole, 1990: 3). The model which Poole developed, however, began as part of an MBA syllabus in 1981, then became known as the 'map of HRM territory' and then developed into the 'Harvard model'. As a model, however, it implies and promises either a descriptive analysis or a prescriptive agenda for human resource management, a status that Beer et al. have never claimed for the management of people. Their original intention was to develop "a framework for thinking and managing human resources that general managers will find useful", as part of a course at Harvard Business School (Beer et al., 1984: x). As a model, human resource management is raised to a position of practical importance in terms of its analytical and predictive powers, while as a map it only lays claim to being a tool that managers will find useful. All Beer et al. offer are prescriptive guidelines on human resource management, not how it is done.

### 2.1.2 The Brewster and Bournois model of international human resource management

Brewster and Bournois (1991), acknowledging the difficulties of producing an international model of human resource management, however developed a model from a European viewpoint (Brewster and Bournois, 1991: 4). Their model emerged from data based on the Price Waterhouse Cranfield Survey on international strategic human resource management. They claim that their model is rooted in the views of Kochan et al. (1986), who argue that government-market and labour-management relations are interwoven and "would have been all the stronger if they had drawn international comparisons" (Brewster and Bournois, 1991: 11). In their model, Brewster and Bournois place "human resource management at the centre of concentric circles of influence and constraint" (1991: 12). They argue that three constraints act on the human resource management process:

- *the organisation* — size, structure and culture;
- *sector;*
- *national culture* — laws, industrial relations and labour markets.

They argue that the outcomes of human resource strategy is influenced largely by sector and national and regional culture. Brewster and Bournois believe that the Harvard model is an American view of employment relations, and question if the Harvard model can be applied to Europe with its different employment laws and practices (1991: 11).

In contrast to the research cited above, Pieper (1990) holds the view that no universal model of human resource management is possible. He states three reasons for this view. First of all, "human resource management seems to be more a theoretical construct than an applied reality" (Pieper, 1990: 18). He supports this argument by quoting Gaugler (1988) who claims that "what companies generally practise is personnel

management instead of human resource management" (Pieper, 1990: 18). Gaugler claims that no company can do without personnel and as a result chooses to ignore cultural or general environmental differences in pursuing its international human resource policies. "This can only mean the practice of personnel, not human resource management policies *per se"* (Gaugler, 1988: 24).

Second, Pieper states that both practical and theoretical concepts in the various nations vary widely and one of the major factors in these variances is the degree of state interference. In western European countries state interference is very high in comparison with Japan and the United States. In countries where state interference is high personnel policies such as recruitment, pay, training and other aspects of the employment relationship are shaped by national legislation rather than the freedom of individual companies to act. There is also the differences in working practices in terms of collectivism and individualism. While Japan has less state interference than western European nations, it has, for example, greater group identity in the work situation than the United States.

Third, according to Pieper, culture has been exaggerated in its influence on human resource management practices. Pieper concludes that what is most lacking is a clear theoretical framework with which to compare differing forms of human resource practices. "This lack of adequate theory in turn prevents a proper methodology being developed with which to test the theory" (Pieper, 1990: 20).

As can be seen from the above, models have been developed from either an American or European perspective, and problems of international research arise if these models are presented for examination in other countries, as practices of human resource management vary widely and are influenced by national employee relations laws and practices.

It can be seen from the problems highlighted by Pieper that it is difficult to develop a universal model of human resource management. In an effort to deal with these problems, contingency-based models of human resource management have attempted to highlight the importance of ensuring that there is some coherence and consistency across a range of human resource policies and practices. Sparrow and Hiltrop (1994), however, argue that the prescriptions of the contingency based theories are highly culture-bound and generally only tested against United States organisations (1994: 10).

Kochan et al. (1992) have also suggested that the research which has been carried out on international human resource management has focused too narrowly on functional activities and lacks appropriate theoretical structures. A difficulty in creating an international model arises because practices of human resource management vary widely between nations and various cultural influences impact on these practices. Despite these difficulties, however, Scullion (1995) argues that considerable progress has been made in researching international human resource management issues, given the relatively recent development of this field of study. Table 2.1 presents representative findings and illustrative sources on international human resource management:

**Table 2.1**

**Summary of Research Findings on International Human Resource Management**

| ***Representative Findings*** | ***Illustrative Sources*** |
|---|---|
| International Human Resource Management is a relatively new discipline of study | Scullion, 1995;<br>Holden, 1994;<br>Laurent, 1986. |
| International Human Resource Management lacks comparative data, especially outside of the United States | Scullion, 1995;<br>Holden, 1994;<br>Tyson et al., 1993;<br>Brewster and Tyson, 1991;<br>Pieper, 1990. |
| International Human Resource Management is more complex than domestic Human Resource Management | Torrington, 1994;<br>Morgan, 1986;<br>Tung, 1984. |
| Clear cultural differences exist between nationalities | Holden, 1994;<br>Brewster and Bournois, 1991;<br>Laurent, 1986;<br>Hofstede, 1980. |

## 2.2 European Human Resource Management

The development of human resource management in Europe is traced in this section. Distinct regional clusters are distinguished in the practice of human resource management within Europe, which are important for explaining the cultural and other difficulties the managers in this study experienced when moving from one European country to another.

Several comparative analyses of European and international human resource management have been carried out in order to identify the most significant influences that have shaped human resource management (Brewster and Hegewisch, 1994; Sparrow and Hiltrop, 1994; Sparrow, Schuler and Jackson, 1994; Torrington, 1994; Brewster, 1993; Brewster and Tyson, 1991; Pieper, 1990). According to Brewster and Bournois (1991), however, these studies have tended to describe the general national practices of human resource management and have focused on differences and similarities, thus providing "a glimpse of the uneven way in which concepts of human resource management have been applied across Europe" (Brewster and Bournois, 1991: 4-13).

Given its largely North American origins, Sparrow and Hiltrop (1994) suggest that it is important to first of all develop an understanding of what human resource management is *in a European context* (1994: 5). Brewster and Hegewisch (1994) suggest that in a global perspective Europe has a coherence of its own, and a distinctiveness from other major blocs (1994: 3). Remer (1986) similarly suggests that, although there are differences in human resource management conditions and circumstances within western Europe, taken as a whole "they stand out as being distinct from other economic areas like the USA, USSR or Japan" (Remer, 1986: 363). According to Brewster and Tyson (1991), throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s a process of 'Europeanisation' has taken place and this provides an opportunity to re-evaluate human resource management in a regional context, by examining and interpreting

differences in labour markets, participation structures, legislation, rewards, recruitment patterns and the harmonisation of qualifications (Brewster and Tyson, 1991). Sparrow and Hiltrop (1994), however, make the point that the need for the re-evaluation of what is meant by human resource management in a European context is not just driven by international developments (1994: 5). Such a requirement is also driven by the growing academic criticism of many studies on European human resource management. This criticism suggests that these studies simply provide descriptions of best practice in traditional personnel management areas such as recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, pay, training and development, without providing any credible framework for what is meant by European human resource management (Boxall 1991; Guest 1990; Legge 1989).

Thurley and Wirdenius (1991) point out the need to "distinguish European Management as a possible alternative approach" because of the predominant focus of American and Japanese conceptions of management (1991: 128). They consider this as necessary to reflect the different cultural values and legal-institutional practices that are dominant in Europe. They suggest that a European approach is emerging, but cannot be said to exist except in limited circumstances (Thurley and Wirdenius, 1991: 128). Brewster and Hegewisch (1994) suggest that a model of European human resource management is required that re-emphasises the influence of such factors as culture, ownership structures, the role of the state and trade union organisation (1994: 5). Brewster (1994) notes that in European management practices, for example, trade unions are recognised as social partners with a positive role to play, whereas the culture of American management appears to be anti-union.

In the 1980s, when theories and models of human resource management were first being developed, underlying cultural assumptions became apparent. By this time, United States organisations in particular were

under severe competitive threat from Japan. Management writers began to draw attention to low levels of commitment in Anglo-Saxon organisations and the need for major restructuring and reorganisation in order to meet the challenge of new competition (Pascale and Athos, 1982; Ouchi, 1981). According to Peters and Waterman (1982), the role of quality, and the need to tie people in the organisation deeper into the heart of the business, should be seen as central to achieving this restructuring (Peters and Waterman, 1982). It was argued that restructuring was to be achieved by linking 'people management' and strategic planning processes and this linkage was seen to differentiate human resource management from traditional personnel management (Sibson, 1983). The concept of human resource management was initially taken up by countries like Britain and Australia whose cultures most resembled that of the United States. The language, theoretical concepts and the practice of human resource management, therefore, moved into continental Europe from the United States via Britain (Sparrow and Hiltrop, 1994: 5). Pieper (1990), however, argues that, although it is widely acknowledged that much of the human resource management literature within Europe is rooted in United States and human resource management is largely seen as an American invention, paternalistic personnel management and human resource management concepts have a long history over the course of European industrialisation (Pieper, 1990).

Lawrence (1993) argues that human resource management is essentially an Anglo-Saxon construct that has been 'grafted on' — rather than 'taken root' — in continental Europe (1993: 12). According to Legge (1995), the shift in language from 'personnel management' to 'human resource management' in the 1980s in the United States and Britain signifies that some changes in some sectors of industry have taken place in the management of the labour process and in employment relationships (1995: 34). Legge's 1989 review of British and American literature of

human resource management notes that there are three main areas that distinguish human resource management from personnel management. First, human resource management gives greater emphasis to the development of the management team than personnel management. Second, it differs from personnel management as an activity for line managers because it is more firmly integrated in the general co-ordinating activity for line managers. Third, it emphasises the management of corporate culture as a senior management activity (Legge, 1989: 27-28). Legge, however, suggests that the development of such language is a pragmatic response to opportunities and constraints in the economic environment, rather than "constituting expressions of a coherent new employment philosophy" (1995: 34).

Sparrow and Hiltrop (1994) note that throughout Europe different political, economic, social and cultural considerations lead to a reinterpretation of management agendas at a local level. They suggest that every European country has a different historical and legal inheritance and "so European human resource management must remain an ambiguous concept" (Sparrow and Hiltrop, 1994: 30). Brewster et al. (1991) comment that until recently there has been little empirical evidence and that few quantitative data exist to allow a systematic analysis of international and European trends in human resource management (Brewster, Hegewisch and Lockhart, 1991: 36-40). Thurley (1990) suggested that, although there is no clear model for European human resource management, many European multinationals and some medium-sized cross-border organisations display some pan-European human resource management principles in a distinct form (Thurley, 1990). Sparrow and Hiltrop (1994), however, suggest that there still some marked differences across Europe and between Europe and the United States in terms of human resource management practices and policies (1994: 48). Albert (1989) has also argued that regarding human resource management practices in Europe "we are in culturally different contexts and, rather than copy solutions

which result from other cultural traditions, we should consider the state of mind that presided in the search for responses adapted to culture" (Albert, 1989: 75). Forster (1992) indicates that for a human resource management strategy to succeed in a European context it has to be highly responsive to local cultures, national legal and institutional frameworks, business practices and ownership structures which are the major determinants of local human resource management practice (Forster, 1992). Similarly, Whitley (1992) notes that despite increasing internationalisation within many European industries, national institutions remain quite distinct.

The differences in human resource management practices in Europe are evident from data generated in 1992 and 1995 by the *Price Waterhouse Cranfield Project on international strategic human resource management* which currently involves nineteen participating countries. According to Clifford et al. (1997), "the purpose of this project is to generate an overall picture of human resource management in European organisations by examining the nature of human resource management at organisational level" (1997: 1). Morley et al. (1996) argue that, rather than a convergence of practices of human resource management in Europe due to factors such as the internationalisation of markets, and the development of the European Union, there was instead increasing divergence between employee management systems. Morley et al. suggest that these differences are due to the historical divisions which exist between countries, in economic, legislative, political, social and cultural conditions (1996: 640-56). One of the main findings of the 1992 study in Ireland, for example, was the continuing robustness of the traditional collective model of employee management (Clifford et al., 1997: 13). Collectivism in employee relations incorporates the extent to which management acknowledges the right of employees to collective representation and the involvement of the collective in influencing management decision-making (Gunnigle, 1995; Purcell, 1987). In a

European context, Irish trade unions appear to be relatively strong at organisational level in terms of recognition, density and influence (Clifford et al., 1997: 13).

Following Kanter's (1991b) survey of 12,000 managers in twenty-five countries, she remarks that "the idea of a corporate global village where a common culture of management unifies the practice of business around the world is more a dream than reality". She observes that, given similar levels of technological and economic development in various countries, convergence of management practices is not necessarily apparent. She concludes that "management practice is not as global as once hoped" (Kanter, 1991b). Similarly Hofstede (1993) argues that there are no such things as universal management theories or management practices. He suggests that the validity of many management theories, including human resource management, stop at national borders. Hofstede (1993) notes that "often, the original policy will have to be adapted to fit the local culture and lead to the desired effect" (Hofstede, 1993: 89). This creates difficulties because, according to Ronen (1986), one of the key challenges confronting cross-cultural research is the problem of adequately defining and measuring national culture (Ronen, 1986). Ajieruke and Boddewyn (1970) suggest that culture is one of those terms that defy a single all-purpose definition. This causes difficulties as unconscious identity with one's own cultural values has been identified as the root cause of most international business problems (Ronen, 1986: 31). Leeds et al. (1994) believe that important culture differences divide Europe, and these cultural differences are significant for attempts to harness the diverse qualities of different parts of the European Union countries and of a wider Europe, in order to create closer economic business co-operation (1994: 11).

Calori (1994), while acknowledging that, although several typologies of management systems in Europe have been proposed by researchers, he claims however, that "the problem is that they do not really fit with each

other" (Calori, 1994: 16). Examples of these typologies include the work of Schneider in the south and northern Europe. Albert (1991) contrasts the Anglo-Saxon model (the United States and the British Isles) to the 'modèle Rhénan' (developed by the Germans), but does not characterise most of the other European countries. Simonet (1992) identifies four managerial models within Europe: the German, the Latin (without France), the French, and the Anglo-Saxon (including Scandinavian countries). Hofstede's (1980) study of work-related values suggests the existence of four clusters: Scandinavian, British, a Germanic group and a group including Latin countries and Belgium.

Interview research conducted by Calori et al. (1994) with fifty-one top managers of forty large international companies with headquarters or major operating units in Europe asked "Is there something like a European model of management?". The research team's original hypothesis was that management in Europe is diverse, but, when compared to the United States and Japan, some common characteristics appear across Europe which together form the components of an evolving management model (1994: 7). Data from their interviews reveal that a typical remark was 'Europe is in between'; if there is a European style of management, it is 'halfway' between the United States model of management and the Japanese model (Calori et al., 1994: 44). These researchers note that from the managers perspective there are three types of management in Europe: Anglo-Saxon, Latin, and Northern Europe, using the German model as an example (Calori et al., 1994: 22).

These three types of management have been summarised by Calori et al. (1994), as follows:

(i) the *Anglo-Saxon* model. It was recognised by the managers interviewed by Calori et al. that Britain is an exception to many possible common characteristics of management in Europe, and that British management is close to the American model of management. Managers

did not explicitly mention Ireland, but Calori et al. suggest that Ireland probably belongs to a broader Anglo-Saxon block, but which may also share some Latin Characteristics (1994: 21). The study suggests that management in Britain has the following characteristics in common with United States management:

- A higher turnover of managers,
- A greater liberalism towards foreigners (e.g. the Japanese),
- More freedom for top management *vis-à-vis* the workers and the government,
- More direct and pragmatic relationships between people,
- More variable remuneration.

Management in Britain, however, differs from management in the United States because of adversarial relationships with labour, the influence of class differences in the firm, managing international diversity and managing between extremes. Another difference discernible between the practice of human resource management in Britain and the United States is that, as a member of the European Union and a significant target of foreign direct investment, human resource management practices in Britain are undergoing change. Sparrow and Hiltrop (1994) suggest that the United States views of human resource management, reflect the Unites States value system which is not truly reflected in Britain — and is certainly not reflected in continental Europe (Sparrow and Hiltrop, 1994: 14). Armstrong (1987) argued that the Anglo-Saxon model of human resource management was in fact no more than a re-labelling of personnel directors' job titles and a re-packaging of an old product (traditional personnel management activities). Armstrong further suggested that human resource management is just good personnel management practice and there was no real change in the content of what was happening in organisations (Armstrong, 1987: 30-5).

(ii) The *Latin* or *Southern Europe* model*.* This model has the following characteristics:

- State intervention,
- Hierarchy in the firm,
- Intuitive management,
- Family businesses (especially in Italy),
- Reliance on an élite (especially in France).

In this model, France is differentiated from other Latin countries on the basis that it combines intuition and organisation, and because the links between firms and a strong state are tight and based on a management élite produced by the 'Grandes Ecoles'. According to Calori (1994), the French believe that alumni who come out of these schools can manage any private or state-owned companies (1994: 25). Management in the remainder of southern Europe is more inclined to intuition as the heads of firms are suspicious about structures and procedures. According to Calori et al. (1994), "they manage by pressure, intuition and chaos, they don't pay too much attention to organisation charts" (1994: 25).

(iii) The *Northern Europe* model, is applied by authors to Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and the Benelux countries. According to Calori et al. (1994), in the case of management in Germanic countries, authors and managers use the word *model*, which signifies that German management is consistent and has proved successful. Calori et al. note that 'le modèle Rhénan', described by Albert (1991), is by far the most visible style of management in Europe. This type of management has less state intervention, more liberalism, more participation in the firm and more organised management. The German model is based on three cultural and structural characteristics:

1. Strong links between banks and industry.
2. The balance between a sense of national collectivity and the Länder system.
3. The system of training and development of managers.

The model can be described as comprising of the following five components:

- The loyalty of managers (and employees in general) who spend their career in a single firm, which then gives priority to in-house training.
- The collective orientation of the work-force, which includes dedication to the company, team spirit and a sense of discipline.
- The long-term orientation which appears in planning, in the seriousness and stability of supplier-client relationships and in the priority of industrial goals over short-term financial objectives.
- The reliability and stability of shareholders, influenced by a strong involvement of banks in industry.
- The system of co-determination with workers' representatives present on the board.

Calori et al. conclude that a simplified but reliable image of the diversity of management in Europe would be to view management philosophies, structures and practices in Europe as if they were stretched between three poles with (i) Anglo-Saxon management to the west, (ii) the German model to the east and Japan to the far east, and (iii) the Latin model to the south (1994: 28). This research by Calori et al. highlights the cultural diversities in Europe and should help to explain some of the difficulties experienced by the largely European sample of participants in this study, when moving to cultures which are considered similar to those of their home countries.

As discussed in section 2.1.2 above, Brewster and Bournois (1991) developed an international model of international human resource management from a European viewpoint. In their model, they placed human resource management within the national context which allowed for an understanding of situations which differ from that existing in the United States. According to Brewster (1994) “the advantages of this approach include a better fit of the model to the European scene and experience” (Brewster, 1994: 82). The model also shows that human resource practices are located within an external environment of national culture, power systems, legislation and employee representation. Their model also allows for a greater input into human resource management from the environment in which the organisation is located. Hedlund and Rolander (1990) and Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989) have suggested that this enables human resource management to be linked more clearly with some of the advantages in international competition, especially for those organisations that take greater account of personnel requirements and are in a position to take greater risks and are more accepting of variability. Brewster (1994) suggests that “perhaps based partly on this reasoning the model provides a closer fit between human resource management and national success” (1994: 83). Brewster (1992), however, suggests that the model needs development in its relation to multinational corporations. He suggests that international managers and international organisations need to be aware of, and to adapt to, local environments in which they operate. Brewster (1994) further adds that a more complicated model would be required to provide a full picture of the world environment within which many international organisations operate (1994: 84).

The Price Waterhouse Cranfield study of European human resource management was set up to monitor the impact over time of the Single European Market on human resource management and to ascertain the degree to which a planned, coherent and interactive approach was being adopted. Brewster and Hegewisch (1993) summarised their conclusions

of the survey about European human resource management models as follows:

- The human resource management issues that are being dealt with in Europe are remarkably similar. However, while the issues have much in common there are clear national differences in the way they are handled.
- The way in which personnel departments are organised and operate varies widely across Europe, with distinctive roles, status, and functions that reflect cultural, traditional, legislative and labour market factors.
- Some models and concepts of human resource management (in particular those that reflect a strong United States influence) do not fit well with existing European practice (Brewster and Hegewisch, 1993).

Overall, it can be seen from the above studies that cultural differences in Europe are considered to be both deeply ingrained and to persist over time. As Evans (1990) stated “There are profound differences between European countries, not just in markets and competencies, but in basic concepts of management” (in Utley, 1990: 7). A review of the literature shows that in Europe, management philosophies, structures and practices are diverse and share some common characteristics, when countries are compared with each other and with the United States and Japan. According to de Woot (1994), European national management systems “will doubtless remain strong, and this is no bad thing, since diversity is Europe’s greatest strength” (1994: 261). He argues that in the past we have tended to believe too strongly in a universal model of management and have attempted to imitate the American or the Japanese, “but culture is stronger than methods” (1994: 262). Table 2.2 presents representative findings and illustrative sources on European Human Resource Management:

**Table 2.2**

**Summary of Research Findings on European Human Resource Management**

| *Representative Findings* | *Illustrative Sources* |
|---|---|
| Details of the differences and similarities of the general national practices of European Human Resource Management | Brewster and Hegewisch, 1994; Sparrow and Hiltrop, 1994; Torrington, 1994; Brewster, 1993; Brewster and Tyson, 1991. |
| European Human Resource Management practices moved into continental Europe from the United States | Sparrow and Hiltrop, 1994; Pieper, 1990. |
| European Human Resource Management is distinctive from other areas such as USA, USSR or Japan | Brewster and Hegewisch, 1994; Brewster and Tyson, 1991; Thurley and Wirdenius, 1991; Remer, 1986. |
| Key cultural differences exist between countries in European Human Resource Management practices | Calori, 1994; Leeds et al., 1994; Kanter, 1991; Ronen, 1986; Hofstede, 1980. |
| Regional patterns of European Human Resource Management practices, for example, (i) Anglo-Saxon, (ii) Latin and (iii) Northern European can be discerned | Brewster and Hegewisch, 1994; Calori et al. 1994, Simonet, 1992; Filella, 1991; Hofstede, 1980. |

## 2.3 The Senior International Career Move

The previous sections highlighted the complexities of international human resource management. It is clear from table 2.2 that these studies have not explored gender in the context of human resource management. Davison and Punnett (1995) noted that gender and race have received relatively little attention in expatriate literature, despite the impact of these and other variables — such as religion, and other distinguishing personal characteristics which frequently arise in expatriate decisions (Davison and Punnett, 1995: 412). The literature emphasised the importance for international managers of adapting to the local environments in which they operate, while simultaneously having the ability to think and plan globally. These implications are central to organisations when developing and training managers for international assignments. From a review of the relevant literature, the issues which are considered to be important for the *senior* international career move are outlined in this section. A profile of the expatriate manager is also presented.

According to Torrington (1994), there is a small, élite group of genuinely international managers in the world of global business. This group is familiar with different countries and regions and operates internationally with other managers occupying similar roles in other companies. Torrington distinguishes between international managers and expatriate managers and proposes that this distinction can be summarised as follows: international managers *pass through* foreign countries; expatriates go and *live* in them (1994: 19). Similarly, Brewster (1991) defines an expatriate as "an employee of an organisation who is sent on a temporary work assignment in a different country from their home country" (1991: 19). Torrington further suggests that expatriation usually enhances career prospects, but that cannot be guaranteed, and "the impact on the expatriate personally and on the expatriate's family is likely to be considerable" (1994: 20).

Studies in Europe the United States and Australia have shown that the majority of expatriates are men, usually married men, which means that the research which has been undertaken has typically focused on the *male* international career move (Smith and Still, 1996; Harris, 1995; Torrington, 1994; Alder, 1984). Only a few studies have considered the influence of gender in expatriation (Smith and Still, 1996; Harris, 1995; Punnett et al., 1992; Jelinek and Adler, 1988; Adler, 1987; Adler, 1984), which according to Brewster (1991) means that female expatriate managers are an under-researched group (1991: 42). From the limited research conducted on female expatriates, however, findings by Adler (1991) and Scullion (1992) suggest that women in British multinational corporations are not making as much progress in international management as women in United States multinationals. Harris (1995) reports that progress for women within the United States has come about much more as a result of political action rooted in the powerful civil rights women's movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Harris suggests that in the United States responsive governmental legislation, including the use of quotas, and affirmative action programmes, and improved educational opportunities did much to improve the representation of women in the workforce (1995b: 234). McGee-Calvert and Ramsey (1992), commenting on the lack of data available, suggest that "we know almost nothing about what managerial women's experiences, values, beliefs, expectations and aspirations would look like if brought fully valued into the organisational arena" (1992: 83).

According to Feldman and Tompson (1993), the empirical research on international career moves in general has 'lagged far behind' the descriptive and theoretical models of the process (1993: 510). Mendenhall et al. (1987), Pieper (1990) and Holden (1994) also noted that very few empirical studies have been conducted on expatriation and career management issues facing expatriates. Their review suggests that

the overseas assignment is often a ‘haphazard, ill-planned affair’ that all too frequently leads to poor job performance and job displacement (Mendenhall et al., 1987: 331-45). Brewster and Scullion (1997) suggest that, in general, the study of expatriation has followed the traditional male expatriate ‘cycle’ — selection, training, relocation and adjustment, pay and performance, and return (1997: 33). Borg and Harzing (1995) outline three phases in the international career move:

- Phase 1: recruitment and selection;
- Phase 2: the assignment period abroad;
- Phase 3: repatriation.

*Phase 1:* Studies conducted by Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) and Tung (1981) have shown that expatriate selection is a multi-faceted subject and that interpersonal skills are very important. In practice, however, most companies use technical competence and knowledge of company systems as selection criteria (Brewster, 1991; Barham and Devine, 1990; Harvey, 1985). Brewster (1991) notes widespread reliance on personal recommendations for expatriate postings from either specialist personnel staff or line managers. According to Borg and Harzing (1995), this results in pre-determined selection interviews in which negotiating the terms of the offer takes precedence over determining the suitability of the candidate (1995: 189).

Borg and Harzing (1995) and Brewster (1991) noted that in the majority of cases there are no formal and elaborate selection and recruitment procedures, since international positions are rarely advertised (Borg and Harzing, 1995: 190). These authors also observed that the time span before the transfer is normally very short, ranging from a few weeks to some months, which does not allow adequate time for preparation and training. Despite the evidence provided by Dowling et al. (1994) and Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) that many expatriates fail on their foreign assignments and despite the evidence that training increases the chance

of success, few companies provide preparatory training. In practice, pre-departure training is usually limited to a very short time, often just a few weeks (Borg and Harzing, 1995: 190). Research studies have established that a time span of at least a year should be allocated for training and development after the potential expatriate candidate is selected (Baumgarten, 1995; Borg and Harzing, 1995).

According to Rothwell:

> *Ideally, preparation for an international assignment should begin a year or more in advance, so that global awareness and thinking internationally about the business become part of a continuous process . . . All too often everything is condensed into a flurry of international briefings just before departure* (Rothwell, 1992: 35).

The most frequently mentioned reasons in the literature (Hogan and Goodson, 1990; McEnery and DesHarnais, 1990; Ronen, 1989; Mendenhall and Oddou, 1985) for neglecting preparatory training are:

- Training is not thought to be effective. Many managers believe that international expertise can be learned only through experience, such as business travel and assignments abroad. As a result, top management often gives little support to cross-cultural training programmes.
- The period of time between the expatriate's selection and departure is short, leaving little time for in-depth training prior to departure.
- The temporary nature of most assignments does not warrant budget expenditures for training.
- There is a belief that technical skills are the main success factors on assignments abroad. Relational skills and other intercultural competencies are not seen as being of importance

for success on foreign assignments, resulting in a lack of awareness of relevant selection criteria and training goals.

*Phase 2:* An assignment abroad normally lasts about three years (Borg and Harzing, 1995; Brewster, 1991). According to Lane and DiStefano (1992), the pattern usually experienced by expatriates is characterised by three phases: first, the elation of anticipating a new environment and moving into it; second, the distress of dealing with one's own ineffectiveness and the realisation that one has to function in a strange situation; and third, the adjustment and effective coping with the new environment. At the beginning of the assignment everything is new and exciting, but after about three months 'culture shock' sets in, which may mean that the expatriate is frustrated over various operating details of working and living in a foreign country. After another two months the expatriate starts to adapt to the foreign culture and gradually moves to a more neutral state. After a period of four to five years the expatriate is naturalised to some extent (Torbiörn, 1982). Lane and DiStefano suggested that the period of adjustment normally takes from three to nine months, depending on: previous experience, the degree of cultural difference being experienced, and the individual personality (1992: 47).

*Phase 3:* Repatriation usually takes place after a period of about three years. Two problems are generally associated with repatriation: readjustment and re-establishment. Readjustment means adjusting to one's native culture again and returning expatriates often experience a second culture shock. Re-establishment is finding a suitable position in the firm on return, but repatriates are not always offered this which means that if both re-establishment and readjustment are difficult, the re-entry can be very problematic (Borg and Harzing, 1995: 193). According to Brewster (1991), European organisations are reporting that repatriation can be as traumatic as expatriation because of the problems of re-absorption — both professionally and personally (Brewster, 1991: 89).

The available literature on repatriation indicates that the problems associated with reintegration into the home country and organisation, after successfully completing an international assignment, often results in the resignation of the expatriate (Bennett, 1993; Crawford, 1993; Feldman and Thomas, 1992). Research conducted by Adler in North America indicated that 20 per cent of all managers who complete foreign assignments wish to leave their company on return (Adler, 1986).

Scullion's study (1992) of forty-five British and Irish managers revealed that 33 out of 45 faced significant problems regarding re–entry. Only three of the managers in Scullion's study claimed that repatriates had no difficulty reintegrating into their home organisations. A key problem for the majority of companies was finding suitable posts for repatriates, particularly posts of similar status and responsibility to those they held abroad. The other problems associated with reintegration, which Scullion's study established, were loss of status, loss of autonomy, loss of career direction and a feeling that international experience is undervalued by the company (1992: 65). Scullion (1992) also noted that there was a growing recognition that where companies are seen to deal unsympathetically, with the problems faced by expatriates on re–entry, that managers will be more reluctant to accept the offer of international assignments (1992: 65).

A British study carried out by Johnston (1991) also revealed that virtually all repatriated personnel experienced some personal difficulty in reintegration on return to their home organisation. Johnston noted that home-country management did not always recognise the difficulty:

> *Little appears to be done at a personal level for the returning managers who are expected in the main to work things out for themselves. No companies within the Chemicals, Manufacturing and Services sector's sample had a formal company reorientation for repatriates to aid their social and*

> *professional integration into what will inevitably be a substantially different organisation from that which they left* (Johnston, 1991: 106).

Solomon (1995) argues that repatriation is often overlooked as a career issue instead of being seen as the final link in an integrated, circular process:

> *Often when they return home, expatriates face an organisation that does not know what they have done for the past several years, does not know how to use their knowledge and does not care* (Solomon, 1995: 29).

A review of the expatriate literature, however, reveals that large percentages of foreign assignments fail. Studies of United States expatriates have shown that 16 per cent to 50 per cent fail on their foreign assignments (Black, 1988; Mendenhall et al., 1987; Tung, 1981). Tung (1981) also surveyed European and Japanese expatriates and established that their failure rates were significantly lower, varying from less than five per cent to 15 per cent. The criterion for failure used in these studies is the return of the expatriates to their home countries before the assignment has been successfully completed. The percentages do not include expatriates who fail to perform satisfactorily, but are not sent home early. If these cases were included, it should be expected that the failure rates would be significantly higher. Tung's studies (1981) concluded that European and Japanese firms seem to offer more extensive training for expatriates than their American counterparts, which might explain their lower failure rates.

### 2.3.1 Profile of Expatriate Managers

Pinder (1990) quotes from a survey by an executive search agency on the Euro-executive:

> *Fluent in at least one other Community language, of greater importance is exposure to diversity of cultures stemming both from family background — he or she is likely to have a mixed education, multi-cultural marriage and parents of different nationalities — and working experience . . . graduating from an internationally-oriented business school . . . line management experience in a foreign culture company . . . experience through various career moves of different skills, roles and environments* (Pinder, 1990: 78).

Tung (1981) identified four groups of variables that contribute to success or failure on the job:

1. *Technical competence on the job.* Technical competence may even be more important for assignments abroad than in domestic operations, because the individual is located at some distance from headquarters and cannot consult as readily with peers and superiors on matters related to the job.

2. *Personal traits or relational abilities.* In international management, this variable greatly influences the probability of successful performance. It is having the ability to live and work with people whose value systems, beliefs, customs, manners and ways of conducting business may be greatly different from one's own.

3. *Ability to cope with environmental variables.* The political, legal and socio-economic structures which constitute the macro-environment in the host country may be very different from the systems with which the expatriate is familiar. This poses problems of adjustment. The expatriate has to understand these systems and operate within them.

4. *Family situation.* The ability of the expatriate's family (especially the partner) to adjust to living in a foreign environment is a central concern. The situation often becomes even more complex if the partner has had to give up a career to accompany his or her partner abroad (Tung, 1981: 68-78).

According to Brewster (1991) British expatriate managers are generally male. Most expatriates fall into the late twenties or thirties age group and the majority of them are married (1991: 97). A survey of four hundred British based organisations employing a total of 3,619 expatriates conducted by Harris (1995) revealed that 91 per cent of expatriates were male and nine per cent were female. For managerial assignments, the majority of organisations would arrange a first expatriate assignment between the ages of 31 to 40 (1995a: 5-6). A study by Nicholson and Imaizumi (1993) of ninety-one expatriate Japanese managers working in London revealed that all but one were male. The average age was forty, 95 per cent were married, and 19 per cent had left either a spouse or children in Japan. Most of the managers had been in Britain for one to four years of an average expected duration of 4.5 years (1993: 121).

Research, conducted by Guzzo et al. (1994) with 148 expatriates employed in thirty-six different countries and employed by forty-three different companies, revealed that 93 per cent of the respondents were male, and the majority (80%) were accompanied by a spouse or children. Respondents averaged 43 years of age (ranging from 27 to 64) and

averaged thirteen years of service with their current employer (Guzzo et al., 1994: 619).

Adler's (1994) North American research based on a study of 686 major multinational firms, revealed that only three per cent of expatriate managers were female. In comparison with this figure in international management, women held 37 per cent of domestic North American management positions. An even lower percentage of female expatriate managers was recorded in Canada, at only 1.3 per cent. Female expatriate managers were considerably younger than the typical male expatriate, the average age being under 30. Nearly two-thirds were single and only three (six per cent) had children. On average, their international assignment lasted 2.5 years, with a range from six months to six years (1994: 30). Adler's (1984) research established that female expatriates appear to be concentrated in three industries: banking, publishing and retailing and apparel. The rubber, shipbuilding, utilities, life insurance and construction industries each reported sending male expatriates overseas, but none reported sending females (1984: 84).

Chusmir and Frontczak (1990) also conducted research with 222 American senior male and female expatriate managers in order to compare the perceptions and attitudes of these managers regarding opportunities for women in international business. One hundred and six respondents were male and one hundred and sixteen respondents were female. Respondents averaged 4.7 years working with their present company, and had spent approximately one half year in international positions. Their ages ranged from 35 to 44 years. The majority (53.5%) were married. Chusmir and Frontczak's study showed that the females perceived fewer opportunities for the advancement of women in international positions than men see for women. The authors suggest that this perception may be influenced by findings by Sutton and Moore (1985) which noted that people often expect more of women in

management, so women realise they need to be exceptional performers. Chusmir and Frontczak suggest that, unless the performance of women in management is outstanding, women perceive their opportunities in international management to be more limited. The authors suggest that further research might look at the actual reasons why women perceive more problems than men do for women entering international management (Chusmir and Frontczak 1990: 300).

Torrington (1994) noted that there is no profile of the ideal expatriate, but he highlighted four important issues that should be considered in the selection of expatriates:

- *Culture* How different from home is the culture of the country regarding religion, the social position of women, the degree of political stability/instability, personal security and petty crime, local press and television, cable television, availability of foreign newspapers, and health hazards?
- *Economic development* How developed is the economy of the country regarding the standard or cost of living, availability of familiar foods and domestic equipment, transport, post and telephone services, local poverty, health and education facilities, and availability of international schools?
- *Geographical location* How far away is it, and where is it regarding climate, location in a cosmopolitan city or in a more remote location, the importance/unimportance of language proficiency, the size of the local expatriate community, and employment prospects for spouse?
- *The job* What has to be done and what is the situation regarding the nature of the organisation, what is the proportion of expatriates, the technical, commercial and managerial demands of the job, staffing and support, and the extent of one's role in managing local nationals?

Overall, therefore, it is clear that the profile of the expatriate manager reveals that the majority of such managers are white, male, and are usually accompanied abroad by a trailing spouse. It is evident that there is a lack of empirical data documenting the international career movements of the senior *female* manager. The review of the international human resource management literature conducted has revealed this gap, and in particular the lack of data available on the overseas career moves made by senior female managers outside of the United States. This study proposes to conduct empirical research with senior women managers in international business so that the opportunities and constraints surrounding their careers can be understood within the wider context of factors affecting organisational behaviour. Table 2.3 presents representative findings and illustrative sources on the international career move:

**Table 2.3**

**Summary of Research Findings on the International Career Move**

| ***Representative Findings*** | ***Illustrative Sources*** |
|---|---|
| Managers are becoming less internationally mobile because of dual-career problems | Brewster, 1993; Scullion, 1992; Barham, 1991: Coyle, 1988; Hall and Richter, 1988; Hall and Hall, 1987; Harvey, 1985. |
| Expatriate failure is a significant problem for international firms | Dowling et al., 1994; Mendhenhall et al., 1987; Dunbar and Ehrlich, 1986; Tung, 1984. |
| The majority of expatriates in the United States and Europe are married men | Harris, 1995; Scullion, 1995; Torrington, 1994; Punnett et al. 1992; Brewster, 1991; Adler, 1984. |
| Female expatriate managers are an under-researched group | Harris, 1995; Punnett et al. 1995; Brewster, 1991. |

## 2.4 The Role of Women in Management

### 2.4.1 Introduction

This section is in two parts. The role of women in management and the difficulties women encounter in reaching senior management positions is the focus of the first section. The overt and covert barriers women have to overcome to reach senior managerial positions in comparison with their male counterparts are also examined in this section. The literature on women in international management is reviewed in the second section, and the dearth of empirical research conducted with European female international managers is highlighted. According to Vinnicombe and Colwill (1995), women occupy only about ten per cent of management positions in Europe and women managers remain concentrated in junior and middle management positions. It is difficult, however, to put an accurate figure on the numbers of women in management in Europe, because different countries have a different definition of a 'manager', and in many countries there are no regularised systems of gathering statistics in this area (Vinnicombe and Colwill, 1995: 3). Davidson and Cooper (1993), for instance, suggest that fewer than five per cent of women occupy senior management positions in Europe, and that this figure may be as high as eight per cent in Greece and as low as two per cent in the United Kingdom (1993: 13).

The major focus of research on women in management has generally been on women themselves as they arrived in and advanced through organisations. The emphasis has not been on gender aspects per se, but on the implications of gender *for* the organisation (McGee-Calvert and Ramsey, 1992: 80). According to Marshall (1995), the term 'gender' is gaining breadth of usage. The original connotation referred to the social expectations and roles attributed to or experienced by people based on their biological sex. Gender is now taking on a much broader and more diffuse set of meanings. Marshall suggests that it has become a general

label for talking about women, men, the relationships between them, related aspects of organising, processes through which gender-differentiated behaviour patterns are enacted, and associated issues of power in various guises (1995: 53). Marshall maintained that the gender aspect of management is not a particularly coherent field, but a highly diverse field (1995: 54).

### 2.4.2 The Glass Ceiling

Scase and Goffee (1990) have observed that, despite our increasing knowledge of the problems and experiences which are directly related to gender and affect women in management, many issues remain unexplored and, as yet, have not been the subject of detailed *empirical* research (Scase and Goffee, 1990: 107). As more women enter the workforce, their failure to reach the highest management positions has become the cause for considerable research and debate both in their home countries and in international management. European women, like their United States and Australian counterparts, are confronted by a glass ceiling and glass wall, described below. The available Irish data indicate that difficulties facing the career progression of women do not differ greatly from the difficulties which women face in domestic management in other countries, as identified in international research. A review of the relevant research literature in management shows that women face barriers to progression within organisations, barriers which are not faced by their male counterparts (Davidson and Cooper, 1992; White et al., 1992; Schwartz, 1989).

In a number of countries, while women are gaining managerial experience, they still encounter a *glass ceiling* — a term used to describe "a barrier so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong that it prevents women and minorities from moving up the managerial hierarchy" (Morrison and Von Glinow, 1990: 200). According to Morrison and Von

Glinow, the glass ceiling is not simply a barrier based on the person's inability to handle a higher-level job, it "applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing higher because they are women" (1990: 200). In the case of the '*glass wall'* lateral movement is also prevented. According to Davidson and Cooper:

> *While it seems relatively easy for women to gain employment at the lower levels of organisations, it is still proving very difficult for them to reach upper, middle and senior management positions, even in the more enlightened USA* (Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 13).

Similarly, research by Still et al. (1994) revealed that women in senior management positions in Australia constitute less than three per cent. Smith and Still (1996) also established that Australian female expatriate managers are concentrated at middle, rather than senior management levels (Smith and Still, 1996: 8). Morrison (1992) reports from her interviews with top managers that there are major organisational barriers which constitute the glass ceiling. These include: a lonely and non-supportive working environment; treating differences as weaknesses; excluding people from group activities because of their differences; and failure to help individuals to prepare to balance work and personal life issues (Morrison, 1992). According to Schwartz (1989), however, the metaphor of the glass ceiling is misleading as it suggests an invisible barrier created by corporate leaders to hinder the promotion of women managers. Schwartz believes that:

> *A more appropriate metaphor would be the kind of a cross-sectional diagram used in geology. The barriers to women gaining senior management positions occur when potentially counterproductive layers of influence on women — maternity, tradition, socialisation — meet management strata pervaded by the largely unconscious preconceptions,*

> *stereotypes, and expectations of men. Such interfaces do not exist for men and tend to be impermeable for women* (1989: 68).

There is now an extensive literature on this topic, with evidence from Australia, the United States and Europe, which indicates that women face obstacles in their careers which are not faced by their male counterparts. Overcoming 'hidden' or less obvious organisational barriers to managerial equity may be difficult for women to achieve in the near future. According to one estimate, attaining full economic integration for women at every organisational level would take seventy-five to one hundred years at the current rate of change (Women's Research and Education Institute, 1992).

Cross-cultural studies and reviews which have been undertaken in order to compare male and female managers in terms of managerial efficiency and performance have produced results which reveal that there are far more similarities than differences in terms of managerial efficiency and performance (Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 16). Where differences do occur, they tend to be found not so much in the way each sex 'manages', but stem from factors associated with the low proportion of female managers, attitudinal differences, prejudices, discrimination, and different life circumstances and stressors of female managers in comparison to male managers (Scase and Goffee, 1989; Nicholson and West, 1988; Cooper and Davidson, 1984; Donnell and Hall, 1980). Research suggests that many of these differences are regarded as negative and, therefore, hamper the career advancements of women in management (Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 16).

The specific problems and pressures which have been identified as unique to female managers include: burdens of coping with the role of the 'token' woman; being a test case for future women; lack of role models

and feelings of isolation; strains of coping with prejudice and sex stereotyping; and overt and indirect discrimination from fellow employees, employers and the organisational structure and climate (Cooper and Davidson, 1982; Henning and Jardim, 1977). Davidson and Cooper (1992) report that women managers in token positions are subjected to isolation imposed by males at work, which in itself can restrict social and business life. For a woman in management, the task of breaking into this male-dominated 'club' can prove difficult, and she can be denied policy information, opportunities, contacts, and social support. It has been estimated that over 50 per cent of all jobs in management come about through personal contacts (Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 88).

These difficulties, on top of trying to maintain a family and home, are creating enormous pressures on women in management, which may manifest themselves in a variety of undesirable ways (Davidson and Cooper, 1984: 34). In a survey of 374 managers (323 men and 51 women), carried out by Scase and Goffee and which focused on the stress and pressures of management, 82 per cent of the women felt that they faced 'greater pressures than men as managers' (1989: 107). Burke and McKeen (1994) in their review of the stress literature concluded that working women experience more stress than working men, and the sources of that stress are "related to the expected and actual roles of women in society and to the fact that women still occupy minority status in organisations" (1994: 18). The results of a British survey conducted by the Institute of Management in 1992 reveal that barriers to the progress of women are largely attitudinal (male attitudes) and relate to the 'men's club network' (Coe, 1992: 16). The barriers which hinder women in attaining senior management positions outlined above are examined in greater detail in sections 2.4.3 to 2.4.12 below.

### 2.4.3 Cultural Barriers

A review of the research which has been conducted on the culture of societies in various countries which create obstacles for women in management is presented in this section. Adler (1987), reviewing the situation of female managers in a wide range of countries, concluded that many of the constraints which often hinder women in attaining senior managerial positions are quite similar. She reported, for example, that there are cultural, educational, legislative, attitudinal and corporate constraints in most countries. Adler noted that the relative importance of each constraint varies from society to society (1987: 4). Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993) similarly point out that the consistency of male dominance in management across the world is all the more remarkable when one considers that the actual features sought in a manager vary by culture (1993: 63). Research by Izraeli and Adler (1994) likewise suggests that the specific image of an ideal manager varies across cultures, "yet everywhere it privileges those characteristics that the culture associates primarily with men" (1994: 13). They point out from their research that this belief is widely supported by male managers, and that successful management is associated with masculinity (1994: 13). According to Farmer and Richman (1989), the requirements for effective managerial performance are not 'culture free' but are influenced by the national culture in which the behaviour is performed, and that effective performance requires managers to adapt their behaviours accordingly (Farmer and Richman, 1989).

According to Adler (1987), almost all cultures differentiate between male and female roles. Societies expect women to behave in certain ways, and men in others (Adler, 1987: 19). In many cultures the traditional female role maintains attitudes and behaviours that fail to support those attributes associated with that of traditional managers. This is evident in samples from the three European typologies of management outlined above. In the case of southern Europe, for example, and in Italy where Olivares

(1993) reports that only three per cent of women are employed in upper management positions, there is a lower percentage than in other European countries. Olivares suggests this low percentage of senior female managers can be attributed to the sociological context of Italian society and, in particular, the historical role of the Catholic church which has played an important aspect in cultural values, and to the fact that only 30 per cent of Italian women work outside the home. The representative value of marriage and motherhood for women is still very strong, and may help explain why many women stop working after the birth of children (Olivares, 1993: 161). A similar situation can be seen in Portugal, where, if equal opportunities for men and women in managerial careers are to occur, major cultural and social changes would be required (Cunha, 1993: 182). Women in Portugal are still expected to fulfil their maternal role, which includes not only childbirth, but also child rearing responsibilities, and at the same time are expected to pursue a serious professional career. Portugal also has the lowest rate of childcare facilities in the European Union for children between the ages of three months and six years (Comissao da Condicao Feminina, 1989).

In Spain, an analysis of relative participation rates reveals that women represent 64 per cent of those employed in the leather and footwear industry, 45 per cent in the clothing and textiles industry, 38 per cent in restaurants and catering, 47 per cent in cleaning services, 83 per cent in personal and domestic services. The proportion of women in senior management positions is still less than five per cent, and these women are usually employed in the service sector firms, small and medium-sized firms and newly created businesses (Fernadnez, 1993: 187). The social role of women in Spain, however, is still linked to their role in the family, while for men, time spent at work is of prime importance. A survey on women executives researched by the Spanish Women's Institute revealed that stereotypes still existed about women who hold responsible posts, for example, that they are incapable of accepting responsibility or risks, that

they have little interest in being promoted, and that they are excessively concerned with the running of their home (Fernadnez, 1993: 197).

Similarly, in *northern* Europe, for example, in Switzerland there is a cultural norm that if a Swiss man's wife works it must be because the man is not able to provide adequately for her and his family (Black et al., 1992: 243). This creates a strong cultural norm for Swiss men not to encourage or allow their wives to work or pursue managerial careers. Of the female managers in Switzerland, 62 per cent are not married, and this contrasts with only 14 per cent of male managers who are not married (Black et al., 1992: 243). Black et al. (1992), suggest that women's progress in management is further inhibited by some of the key concepts of family law, for example, a wife can have a profession only if the husband consents. The wife is responsible for taking care of the household and can represent the household only on items of housekeeping, but the husband can withdraw that right (Black et al. 1992: 243).

Research by Maddock and Parkin (1994) during the course of conducting equality audits, training sessions and discussions with men and women managers in British public authorities in the early 1990s reveal different gender cultures. Traditional cultures have been identified as the 'Gentleman's Club', the 'Locker Room' and the 'Barrack Yard', all reflecting the view that men and women are fundamentally different and have different roles in society. For many men in British public authorities who are used to clear-cut divisions, such as the woman doing the household chores and caring for her children, while her partner earns the money, "encountering women at work can be unsettling, if not disturbing" (Maddock and Parkin, 1994: 31). The 'Gentleman's Club' reinforces the notion that the woman's role as mother and homemaker and the man's role as breadwinner are natural and pre-ordained. The Gentleman's Club "is polite and civilised, women are kept firmly in established roles by male managers who are courteous and humane" (Maddock and Parkin, 1994:

31). The 'Locker Room' culture as described by Maddock and Parkin is an exclusion culture, where men build relationships on the basis of common agreements, common assumptions and frequently talk about sport and make sexual references to confirm their heterosexuality (1994: 34). The 'Barrack Yard' culture is a bullying culture. 'Barrack Yard' managers disregard training and development and assume people are either 'top' or 'bottom' candidates. The 'Barrack Yard' hides a real hostility towards women and anyone possessing little institutional power; it can be vicious and is an authoritarian culture where power delivers respect. According to Maddock and Parkin, in the 'Barrack Yard' culture "as women do not have senior status within organisations, their interests and comments are ignored and they are rendered invisible" (1994: 33).

Maddock and Parkin conclude that gender cultures still exist in British public authorities, that behaviour is coded male or female and gender stereotypes are clearly not just perpetuated by men. Women in most organisations have positive or negative attitudes towards other women especially those in 'unusually senior' positions. Gender cultures also tend to divide as well as restrict women (Maddock and Parkin, 1994: 40).

In summary, it can be seen that cultural barriers still exist for women managers. Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993), in their review of women in management world-wide, state that "probably the single most important hurdle for women in management in all industrialised countries is the persistent stereotype that associates management with being male" (1993: 63). Black et al. (1992) suggest that cultural traditions and norms are formed slowly and change even more slowly and with great difficulty (1992: 248). It can be seen from the literature reviewed above that various cultural barriers still exist for female managers in their home countries and home organisations. The implications of these cultural barriers are significant for this study as (i) domestic cultural barriers limit the numbers of senior female managers which in turn reduces the

availability of female managers for international assignments, and (ii) female managers have to contend with a new set of domestic barriers in the culture of their host countries.

### 2.4.4 Legislative Barriers

The various and complex laws pertaining to the employment of women which still exist throughout Europe, despite the attempts of the European Union to standardise these procedures are outlined in this section. Legislation on matters such as equality, equal pay and maternity leave still form barriers to women achieving senior managerial positions. These topics will be dealt with in detail below.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries there was much debate between employers, feminists and trade unions about how best to protect women from the hazards of the workplace (Alimo-Metcalfe and Wedderburn-Tate, 1993: 31). These included working conditions, pay, promotion and equal opportunities. Recent legislation has been concerned with issues such as career breaks, maternity and paternity leave, child care provision, family support, care of the elderly, and sex discrimination legislation, all of which have an impact on women gaining and maintaining full-time employment and for their career opportunities. According to Scase and Goffee (1990), there are contrasts in different countries in national policies associated with these issues (1990: 122). These differences can also be seen in the three typologies of European management in the examples which follow.

European Union legislation has attempted to improve women's working conditions and to regulate legislation among European Union member countries. In 1974, the European Community established a Social Action Programme. The promotion of women's rights has been a central aim of this programme. Article 119 of the EC Convention, as well as Directives 75/117, 76/207 and 79/9 impose additional measures in all European

Union countries which abolish the distinction between men and women in the field of employment, professional education, promotion and social security schemes. Various explanations have been suggested for the introduction of this legislation, an economic motive being to the fore. The economic recession of the 1970s created an opportunity in the European Community for greater economic planning to combat unemployment in member states. Also, by the 1970s, most of the countries in the European Community had introduced some form of equality legislation as a response to the increased participation of women in the labour market. According to O'Donovan and Szyszczak (1988), "the notion of a social action programme was perhaps an attempt to paint a human face over bare economic priorities" (1988: 195).

The shift in emphasis from economic priorities to social priorities, however, has not always occurred in various member states. This can be seen in the attitude of some the member-states towards new social policy proposals. In Britain, the government has frequently blocked new proposals, for example, when they opposed the draft directive on parental leave (O'Donovan and Szyszczak, 1988: 210). Nielsen (1983) and Hoskyns (1985) are critical of the European Community decision-making process suggesting that the equality laws are neither mobilised for nor implemented by women. Hoskyns, further argues, that "The European legislation . . . was not fought for in any direct sense by women, and remains virtually unknown to those who are supposed to be its beneficiaries" (Hoskyns, 1985: 72).

Maternity leave legislation throughout Europe can be regarded as complex. According to Hegewisch and Mayne (1994), parental leave provisions are difficult to compare meaningfully because of the varying levels of statutory regulations across Europe. Only a sixth of employers in Sweden, for example, provide enhanced maternity leave, but legislation on maternity, leave in Sweden entitles women to fifteen months of leave,

twelve months of which will be paid at the statutory benefit rates (of about 90 per cent of average earnings). In contrast to Sweden, British statutory maternity leave provisions are restricted according to length of service and provide low levels of pay (Hegewisch and Mayne, 1994: 209). Fifty per cent of working women in Britain receive no maternity leave, and those who are entitled to this benefit may not always know of their entitlement. Only a minority of women (ten per cent) benefit from extended maternity leave arrangements in Britain (Alimo-Metcalfe and Wedderburn-Tate, 1993: 33).

In Ireland, legislation is derived from the Constitution which came into effect in 1937. According to Connelly (1993), despite amendments over the years, the Constitution has not taken social changes into account. Specific mention is made of the role of women in the home and as mothers (Articles 40.3.3 and 41.2.1). There is no mention of the word 'father' in the Constitution, and there is no mention of men in their domestic positions. According to Connelly, it is clear from the constitutional provisions "that it is in their role as wives and mothers that women are especially valued" (1993: 5).

Dutch legislation shows that the focus has been on equal rights, but that legislation took a long time to enforce. It was not until 1957 that the law dating back to 1935 which prohibited married women from employment in the civil service was removed. The Dutch government did not ratify the Equal Pay Act until 1975. It took another five years for the Equal Opportunities Act to be passed (Tijdens, 1993: 87). In 1985, a few full-time childcare facilities were subsidised, which catered for only one per cent of all children between 0 and 5 years, and supply did not meet demand in any way (Tijdens, 1993: 88).

In Germany, although there has been some improvement in equal pay, there is still a large income gap between men and women. The income

gap exists across all spheres — female blue-collar workers, female white-collar workers and women in management. Women in management are rare, and their salaries are roughly 20 per cent lower than those of male managers (Wirtschafswoche, 1985: 70). The income gap may be explained by the fact that women work fewer hours than men and in jobs and sectors which are lower paid. The issue of 'comparable worth' has been raised in Germany as a result of pressure from the European Union (Krebsbach-Gnath and Berthoin-Antal, 1993: 95). There is no specific anti-discrimination law in Germany, although a proposal for such a law was officially discussed at a hearing of the German Parliament (Bundestag) in 1982 and again in the late 1980s, but no political majority could be obtained to pass it. A number of laws in the Code of Civil Law impose equality into working life, and compliance with these laws was and still is officially regarded as sufficient to achieve equal opportunity in working life (Krebsbach-Gnath and Berthoin-Antal, 1993: 98). In 1986, the federal government passed the 'guidelines on the occupational promotion of women in the federal administration'. These guidelines, which have been adopted by public administrations in several states, cover measures to increase the recruitment, promotion and further training of women (Krebsbach-Gnath and Berthoin-Antal, 1993: 101). Furthermore, Article 31 of the Unification Treaty stipulates that government should further develop equal rights and anti-discrimination legislation, as well as legislation that enables women and men to combine employment and family life (Krebsbach-Gnath and Berthoin-Antal, 1993: 104).

In France, an equality law was passed in 1983. The main purpose of this law was to provide businesses with tools to evaluate the work situation of women and to promote equal opportunity, through comparative employment status reports and positive action schemes. Each year companies must draw up a report on the comparative status of women and men in relation to recruitment, training, promotion, qualifications,

working conditions and pay (Laufer, 1993: 116). Under the positive action schemes, companies are encouraged to negotiate with unions to improve the status of women in areas such as recruitment, training, promotion or working conditions. Since the 1983 law has been passed, however, only about thirty-five firms in the private sector and only four public sector companies have implemented positive action schemes. These relatively low figures would indicate that most companies do not feel it necessary to include equality of opportunity among their objectives, or do not wish to promote policies regarding the promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace (Laufer, 1993: 116). According to Doniol-Shaw et al. (1989), the French trade unions have done little to promote a matter they felt largely unfamiliar with.

Throughout Europe, when mothers take additional leave beyond statutory maternity provisions — a frequent occurrence particularly in countries with low childcare provision and short leave arrangements — they will often break their employment contract. This often leads to a loss of seniority and other benefits related to continuity of employment. In Germany and Britain, for example, the concept of a career break, of providing extended unpaid leave, has gained prominence. The career break scheme involves some continued professional contact and arrangement for periodic attendance at training courses or holiday cover to ensure that professionals' skills are kept up to date. The concept of a career break is much less common in other European countries, being virtually unknown, for example, in the Scandinavian countries (Hegewisch and Mayne, 1994: 211). Table 2.4 shows the percentage of European organisations which offer parental benefits to managers:

**Table 2.4**

**Percentage of organisations which offer various parental benefits to managers in selected countries in Europe**

| Country | Ger % | Den % | Sp % | Fra % | Fin % | Irl % | Nor % | Net % | Por % | Sw % | Tur % | UK % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Workplace childcare | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 20 | 4 | 12 | 3 | 11 | 11 |
| Career break scheme | 2 | *ni* | 9 | 12 | *ni* | 1 | 7 | 20 | *ni* | *ni* | 4 | 3 |
| Maternity leave | 11 | 17 | 25 | 51 | 35 | 38 | 28 | 31 | 4 | 15 | 38 | 43 |
| Paternity leave | 8 | 8 | 12 | 32 | 33 | 9 | 25 | 19 | 15 | 11 | 19 | 29 |

*ni* = Question not included in country survey

Source: Brewster and Hegewisch, 1994, p. 333

Hegewisch and Mayne observed that throughout Europe there are strong country differences on employers' equality measures. The highest efforts to target women in recruitment and provide flexible working hours were made in Germany and Britain where women with children continue to have a very different working cycle to men, or to women without children (1994: 211). Hegewisch and Mayne, however, doubt if European equality legislation has had any positive impact on women's actual position in the workforce, given the continued inequality of women in employment, as demonstrated in terms of their low share of managerial positions, persistent pay gaps and the rigid occupational segregation between men and women's work across Europe (Hegewisch and Mayne, 1994: 212). Hamminen-Salmelin and Petajaniemi (1993) have also questioned whether European equality legislation seems to have had more of an impact on women's attitudes, making them conscious of their rights, rather than as an instrument of the advancement of women.

In conclusion, despite the efforts of European Union legislators over recent years, many legislative barriers still exist and cause difficulties for

women to achieve positions of senior management in various European countries. According to Davidson and Cooper (1992), in order for the position of women in management to improve there may be a need for stronger legislative programmes to bring about change regarding the principles and realities of equal opportunities (1992: 169).

Davidson (1987) suggests that a possibility for European countries could be to follow the example of Australia, which has adopted Affirmative Action for Women legislation, which originated in the United States. Affirmative Action for Women Programmes include: the analysis of the position of women within the organisation; a review of all employment policies and practices; the encouragement of women to apply for a wider range of jobs within the organisation; and the elimination of discriminatory practices. In Australia, all private-sector organisations employing over one hundred people, and all universities and colleges of advanced education are legally obliged to adopt Affirmative Action for Women Programmes in order to ensure equal employment opportunities for women and men (Davidson, 1987).

### 2.4.5 Educational Barriers

Walsh and Osipow (1983) have stated that educational level is one of the most powerful predictors of career achievement in both men and women. The results of studies presented in this section suggest that career achievement can be traced back to the early school-going years where male and female students are treated differently. A United Nations Study found that among those countries where gender-based statistics are collected no country treats its women as well as its men:

> *Researchers in 33 countries including the USA admit . . .that they haven't found a place where women have education, employment and health opportunities equal to those available to men* (United Nations, 1993).

The trend towards higher levels of educational achievement shows a faster rate of growth in university students for women than for men in all industrialised countries (Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993: 59). As more women gain the necessary educational qualifications, however, a United States Department of Labor report found that men all over the world hold the highest management positions, with greater inequalities occurring between men and women the closer they get to the top of organisational hierarchies (International Labor Office, 1993). According to Roobeek (1989), despite a gradual upward trend in most industrialised countries, women are still severely under-represented in the natural sciences and technological faculties of universities. Roobeek suggests that it is generally assumed that managers employed in technological firms, almost regardless of their function, must have technological training, even though once in the job they may never be required to use their training. Roobeek's study of women, management and technology in Europe showed that the presumption of male technological competence combined with the stereotype of female technological incompetence, may keep new technological firms out of reach for female managers. Roobeek concluded that "the traditional view of technology as a male domain is used to exclude women" (1989: 12-22).

Research studies have shown that educational barriers for women still exist in most European countries (Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993; Domsch and Autenrieth, 1993; Laufer, 1993). The following examples illustrate some educational difficulties experienced by women in a selection of European countries. In France, managers are typically recruited from among the graduates of a small number of élite universities, such as the Grandes Écoles which, until recently, were male dominated. According to Serdjénian (1988), these institutions functioned to filter women out of the paths to power. According to Laufer (1993), the difference in positions held by men and women in France reflects the traditional division in male and female roles. Women are generally at the

lower of the scale in each profession. These differences also reflect the way in which education and training contribute to the continuation of this division of labour between the sexes (Laufer, 1993: 113). According to Baudelot and Establet (1990), the lack of diversification in career guidance for girls could contribute to the fact that 70 per cent of girls take a literary, administrative or medicosocial-type *Baccalauréat*, and only 30 per cent of girls take a scientific or technical one. This trend continues in universities, with 70 per cent of females choosing arts subjects, and only 30 per cent choosing science subjects (Laufer, 1993: 113). The general educational level of girls is higher than that of boys — more girls have taken the *Baccalauréat* than boys for the last twenty years. Despite this, however, women are often perceived to be less interested in qualifications and careers and less interested in partaking in company training schemes and training courses leading to new skills (Divisia and Cagan, 1990).

In Switzerland, according to Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993), the army serves as a special kind of 'school' and represents a major recruitment pool, especially for more senior managers. Swiss corporations, and especially banks, have a strong preference for promoting men who are army officers. Both the military training and the social networks of army officers are considered to be important assets for managers (Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993: 67).

According to research, conducted before the unification of Germany, Krebsbach-Gnath and Berthoin-Antal (1993) found that in West Germany, a basis is laid for the sex-segregated labour market in universities as well as in vocational training (1993: 97). Women students in universities are concentrated in arts, languages, and cultural science, where 71 per cent of all students wanting to become teachers were female (Germany, 1989: 24). Female university graduates in West Germany were suffering from higher unemployment rates than male graduates — accounting for 45 per cent of unemployed graduates (Germany, 1990: 38). A similar pattern

existed in East German universities, where 73 per cent of women were in educational and teaching professions in 1989, and 62 per cent in literature and languages (Winkler, 1990: 43).

Table 2.5 shows the results from an empirical study of educational qualifications carried out in West Germany by Domsch and Autenrieth during the years 1990-92, (the research design had already been drafted before German unification). The research revealed that the levels of formal qualifications are evenly distributed among male and female managers. The research, however, does not specify the university or doctorate degrees attained by male and female managers. The large number of non-university graduates is explained by the German educational system which combines college education with vocational training. The system of vocational training is much more extensive in (West and East) Germany than in most other countries, accounting for 60 per cent of school-leavers (Domsch and Autenrieth, 1993: 23).

**Table 2.5**

**Highest Educational Qualification of Male and Female Managers in West Germany: 1990-92 (%)**

| Highest Qualification Attained | Women | Men |
|---|---|---|
| Higher professional training | 14.2 | 12.9 |
| University degree | 34.7 | 35.4 |
| Doctorate | 11.6 | 15.2 |
| Other qualifications | 17.6 | 23.4 |

Source: Domsch and Autenrieth, 1993, p.23

Domsch and Autenrieth's research, however, indicates that there is a certain degree of discrimination against women when making decisions regarding which vocational training courses to attend. Vocational training

courses on leadership, for example, were attended much more by men than by women. When women managers were questioned about their lower level of attendance on leadership courses, it appeared that women had less executive responsibility than their male counterparts. Domsch and Autenrieth conclude that "there is every reason to assume that significantly fewer women have been earmarked for executive positions in the near future" (1993: 24). In 1989, women in West Germany were still concentrated at the lower levels of company hierarchies and women held only six per cent of all positions in technical occupations and managerial positions. In 1988, women accounted for only 0.7 per cent of positions at the level of managing board members in public companies (Hochstatter and Schunke, 1989: 47).

During 1990 and 1991, the British department for Education conducted a survey to examine how schools prepared girls for adulthood and their working lives. The study was conducted in eight secondary schools and backed by evidence from seventy other secondary schools. The survey found that in coeducational schools many teachers paid insufficient attention to the ways in which boys dominated the classroom. Teachers in mixed schools tended to assume that the presence of girls and boys ensured equal opportunities. Within coeducational schools staff could hold two different viewpoints for girls: some staff and departments working to enrich the educational experience of girls, while others regarded such activities as irrelevant (Department for Education, 1992). The study found a different perspective in single-sex girls' schools. Most schools had made positive assertions about the role of women, for example, as in the following extract from a booklet from one single-sex girls' school:

> *It is now acceptable for a women to be anything from an astronaut to a zoo keeper. Your imagination and ambition are the only limitations* (Britain: Department for Education, 1992: 3).

According to Riley (1994), the study revealed findings that showed that schooling for girls and boys in England had changed little over the last two decades. Riley noted that “coeducational schools might no longer list girls and boys separately, but overall have gone little further in addressing inequalities” (1994: 43).

In universities and business schools in England, the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degree programme has increased in popularity as the top management qualification. Between 1978 and 1993, the number of MBA graduates rose from 18,500 to 30,000 (Simpson, 1995: 3). Leeming (1994), however, suggests that doubts exist as to the accessibility and overall success of the course for women managers. Women form approximately only 14 per cent of students on MBA programmes, despite the fact that the numbers of men and women undergraduates are at equal levels (Hay Management Consultants, 1992). Simpson (1995) conducted a research project in Britain which sought to make a comparison of the potential returns of an MBA for men and women. Participants from twelve business schools took part in her study, and of the responses she received, 128 were male and 55 were female. Simpson cautioned that it is difficult to attribute the managerial changes that have occurred following from an MBA course solely to the MBA itself. The research, however, revealed that the careers of both men and women have improved considerably since completing the course — but with men gaining greater advancement than women. The proportions of both men and women rose from junior and middle management roles to senior management, however, there was more than a 100 per cent increase for men, in comparison to a 50 per cent increase for women (Simpson, 1995: 5).

Similarly, Sinclair (1995) argued that an explanation for the MBA being less successful for women is that the culture of MBA programmes is constructed on gendered understandings of who a manager is, what they

should do and how they should learn. Sinclair further suggested that the MBA culture may be diagnosed as a microcosm of a broader management masculine culture which may provide insights into why women are not making greater progress in the ranks of management in general (Sinclair, 1995: 299).

Simpson also examined the salary levels of both men and women managers before and after taking the MBA programme. She found that before the MBA, women were at the lower salary scale, with no women earning more than £35,000. Her research found that with an MBA qualification the salaries of women tended to fall further behind in comparison with men. The most noticeable difference being at the higher pay scales, for example, 20 per cent of men earned over £45,000 after the MBA in comparison to only four per cent of women. Table 2.6 shows the differences in salary levels for men and women prior and post MBA:

**Table 2.6**
**Salary Levels of Men and Women Managers**
**Before and After Completing an MBA Programme (in %)**

| **£** | **Men** | | **Women** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Before MBA | After MBA | Before MBA | After MBA |
| Under £15,000 | 13 | 2 | 16 | 4 |
| 15,000-20,000 | 16 | 3 | 30 | 6 |
| 21,000-25,000 | 27 | 14 | 34 | 28 |
| 26,000-30,000 | 18 | 22 | 14 | 32 |
| 31,000-35,000 | 12 | 20 | 4 | 18 |
| 36,000-40,000 | 5 | 13 | – | 4 |
| 41,000-45,000 | 4 | 3 | – | 4 |
| Over £45,000 | 4 | 20 | – | 4 |

Source: in Simpson, 1995, p.6

From Simpson's research, it can be seen that the MBA does improve career and salary levels for women, though men have moved ahead at a faster pace. Career progress and salary levels, however, may not be the only measure of success for women in management positions. A study of women MBAs carried out by Dix (1990) revealed that the desire for a major career change emerged as an important reason for women undertaking the programme. Simpson, in agreement with Dix, noted that the MBA could be an important device for women in achieving career change. According to Simpson, career change would seem to see women in management moving from the traditionally female support functions of administration, education and personnel to specialist areas such as production and information technology which have largely been the preserve of male managers. Simpson states that, overall, the MBA does not seem to be as successful for women in terms of career advancement and salary levels as it is for men (Simpson, 1995: 6). Simpson, however, concludes that, the MBA could be the appropriate programme for women managers, but that more women will need to enrol for this qualification "if the full effects of their talents and capabilities are to be felt in organisational life, and if the dynamics of gendered power in the workplace are to be fully challenged" (Simpson, 1995: 8). Other United States studies also revealed that women with equal qualifications to men are extended fewer job offers, receive lower salaries, and are seen as less desirable for managerial positions (Rosenbaum, 1985; Madden, 1995). Davidson and Cooper (1984) also noted that in Britain there is no evidence that women in management are less academically qualified than men.

In summary, it can be seen that educational barriers exist for women throughout Europe beginning with their early school days and continuing into their second level education — a pattern which govern their choice of courses at university and ultimately their career choice in organisations. According to Leong et al. (1992), men's and to a lesser extent women's

negative attitudes and behaviours towards women in management combine together to serve as barriers to women's entry both at the educational level and for promotion in management careers. At the initial stages of career choice these attitudes and behaviours can discourage women from pursuing careers in management (Leong, et al., 1992: 193).

### 2.4.6 Work–Family Conflict Barriers

The work–family conflict which female managers experience in their careers is examined in this section. A review of the literature on work–family conflict reveals that, despite the increased participation of females in senior managerial positions, the majority still take responsibility for home and family life.

Work–family conflict is experienced when pressures from the work and family roles are mutually incompatible, such that participation in one role makes it more difficult to participate in the other (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985: 76-88). Various studies have shown that women continue to take responsibility for household tasks and child rearing, regardless of how many hours they work outside the home (Hochschild, 1989; Lewis and Cooper, 1987; Pleck, 1985). In a 1989 *New York Times* poll, 78 per cent of married women said that they do most of the cooking, 74 per cent did most of the house-cleaning, 69 per cent did most of the food shopping, and 68 per cent did most of the child rearing. According to Hochschild (1989), because of this uneven distribution of household work, women are said to work a 'second shift' at home in addition to their first shift at work. Hochschild believes that women continue to work this second shift because their job is considered to be of less importance than their husband's job. According to Hochschild:

> *Because men put more of their 'male' identity into work, their work time is worth more than female work time — to the man and to the family. The greater worth of male work time makes*

> *his leisure more valuable, because it is his leisure that enables him to refuel his energy, strengthen his ambition, and move ahead at work. By doing less at home, he can work longer hours, prove his loyalty to his company, and get promoted faster. His aspirations expand. So does his pay. So does his exemption from the second shift* (Hochschild, 1989: 254).

Results of a study by Basset (1985) on the examination of housework in Canadian dual-career families showed that both spouses agreed that women were bearing the heaviest burden of housework. In only 50 per cent of the households did men do *any* cleaning or grocery shopping. In only one-third of households did husbands do *any* cooking or laundry (Basset, 1985). Throughout Europe similar trends exist, for example, in Britain, Cooper and Lewis (1993) found that 73 per cent of women still do 'nearly all the housework' and that men with working partners have an average of six hours more spare time at weekends than their partners do (Cooper and Lewis, 1993). In the Netherlands, women spend 15 per cent of every working day on housework, whereas men spend only four per cent (Tijdens, 1993: 81). In the former West Germany, working *and* having a family is the most favourable option for the majority of women (Krebsbach-Gnath and Berthoin-Antal, 1993: 102). The family, however, is still the main responsibility of the woman, although men have increased their small share in household work, as can be seen from table 2.7 below:

**Table 2.7**

**Male Participation In Housework in West Germany (%)**

| | 1975 | 1983 |
|---|---|---|
| Never | 51 | 30 |
| Once in a while | 38 | 48 |
| Often | 8 | 16 |

Source : Hartenstein et al., 1988

Further refining the work of Hartenstein et al., Winkler (1990) carried out in-depth interviews with German couples and found that the above figures reflect more the 'verbal attitude' of men, than their *actual* behaviour. According to Winkler, a real sharing of household duties does not exist, and the 'dual burden' is still a source of stress for the majority of women (1990: 127). Table 2.8 shows the stress rates of daily housework experienced by German couples:

**Table 2.8**
**German Men's and Women's Stress Ratings of Daily Housework (1990)**

| Stress Level | Women (%) | Men (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Very strong | 5 | 1 |
| Rather strong | 13 | 5 |
| Moderate | 60 | 29 |
| Low | 17 | 47 |
| Not worth mentioning | 4 | 19 |

Source: Winkler, 1990, p. 129

Studies suggest that the stress rates illustrated above, relating to German women managers, appear to be common to women managers throughout Europe (Fernandez, 1993; Davidson, 1989; Lewis and Cooper, 1989). British research carried out by Davidson (1989) reveals that "compared to married male managers, married female managers are much more likely to experience higher pressures in respect of career and spouse/partner conflicts, career/home conflicts, and career and marriage/childbearing conflicts" (Davidson, 1989: 32). Similarly, in Spain, research conducted by Fernandez (1993) showed that the social role of women is linked to their role in the family; whereas for men, time spent at work is of prime importance. Women's family ties are seen as obstacles for promotion because these ties stand in the way of their availability at work, and being

available is seen as essential for promotion. It is women who are mainly responsible for organising the household, and it is women who take time off from their professional life to devote time to their children (Fernandez, 1993: 194).

Vinnicombe and Sturges (1995) suggest that some organisations operate a double standard for marriage: they view the married male manager as an asset, with a stable support network at home allowing him to give his undivided attention to his work, but they view the married female manager as a liability, likely to neglect her career at the expense of her family at every possible opportunity (1995: 7). Research by Vinnicombe and Sturges shows that because of the double standard for marriage many women managers have had little choice but to take this into consideration, and avoid the responsibility of family commitments wherever possible (1995: 7). The profile that emerges is that a majority of women managers in Europe are not married (they are single, divorced or widowed) or, if married, have no children (Parasuraman and Greenhaus, 1993: 189). Research carried out in Britain by the British Institute of Management revealed that only 58 per cent of women managers are married, in comparison with 93 per cent of male managers. The research also showed that male managers are three times more likely than women managers to be parents (Alban-Metcalfe and Nicholson, 1984). Similarly, in a survey conducted in a large computer company in France, the findings revealed that women managers are more likely to be unmarried and not to have children. Of those who did have children, the vast majority had only one or two (Serdjenian, 1994).

According to Davidson and Cooper (1992), if women managers decide not to marry, they are likely to experience pressure from colleagues who perceive them as an ‘oddity’, as the stereotype of the ‘old maid’ still exists (1992: 134). Other potential stressors which are associated with the unattached woman manager are the pressures and strains linked with

having to take care of elderly parents and dependants, particularly if they are the 'only' daughter (Scase and Goffee, 1990: 109). According to Davidson and Cooper (1992), single women 'get the rawest deal' in caring for relatives because it often means giving up their social life, having large financial commitments and in some cases having to retire early (1992: 139). Davidson and Cooper continue that a further possible stressor for the unattached female manager is entertaining and socialising. This is seen as an important aspect of managerial life as a great deal of business goes on in these social settings — usually where the wife has to prepare a meal. The social ethic, however, is that "you have to be one of a pair" (Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 139).

Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993) suggest that the work functions and duties performed by managers in all industrialised countries appear to be based on total commitment measured in terms of time spent at the workplace. Career breaks for women managers for child-bearing and child-rearing show incompatibilities with the job of management, which is presumed to be a full-time and continuous job. It is believed that career breaks indicate a lack of commitment and re-entry is problematic (Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993: 64). Lewis and Cooper highlight the disadvantages when career women take breaks, and they quote the opinion of one woman manager:

> *If you are trying to get back into the profession at the age of 40, there isn't much chance. This is the problem: the child-bearing years are the same years when you have to build your career. For a woman who drops out for a period of, say, five to ten years, it would be difficult to get back. You would be out of touch anyway* (Lewis and Cooper, 1989).

In conclusion, despite women's increased involvement in the work-force, research over time and across cultures continues to document the persistence of inequality in the allocation of household work and family

responsibilities, even among couples with ‘modern’ ideologies and in countries with commitment to gender equality at home and at work (Brannen and Moss, 1992; Sandqvist, 1992; Hochschild, 1989; Lewis and Cooper, 1987). Women’s extra domestic responsibilities can create role conflict and over-load and can reduce the potential for achievement in their careers (Lewis and Cooper, 1987). Further research has shown that most women feel that promotion in their careers has been achieved at the expense of time with their children and of the quality of their family lives (Parasuraman and Greenhaus, 1993: 187). As outlined above, family responsibilities involving marriage, childcare, and household activities, can hinder women managers’ career achievements. These family responsibilities produce work–family conflicts to which women may respond by reducing their employment involvement, which, in turn, restricts career opportunities and advancement (Gutek et al., 1988; Olson and Frieze, 1987). However apparent these restrictions are on female managerial careers in home-country organisations, women in international management have to overcome additional difficulties — such as mobility, spousal adjustment and balancing dual careers. These issues will be examined in Chapter Four.

### 2.4.7 Corporate Barriers

The corporate barriers faced by women in attaining senior management positions are examined in this section. The studies presented in this section suggest that corporate barriers appear to be strong in European countries. From a review of the literature it appears that many corporate barriers exist. In an attempt to explain the underrepresentaion of women in management, and in particular in senior management, two of the most cited barriers are concentrated on in this section. First, the recruitment and selection barriers are outlined and, second, the organisational polices and structural barriers are examined.

In addition to encountering barriers to advancing towards senior-level positions, women also face barriers associated with industry-sector and managerial functions (Parker and Fagenson, 1994: 15). Fisher (1987) notes that opportunities for women in management may be greater in industries like computers and telecommunications that are experiencing a rapid pace of change. Fisher suggests that these emergent industries simply have not been in existence long enough to have established rules about who is or should be a manager, relying more on managerial ability than on gender to make employment decisions. According to a United States survey on women in corporate management (1990), women are more likely to hold senior management positions in human resources and communications, and are far less likely to hold senior positions in production or plant facilities functions (Catalyst, 1990).

According to Alimo-Metcalfe (1995), other corporate barriers which prevent women managers from reaching senior level positions include: recruitment methods; selection and assessment methods; and organisational policies and structures which may cause problems for those who care for other family members (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995: 92). According to a survey by the Management Centre Europe (1982), corporate barriers appear to be strong in European countries. Of 420 companies surveyed in nine western European countries, just under half (49%) had ever employed a female manager. Of the remaining 51 per cent, 15 per cent stated they would never promote a woman into management (1982: 56-57). According to Rothwell (1984), many jobs are still seen as ‘men’s’ or ‘women’s’ jobs and this influences the initial intake of a particular gender to organisations. Rothwell points out that if the initial intake for particular career routes are unbalanced, it is unlikely that the pattern will improve later, particularly in organisations which have a policy of ‘promotion from within’ where possible (Rothwell, 1984: 8).

#### 2.4.7.1 Recruitment and Selection Barriers

The subjective selection interview is still used in almost all selection circumstances, despite all the evidence which shows it to be unreliable and more likely to facilitate bias against minority candidates (Hirsh and Jackson, 1989). According to Alimo-Metcalfe (1995), interviews are frequently poorly conducted and are open to potential prejudices and personal bias. These effects are even stronger when the post in question is male-dominated. Sources of bias include the interviewers' perceptions of 'feminine' dress, physical attractiveness and a female candidate's suitability for a 'masculine' job (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995: 98). According to Alimo-Metcalfe, "interviews can be regarded as a social judgement process which is highly subjective and therefore easily susceptible to bias and prejudices" (1994: 96). Conclusions from a study by Glick et al. (1988) showed that male applicants were still preferred for the traditionally male job, and female applicants were favoured for the traditional 'female job' (Glick et al., 1988).

Because of the weaknesses of the selection interview, management in organisations have become interested in more 'scientific' techniques of assessment, such as psychometrics. According to recent studies, British organisations are increasingly using psychometric instruments for selection and assessment, with critical reasoning and personality measures being the most commonly used (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1994; Smith and Abrahamsen, 1992). These tests are used because of their non-gender bias and the tests are regarded as offering reliable and 'objective' information of an individual's ability or potential. The difficulty with these tests, however, according to Webb (1987), is that the sources of bias are developed gradually and are so subtle that the bias becomes difficult to challenge. Webb notes:

> *It is well established, but worth restating, that measures of individual abilities are not neutral with respect to all social categories, but are normative. They contain evaluative judgements about what should count as 'skills' and 'abilities' and what test items measure these. They are likely to be modelled on the perceived traits of current job occupants, which means that atypical applicants are disadvantaged* (Webb, 1987: 4-5).

According to Alimo-Metcalfe (1994), women in management are such a group. The psychometric tests used are based on items which are identified within a particular population sample and then piloted on a similar population. From this, norms are established which again are based on the sample population. Alimo-Metcalfe warns that with regard to the managerial population there is likely to be a male bias, as the norms would be derived from a male population (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1994: 97). Similarly, Jacobson and Jacques (1990) note that most of the psychology research conducted on personality theory has been pre-1980s, which has been derived from studies of men, conducted by men, in response to questions proposed by men, and the data analysed from a male perspective (Jacobson and Jacques, 1990). According to Alimo-Metcalfe (1995), researchers have only recently begun to investigate the existing theories and their methodologies from a perspective of questioning their predominantly male bias (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995: 99).

Ability tests and intelligence tests are also used by some organisations as selection procedures. Psychologists, however, have also outlined problems associated with the design and norms of intelligence tests. According to Webb (1987):

> *The construction of test items can be manipulated so as to favour one group over another and this has long been known in the sphere of intelligence testing . . . The IQ debate continues, but there is adequate work to substantiate the argument that*

> *the construction of such tests can be manipulated to reproduce, or to undermine, socially approved results for the distribution of intelligence according to class, gender and ethnicity* (Webb, 1987: 4-5).

Alimo-Metcalfe (1995) suggests that many of the popular intelligence tests being used by organisations as part of the selection process of managers appear to favour the way in which men tend to think. She notes that there is evidence of women scoring higher on verbal tests of intelligence than men, however men generally score higher on numerical tests. From these results, Alimo-Metcalfe asks if verbal ability has a lower status than numerical ability for managers (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995: 100).

Another development in assessing the potential of managers is the assessment centre. This provides for a particular method of assessment, based on the notion of "if we want to see if someone can do a job, let's observe them trying to do it" (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995: 100). With this method, candidates who may be considered for a particular job are brought together and asked to undertake group and individual exercises that are designed to assume important activities of a job. The candidates are observed in these and other roles and are assessed by senior managers in the same organisation, who have been trained to assess their behaviours. In Britain, assessment centres have increased in usage, despite the high expenses involved. Such expenses include the cost of the consultants who design the centre and train the managers, and the cost of individuals' absence from work, which typically takes two or three days and usually involves additional high accommodation costs. According to Alimo-Metcalfe (1995), a reason for the increased popularity of assessment centres is that they provide the most accurate assessments of individuals' potential, and are used for "senior management selection and to identify high flyers for fast-track career development programmes" (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995: 101).

Despite the increased accuracy of assessment centres, concerns about possible sources of sex bias have been raised. As mentioned above, senior managers from the organisation assess the behaviour of the candidates. These senior managers would have been given 'behavioural frameworks' or 'guidelines' which contain specific examples of 'above average', 'average' and 'below average' behavioural indicators. If these indicators, however, have been developed from a totally male management group, and if there is evidence of gender differences in management style, then these indicators can offer potential sources of sex bias (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995: 101). Findings from studies relating to gender and managerial style are of particular importance to the situation of the assessment centre, for example:

> *In contrast to male managers, it is agreed that female managers can often bring a high relationship approach to managing, which includes a willingness to listen, to seek participation, a wish for disclosure and greater concern about maintaining good interpersonal relationships* (Callan, 1993: 13).

Research findings on the differences in the way women and men communicate highlights gender differences in verbal interaction (Tannen, 1990). These findings support the view that behaviour which is regarded as 'effective' in assessment centres, and which is used to identify potential for senior management, may be biased towards the male way of dealing with situations. The result may be, that if women handle situations differently, their behaviours are either ignored, or allocated low scores (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995: 101). Research by Finigan (1982) showed that underachievement was particularly pronounced for females in male-dominant groups. This research was conducted for three sex-ratio situations: male-dominant groups, female-dominant groups, and those in which there were equal numbers of both sexes. The result of

underachievement of females in assessment centres was found to be due, in part, to males controlling the input of women to discussions (Finigan, 1982). It is not unreasonable to presume that candidates attending assessment centres for senior management positions were predominantly male, which means that women who attend are typically performing in unbalanced sex-ratio groups. Kanter noted that being in a numerical minority inhibits that member's performance in a group situation, particularly one without a history of working together (Kanter, 1977b).

Another consideration of gender and performance on tasks in relation to assessment centres has been raised. Gender research conducted by Carbonell (1984) has highlighted the importance of the fact that not all tasks are gender neutral. Women are found to play a more active role and are perceived as more capable in 'female' tasks (Carbonell, 1984). Researchers have asked, that since assessment centres are specifically designed to replicate 'real-life' managerial situations, which are clearly male gendered, how can one assume that this would not affect the performance of females (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989: 51-88).

In summary, the various approaches to recruitment and selection outlined above show that organisations attempt to increase the 'fairness' of selection and assessment by adopting more scientific forms of assessment. They may, however, be increasing the effect of gender bias. Alimo-Metcalfe concludes that "as the techniques of assessment become more complex, sources of bias are far less obvious and hence less likely to be challenged" (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1994: 104)

### 2.4.7.2 Organisational Policies and Structural Barriers

According to Langrish-Clyne (1984), organisational barriers which may prevent women from gaining responsible positions operate at two levels: the entry level and the promotion to managerial jobs (1984: 72). First, the significant difficulties experienced by women in selection systems — as detailed above in section 2.4.7.1. Second, the 'career path' factor, which is designed to fit the life pattern of men rather than women, ensures that women are prevented from progressing through the organisation (Langrish-Clyne, 1984; Ashridge, 1980). The results of a study conducted by Davidson and Cooper (1987) with male and female managers reported significantly higher pressure levels for females relating to discrimination and career development. Gender was considered to be a disadvantage regarding job promotion or career prospects, sex discrimination and prejudice, inadequate job training experience compared to men, and men being treated more favourably by management (Davidson and Cooper, 1987: 217-42).

According to Rothwell (1984), the ethos of an organisation and especially the style and personalities of top managers are likely to have a major impact on the scope and pattern of career development of women. Rothwell suggests that a very positive attitude can ensure the career development of some women and a very negative attitude will mean that no women advance beyond a certain low level, except in an occasional specialist sideline 'suitable' for a woman (1984: 15). Davidson and Cooper (1984) note that it appears easy for women to gain employment at the lower levels of the organisation, but, it can prove very difficult for them to reach upper, middle and senior management positions (1984: 33).

According to Storey (1989), much depends on the organisation's view of women; whether they are viewed as a cost or investment, as he puts it — "valued asset rather than variable cost" (1989: 8). According to Steele (1992), the perception of women in the organisation and the level of

understanding of their specific problems will to a large extent determine the nature of the employers' 'women-friendly' policies and their levels of commitment to them (1992: 291). Dickens (1989) suggests that women are in the process of being rediscovered as a valuable resource and that if employers are to cope with changes in the labour market they:

> *. . . will need to plan their human resource needs in a strategic way: considering new patterns of recruitment, exploring new sources of recruits and/or reshaping of the jobs to which people are recruited; considering better ways of retaining and fully utilising existing employees with re-skilling and training to aid redeployment* (Dickens, 1989: 168).

Further research by Dickens (1992), however, cautions that various 'flexibility' initiatives such as home-working or part-time working for women, which are often cited as evidence of an equal opportunities approach, may be double edged in that they are seen as 'atypical' because they differ from the male norm. Developments such as career breaks and part-time work, while recognising the current reality of women's lives attempting to juggle waged work and domestic work, can be seen as initiatives which in practice take women out of competition for jobs and thus 'save' full-time jobs for men (Figart, 1992: 43). Similarly, Cockburn (1991) suggests that flexibility initiatives also help perpetuate the assumption that women bear the primary responsibility for caring for and raising children. Cockburn also suggests that the more that women are granted various kinds of work flexibility to enable them to cope with motherhood and other domestic responsibilities the more they can be dismissed as 'different', less serious than male employees (Cockburn, 1991: 92). Dickens (1994) suggests that even if career breaks are open to, and taken by, both men and women they are likely to be taken for different reasons and to be regarded differently by the organisation. Time out taken to study is considered as career enhancing, but time out if used for childcare is considered career detracting, reflecting the low value

placed on women's experience in household and family management despite the organisational, managerial and interpersonal skills involved (Dickens, 1994: 287).

In conclusion, it is apparent that corporate barriers still exist to prevent women reaching senior management positions. Despite the attempts to reduce bias in recruitment and selection methods, it appears that with the introduction of more sophisticated recruitment methods the bias may now be less obvious and more difficult to deal with. This in turn limits opportunities for female managers. Adler suggests that, as outlined above, "corporate barriers to women, especially to women entering top management, persist" (Adler, 1986-87: 23). Another corporate barrier which according to Adler is one of the most important in determining women's progress into senior management positions is top management's attitude (1986-87: 23). This barrier will be dealt with in section 2.4.8 below.

### 2.4.8 Attitudinal Barriers

As suggested above, a serious corporate barrier that women in management face is the attitude of senior male managers towards them. The stereotypical negative attitudes that still exist and which hinder women in achieving promotion beyond the glass ceiling are examined in this section.

According to Steele (1992), in addition to employer practices, deep-seated attitudes remain towards working women, in particular those who work part-time. She points out that employers see women as being less ambitious, not worth training or promoting (because they will leave to have children), less reliable (because of domestic responsibilities) and generally less committed to work than male counterparts. Steele also suggests that marriage for a man is seen as a stabilising influence whereas for a woman

it is seen in terms of child bearing, maternity costs and the end of her career. She maintains that "these attitudes are still dominant and must act as an underlying constraint" (Steele, 1992: 284). According to Davidson and Cooper (1992), the typical employer attitude that women are 'poor training and promotional investments' — who leave work on marrying and/or starting a family — is particularly detrimental to those who work continually after marriage and to single women who do not marry, a profile which fits the majority of the women in management (1992: 120).

According to Flanders (1994), other attitudes by employers are that women are far less committed to work and far less able to undertake a full-time career than men. When promotion arises and when an employer is given the choice between a man and a woman with equal qualifications, the woman is frequently viewed as the greater risk. Flanders suggests that typical employer attitudes are:

> *When it comes to promotion and career development, women are judged not so much on their abilities and achievements, but on assumptions about their family life, responsibilities and future intentions* (Flanders, 1994: 5).

Cross-cultural studies and reviews which have made comparisons of male and female managers in terms of managerial efficiency and performance have concluded that there are far more similarities than differences (Powell, 1993; Davidson and Cooper, 1992). According to Cooper and Davidson (1984), where differences occur, however, the differences "tend to stem from factors associated with the low proportion of female managers, and attitudinal differences — especially prejudice and discrimination, stressors and different life circumstances of women managers compared to men managers" (Cooper and Davidson, 1984: 160). Leong et al. (1992) suggest that "men's attitudes toward women in management have not changed much in the last two decades" (1992: 192). These attitudes can be seen in the samples chosen from European

countries presented below. Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993), in a world-wide overview of women in management, state that “probably the single most important hurdle for women in management in all industrialised countries is the persistent stereotype that associates management with being male” (1993: 63). Social scientists define stereotypes as sets “of beliefs about the personal attributes of a group of people” (Ashmore and Del Boca, 1981: 16). In order to make sense of the social environment, people are grouped into categories, and attributes are associated with those categories. According to O’Leary and Ryan (1994) these attributes are either generalised from direct experience, or they are based on culturally transmitted information, because they refer to groups with which perceivers have little direct experience. O’Leary and Ryan suggest that bias enters the process by which people’s observations become represented in sex-stereotypic beliefs (1994: 65).

Research carried out in Italy by Olivares (1993) revealed that Italian men’s stereotypical attitudes both in the home and in the work environment are additional career barriers for women managers. According to Olivares, attitudes and stereotypes influence women’s managerial careers in three ways:

> (i) as fathers they have lower expectations for the careers of their daughters’ careers than for the careers of their sons’;
> (ii) as husbands they do not share home chores equally;
> (iii) as partners they do not provide the emotional back-up that a professional woman needs (Olivares, 1993: 171).

Italian women managers, however, perceive that the greatest source of discrimination is from the attitudes of employers and society who define competence in masculine terms in the workplace, with reference to ‘macho’ qualities such as stress endurance and competitiveness (Olivares, 1993: 171).

A study by Hunt (1975) of management attitudes and practices towards women at work discovered that managers in Britain thought that all the qualities needed for managerial jobs were more likely to be found in men than in women. A follow-up study by Hunt (1981) on women and under-achievement at work found that although attitudes had become slightly more favourable, women were still regarded as inferior. Schein (1989) and Schein and Mueller's (1990) survey of male and female middle managers in the United States and young business students in the United States, Germany and Britain, however, found that the attitudes of those surveyed regarding the characteristics of effective managers are still associated with males, or as Schein says 'think manager equals think male'. In a follow-up study, Schein et al. (1994) suggest that the strength of the male business students' perceptions are somewhat disquieting: "As they become managers and decision makers of the future, these stereotypical attitudes are apt to limit women's access to and promotions within management internationally" (1994: 13). Schwartz (1989) similarly notes:

> *Men continue to perceive women as the rearers of their children so they find it understandable, indeed appropriate, that women should renounce their careers to raise families . . . Not only do they see parenting as fundamentally female, they see a career as fundamentally male . . . This attitude serves to legitimise a woman's choice to extend maternity leave and even, for those who can afford it, to leave employment altogether for several years* (Schwartz, 1989: 67).

In conclusion, according to Schein et al. (1994), male attitudes to managerial women are strong, consistent and pervasive and appear to be a global phenomenon. Schein (1994) predicts that the progression of women to senior management positions will be kept low if the attitudes of male decision-makers, influenced strongly by managerial sex typing, are allowed to go unchecked (1994: 50). Finally, she suggests that while laws

and corporate practices focusing on objective criteria and removing structural barriers are important, it seems “time to address ways to change stereotypical attitudes as well” (1994: 50).

### 2.4.9 Mentoring

As outlined above, female managers are currently faced with difficulties in achieving upward mobility. In addition to the barriers detailed above, barriers to mentoring also exist for female managers. A review of the literature on mentoring and an examination of the interpersonal and organisational barriers female managers face in developing and maintaining effective mentoring relationships in organisations are the focus of this section.

According to Ragins (1989), one explanation for the disparity in advancement of women to senior management is the gender difference in the development of mentoring relationships. Research suggests that mentoring relationships, while important for men, may be *essential* for women, as female managers face greater organisational, interpersonal, and individual barriers to advancement (Burke and McKeen, 1994; Collins, 1983; Kanter, 1982; Farris and Ragan, 1981).

Mentors have been defined as higher ranking, influential, senior organisational members with advanced experience and knowledge who are committed to providing upward mobility and support to a protégé’s professional career (Kram, 1985; Collins, 1983). Generally, a mentor provides information, training, advice, direction, achievement of social and professional integration in organisations and psychosocial support for a junior person in a relationship lasting over an extended period of time (Lewis and Fagensen, 1996; Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 100).

According to White et al. (1992), much of the literature on mentoring comes from the United States, where the main focus has been on the male experience of mentoring (1992: 136). Irish research by Monks (1998) shows a positive relationship between female career advancement and mentoring. Monks reported on a mentoring programme with eighteen women managers who were mentored by male senior managers. Ten months after the programme began, the female managers revealed that they had more realistic expectations of their careers; they had learned the political skills of organisational life faster than if they had not been involved in the mentoring process, and they had matured and increased in self-confidence. Two years after the programme started, four of the female managers had been promoted and many of the others were recognised as candidates for future promotions (Monks, 1998: 4). Participants in British research on mentoring, conducted by Arnold and Johnson (1997), believed that the benefits of mentoring included: profile raising, power enhancement, role modelling and career guidance (1997: 63).

Leibowitz et al. (1986) reported that mentoring has become increasingly more common in organisations, particularly in the United States. Kanter has argued that all companies wishing to achieve excellence should encourage managers to become mentors to their employees (Kanter, 1991a). United States research conducted on the benefits of mentoring on male and female employees has concluded that an individual's reported career experiences and their protégé status were related. Individuals who were mentored were found to have better career outcomes than individuals who were not mentored, regardless of their gender or level, and were found to have more organisational policy influence and access to important people and resources (Fagenson, 1989; Ragins, 1989). British research on mentoring by Arnold and Davidson (1990) revealed similar findings, for example, that the majority of both male and female managers found that their mentors were

important for introducing them to the informal network of power relations which existed in the organisation. The British study also revealed that women who had not experienced a mentoring relationship felt disadvantaged in terms of gaining access to these informal networks (Arnold and Davidson, 1990).

Although mentoring relationships may be particularly important for the advancement of women in organisations, there is a smaller supply of mentors available to women than to men, and women may be less likely than men to develop these relationships (Burke and McKeen, 1994; Brown, 1985; Burke, 1984). There are many possible explanations for the infrequency of mentoring relationships among women in organisations. Generally, these explanations are that (i) women may not seek mentors, and (ii) mentors may not select female protégées (Ragins, 1989: 6). According to Ragins, one reason why women may be less likely than men to seek mentors is that they may fail to recognise the importance of gaining a sponsor, and may "naively assume that competence is the only requisite for advancement in the organisation" (1989: 6). Other difficulties in approaching male mentors may be compounded by the female's fear that her attempts to initiate a relationship may be misconstrued as a sexual approach by either the mentor or others in the organisation (Reich, 1986; Clawson and Kram, 1984). Women may also have trouble finding mentors because there may be potential discomfort in cross-gender relationships (Burke and McKeen, 1994: 72).

The second explanation put forward for the under-representation of women in mentoring relationships is that mentors may be unwilling to select female protégées. The selection process may therefore be biased by the tendency of male mentors to choose male over female protégées. Even if women are considered as suitable candidates for the protégée role, male mentors may choose male protégés because they may be more comfortable developing a professional and personal relationship

with another male (Ragins, 1989: 8). Studies have found that a key element in the selection process is the degree to which the mentor identifies with the protégé and perceives the protégé as a younger version of himself (Bowers, 1984; Blackburn et al., 1981). Ragins argues that male mentors may be reluctant to sponsor female protégées because they perceive them as being a greater professional risk than their male counterparts. The failure of protégés' may be a reflection on the competency and judgement of the mentor. Mentors of female protégées may therefore have more 'at stake' and may profit less from the relationship than mentors of male protégés (Ragins, 1989: 9).

According to Ragins an issue which deserves more investigation is whether a mentor's gender influences the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship. Ragins points out that there is a lack of comparative research on the effectiveness of male and female mentors, especially outside the United States (Ragins, 1989: 15). From the limited research that has been conducted, however, contradictory findings emerge, Noe (1988), for example, revealed that protégés in mixed gender relationships use mentors more effectively than protégés in same gender relationships, and the research also showed that women receive more psychosocial benefits than men from their mentoring relationships (Noe, 1988). In contrast, however, Gibb and Megginson (1995) identified problems with cross-gender mentoring and found that men mentors are less sensitive to the feelings and perceptions of women protégées (Gibb and Megginson, 1995). A study of thirty female managers by Fitt and Netwon (1981) reported that sexual tension was an issue in mentoring relationships, and some of the managers reported that their mentoring relationships turned into romances (1981: 56-60). Arnold and Davidson's (1990) in-depth interviews with ten male and twenty female British managers investigating the role of mentors found that 21 per cent of female managers reported incidences of their male mentor actually blocking their career development. The reasons for this varied from feeling that they were a

threat to their male mentor to believing that their male mentor did not want to lose them through promotion. Arnold and Davidson concluded that while mentoring is an important training development tool for the career success of both male and female managers, women are more likely to suffer specific problems when they are mentored by a man (1990: 10-18).

Women may seek to avoid the difficulties associated with obtaining a male mentor by seeking a female mentor. Research has established that women having a mentor of the same gender can abolish sexuality problems, and same-sex mentoring relationships do not have the disadvantages associated with the sexual connotations of cross-sex relationships (Ragins and Cotton, 1991; Arnold and Davidson, 1990). Another difficulty may arise, however, that of finding a female mentor, as there are still very few senior female managers in comparison to males. The few females in mentoring positions may therefore receive an overload of requests from the relatively larger block of women in lower levels of the organisation. This may result in a reduction of access to mentors (Arnold and Davidson, 1990; Ragins, 1989). Although there is a general lack of research on this topic, one study of sixteen top-level female mentors found that female executives encounter barriers to becoming mentors to other women in organisations (Bowers 1984). Among the reported obstacles, including non-supportive environments and time pressures, female executives are likely to have less time available to be a mentor. Compared to their male counterparts, women face greater obstacles to advancement and consequentially may have to spend more time performing their jobs and advancing their careers (Ragins, 1989; Nieva and Gutek, 1981). Female mentors reported that high organisational visibility was a problem, with the female mentor and female protégée combination being most visible of all the mentor combinations and therefore entailing the greatest risk (Ragins, 1989; Bowers, 1984).

Factors other than gender which play a more important role in the pairing of mentor and protégé are the similarity in the personal traits of mentors and protégés. Vinnicombe and Colwill's (1995) research revealed that when asked to describe the characteristics of their ideal mentors and protégés, both men and women choose people who are similar to themselves rather than people who are stereotypically masculine or feminine. As Vinnicombe and Colwill note that "there are few top-level executives whose mirror reflects a woman", which suggests that most male and female junior managers will be mentored by men (Vinnicombe and Colwill, 1995: 84).

In conclusion, although mentors may be essential for advancement in organisations, female managers may be hindered in their attempts to obtain mentors because of interpersonal and organisational barriers as outlined above. While there have been many studies investigating the role of mentors in the career development of male managers, there has been very little research carried out on women managers and mentoring, particularly outside of the United States. The study by Clutterbuck and Devine (1987) was one of the few studies on mentoring of women managers. A review of the literature on mentoring suggests that in comparison to their male counterparts, women apparently face more barriers and constraints to developing and maintaining effective mentoring relationships. Perhaps more research is needed to develop a separate theory of mentoring for women in organisations. Since mentoring is closely intertwined with career development, future research could focus on integrating theories of women's career development with theories of mentoring for women in organisations.

### 2.4.10 Tokenism

A further difficulty which exists for female managers is that of belonging to a minority group. This particular strains and pressures experienced by female managers which are not felt by dominant members of the same organisational status are assessed in this section.

Kanter (1977b) chose the term ‘tokens’ or ‘solos’ for the under-represented members of women senior managers. Kanter was one of the first to suggest that if women comprise less than 15 per cent of a total category in an organisation they can be labelled ‘tokens’, as they would be viewed as symbols of their group rather than as individuals. She observed that token women in a large organisation were highly visible and subject to greater performance pressures than their male counterparts (Kanter, 1977b). She suggests that the smaller the minority that women find themselves to be in an organisation, the greater their chances of being isolated and evaluated on the basis of sex role stereotypes. The behaviour of one token is perceived as representative of all tokens. These women have difficulty gaining the trust of their male co-workers, and are excluded from informal networks (Kanter, 1977a).

More recent studies which support Kanter’s findings argue that women in token positions experience particular strains and pressures not felt by dominant members of the same organisational status (Freeman, 1990; Powell, 1993). Other disadvantages which have been associated with being the token woman include increased performance pressure, visibility, being a test case for future women, isolation, lack of female role models, exclusion from male groups, and distortion of women’s behaviour by others in order to fit them into pre-existing sex stereotypes (Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 84). Research findings by Harnett and Novarra (1979) revealed that the feeling of being a token woman, and forever being responsible for representing the entire sex, was a continual burden internalised so strongly that even being conscious of it, and discussing it

with one or two other women in similar positions, was not adequate for its dispersal (Harnett and Novarra, 1979). Powell (1993) suggests that, in addition, negative attitudes toward female managers, particularly if they are tokens, may restrict the range of acceptable behaviour for them and limit their approaches to managerial situations, thereby harming their ultimate effectiveness (Powell, 1993: 159).

According to Freeman (1990), being a token woman not only means having no female peer support but working in an environment which provides no role models of women in senior positions. Research has shown that female role models in higher managerial positions act as important influences in terms of career aspirations for other women (Freeman, 1990). But, as in the case of female mentors cited above, the relative scarcity of women in senior managerial positions makes it difficult for junior women to find both female role models and female mentors.

Given the difficulties associated with being the 'token' woman, outlined above, how do women cope with this situation? According to Kanter (1977b), professional women employed in organisations, where few promotional opportunities are apparent, may engage consciously or unconsciously, in strategies designed to differentiate themselves from women as a group and identify instead with men (Kanter, 1977b). Ely (1994) suggests that attempts to differentiate come from the fear of being too identified with women and being linked to the fate of women as a group. Male colleagues then become the reference group for women adopting this direction, and this reinforces man's dominant position. Ely proposes that there are two roles which women may adopt in this situation, the masculine role or seductress or sex-object role (Ely, 1994: 133).

According to Gutek (1985), when women adopt the masculine role they enact values and behaviours traditionally associated with men. Sex role

stereotypes related to management seem to evolve from the common views of males as more task-oriented, objective, independent, aggressive, and generally better able than females to handle managerial responsibilities (Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 90). Alternatively, females are viewed as more passive, gentle, consideration-oriented, more sensitive and less suited than males for positions of high responsibility in organisations (Marshall, 1984). Gutek observed that a high percentage of one sex in a job category leads to the expectation that people in that job should behave in a manner consistent with the gender role of the numerically dominant sex (Gutek, 1985).

According to Schein (1975), management is usually stereotyped as a male occupation (1975: 44-48). Kanter (1977) has argued that in these circumstances token women aspiring to advance to more powerful positions may act like men in an effort to gain acceptance by the gate-keepers of those positions (Kanter, 1977a). Ely also agreed that women wishing to attain positions of power in organisations where there is still an imbalance, will continue to enact the masculine role (1994: 134). Enacting the masculine role, however, also causes problems, as Scase and Goffee (1989) found, for example, when some female managers in their study tried to blend more easily into the dominant male culture, they felt that the negative pay-off was that sometimes this strategy could result in being 'taken for granted' (Scase and Goffee, 1989). Powell (1993) suggests that another reason why female managers may enact the masculine role is that as the *differences* between token women managers and men managers tend to be exaggerated, women in this situation may conform to their male colleagues' style of management to reduce their gender visibility (Powell, 1993).

The second option available to 'token' women is that of the seductress/sex-object role. In the seductress role, the female manager is "viewed as a sexual object which once again detracts from her credibility

as a competent manager" (Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 92). This role also hampers a token woman's freedom to work closely with and socially interact (for example, have business lunches) with men at work, without the threat of questioned sexual motivations, innuendoes and gossip (Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 93). According to MacKinnon (1979), however, the economic realities of women's lives, resulting from women's generally inferior position in the workplace, may place demands on them to "market sexual attractiveness to men, who tend to hold the economic power and position to enforce their predilections" (MacKinnon, 1979: 174). Similarly, Kanter (1977) has described the role of the seductress/sex-object as one of the few roles available to token women for whom opportunities to advance are limited (Kanter, 1977a).

Numerous research studies have established that whatever role or management style female managers adopt may prove problematic for reaching senior management positions. Antal and Izraeli (1993), in a world-wide overview of women in management, state that "probably the single most important hurdle for women in management in all industrialised countries is the persistent stereotype that associates management with being male" (1993: 63). Social scientists define stereotypes as sets "of beliefs about the personal attributes of a group of people" (Ashmore and Del Boca, 1981: 16). In order to make sense of the social environment, people are grouped into categories, and attributes are associated with those categories. According to O'Leary and Ryan (1994) these attributes are either generalised from direct experience, or they are based on culturally transmitted information, because they refer to groups with which perceivers have little direct experience. O'Leary and Ryan suggest that bias enters the process by which people's observations become represented in sex-stereotypic beliefs (1994: 65).

Interviews conducted by Davidson and Cooper (1992) with female managers revealed that the majority of their respondents reported having

being pressurised into adopting certain sex-stereotype roles at work (1992: 90). The roles which Davidson and Cooper's interviewees identified with were similar to the stereotypical roles which Kanter (1977a) suggested are often attributed to token women, for example, the mother, the confidante, the seductress or the pet (Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 90). Kanter further suggested that managerial and professional women are blocked in their career progression because of the bias and stereotypes men have of women. Burke and McKeen (1994) concur with Kanter, and note that such bias or discrimination is often rewarded by organisations, despite the demonstrated level of job performance of managerial women (1994: 65).

Studies by Davidson and Cooper (1992) and Bartol (1980) established that 'the mother-earth role' was by far the most common role reported by female managers. Davidson and Cooper (1992) described the mother-earth role as a function of an individual from whom others can seek personal counselling about work as well as other problems. This role can be both time consuming and exhausting. Bartol (1980) suggested that, because the mother-earth role requires the female manager to be passive, nurturant and non-critical, "it tends to preclude effective job performance" (1980: 205-21). As can be seen from the research cited above, whether women choose to adopt the masculine role or the seductress role, there are problems associated with both roles. So what is the solution for women in senior management? What role should they adopt? A proposition by Bem (1974) and endorsed by Davidson and Cooper (1992) is the concept of androgyny (the combination of both male and female qualities such as emotional expressiveness and decisiveness). According to Bem:

> *The concept of androgyny (from the Greek* andro*, male, and* gyne*, female) refers specifically to this blending of the behaviours and personality characteristics that have traditionally been thought of as masculine and feminine. By*

> *definition, then, the androgynous individual is someone who is both independent and tender, both aggressive and gentle, both assertive and yielding, both masculine and feminine, depending on the situational appropriateness of these various behaviours* (Bem, 1974: 354-364).

According to Llewelyn (1981), the androgynous individual has been found to behave in an adaptive manner doing what is appropriate in a given situation, rather than behaving in a manner in which a rigid sex role demands. Advantages associated with androgynous behaviour are the ability of being free to be 'oneself' which has been associated with positive mental health in females (Llewelyn, 1981). Powell and Butterfield note:

> *If an androgynous manager is defined as one who has the capability of being high or low in both task-oriented and people-oriented behaviour, most management theorists would agree that better managers are androgynous. As long as it is 'sold' properly, androgynous management deserves a place in the curricula of management training and development programs* (Powell and Butterfield, 1989: 216-37).

Further research by Powell (1993) found that the androgynous individual was associated with higher self-esteem, with self-image and behaviour which were less narrowly restricted along sex-role lines, had a more flexible response to situations that seemed to call for either feminine or masculine behaviours, and was seen to be more psychologically flexible and more ready to meet the complex demands of society. The individual who adheres to gender stereotypes no longer seemed the ideal of psychological health (Powell, 1993: 46).

In conclusion, according to Powell however, "masculine rather than androgyny yields positive outcomes for individuals in American society" (1993: 47). Bem (1981) subsequently proposed the elimination of

society's dependence on gender as the primary means of classifying people. She advocated the development of an environment where everyone is free to be themselves rather than everyone becoming androgynous individuals and being expected to live up to any standard of psychological health (Bem, 1981). According to Markstrom-Adams (1989), however, further research is needed to settle the dispute over the usefulness of being androgynous, or simply being masculine (Markstrom-Adams, 1989). As this study focuses on female managers who have already reached *senior* managerial positions, Chapter Four will examine the particular managerial styles adopted by the fifty interviewees.

### 2.4.11 Networking

An additional source of organisational support for female managers may be peer relationships and interpersonal networks. The difficulties experienced by women when they are excluded from 'old boy' networks are outlined in this section. The advantages for managerial women of belonging to an informal network are also highlighted.

According to Burke and McKeen (1994), studies on both networking and mentoring suggest some similarities. Both mentors and peer relationships can facilitate career and personal development. Networking can be useful at all stages in career development, while mentors are particularly useful at the early stages of career development. Peer relationships are different from mentoring relationships in that they often last longer, are not hierarchical, and involve a two-way helping. Peer relationships have advantages, particularly since a significant number of both women and men may have not had mentors. Burke and McKeen suggest that "it seems clear, however, that managerial women are still less integrated with important organisational networks, and it is these internal networks that influence critical human resource decisions such as promotion and acceptance" (Burke and McKeen, 1994: 75).

Many studies indicate that women have been largely excluded from 'old boy' networks which traditionally are composed of individuals who hold power in the organisation (Fagenson, 1986; Henning and Jardim, 1977; Kanter, 1977). In Denmark, for example, there are many established networks, clubs and groups both inside and outside companies "in which women are not even allowed to participate" (Albertsen and Christensen, 1993: 76). According to O'Leary and Ickovics (1992), networking is essential for success in any professional career. Networks usually involve contacts with a variety of colleagues for the purpose of mutual work benefits (O'Leary and Ickovics, 1992: 21). Research by Henning and Jardim (1977) also supports the importance of networking, and they add that an important characteristic of networking and the 'old boy' system is that it is dependent upon informal interactions involving favours, persuasion, and connections to people who already have influence (Henning and Jardim, 1977). According to Welch (1980), the benefits of networking can be categorised into five types: information exchange, career planning, professional support/encouragement, access to visibility, and upward mobility (Welch, 1980). Nieva and Gutek (1981) suggest that networks also provide essential information on office policies and actual requirements of work situations not found in formal publications (Nieva and Gutek, 1981). According to Vinnicombe and Colwill (1995), men tend to view networks from a utilitarian perspective, and are more likely to receive their utilitarian benefits. Alternatively, women tend to view networks from a social perspective, and are more likely to receive mainly social rewards (Vinnicombe and Colwill, 1995: 90).

A study by Brass (1985) examined interaction patterns of men and women in one organisation, and the effects of these patterns on perceptions of influence and actual promotions. The study found that women and men were not well integrated into cross-gender networks. Women were generally rated less influential than men but were similar to men on many other measures. One of the factors which influenced promotions was the

relationship of men's dominant interaction networks. The study also found that women's networks more closely resembled men's networks when their immediate work group included both women and men (Brass, 1985). Davidson and Cooper's (1992) research also revealed that individual female managers reported feeling uncomfortable when they were mixing socially with an all-male group from work, knowing that the group would prefer her not to be there. Davidson and Cooper concluded that "many female managers seem to force themselves to infiltrate such situations, knowing that these are where many business decisions and contacts are made" (1992: 88). Parker and Fagenson (1994) advised that it is important for women to penetrate male networks to a greater extent if they wish to become sufficiently visible to win organisational promotions (1994: 23). Scase and Goffee's research (1989) established that attempts by male managers to exclude females from joining 'old boy' networks merely reinforces existing stereotypes of negative male attitudes towards female managers. Davidson and Cooper (1992) also suggested that certain established traditional male institutions have developed exclusively male customs and traditions, which perpetuate the "old boy network and safeguard it from female intrusion" (1992: 89).

Research, conducted by Monks and Barker (1995) with 358 Irish chartered accountants, revealed that male accountants spent longer on social events with business contacts outside their normal working hours than female accountants did. The male accountants spent an average of four hours per week, in comparison with female accountants who spent an average of three hours per week outside their normal working hours. A small percentage of the men spent very long hours on social activities. In one case, a respondent stated that he regularly spent thirty-six hours on such activities per week. The female accountants suggested that social situations often proved very difficult and time consuming for them. The female accountants further revealed that they lacked the support networks which men have developed over the years. They referred to the lack of

an ‘old girl network’ which would have provided them with the appropriate contact for business situations (Monks and Barker, 1995: 4-6).

Ibarra (1992) investigated differences in men’s and women’s access to informal networks at work. Some of the findings of the study were that men had greater centrality and better relationships with the same sex, in their network relationships, than women. Men gained centrality through work experience and professional activities; women gained centrality through control of critical resources. Men were more likely than women with the same education and experience to gain access to the networks of their mentors and to be drawn into key political groups. Alternatively, women found themselves between two networks: a women’s network which provided social support and a male-dominated network which provided assistance in attainment of workplace effectiveness. Ibarra (1992) suggests that these two groups often subject women to the stress of conflicting advice, forcing them to maintain a delicate balance between the two, because one network may reject them because of their commitment to the other (Ibarra, 1992). In a review of personal networks of women and minorities in management, various studies found that one of the most frequently reported problems experienced by both women and racial minorities is the limited access to or exclusion from informal interaction networks (Ibarra, 1993; O’Leary and Ickovics, 1992; Fernandez, 1981; Kanter, 1977). Davidson and Cooper (1992) suggest that it is up to organisational policy-makers to take active steps to break down ‘male organisational cultures’ which perpetuate the ‘old boy ghetto’ syndrome (1992: 130).

If women are not allowed to participate in existing networks, clubs or groups, they must form their own organisations (Albertsen and Christensen, 1993: 76). From the late 1970s, women managers began organising support groups in a number of countries in western Europe, sometimes affiliated with a management centre. The first international

association of women in management was founded in 1984 with the creation of the European Women's Management Development Network (EWMD), with its headquarters in Brussels. While primarily European in orientation and membership, the EWMD maintains informal ties with leading figures in management organisations world-wide The EWMD, in turn, served as a catalyst for the establishment of networks for women in management in countries where they had not previously existed. By providing opportunities for women in management to share information, views and experiences, the EWMD encourages experimentation with new approaches tried in other countries. In this way, EWMD helps to deconstruct myths about 'impossible' ideas or 'natural' ways of doing things (Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993: 90). Membership is open to men and women who share a commitment to three key objectives: (i) to promote and further develop the knowledge and performance of women in management; (ii) to encourage women to move into powerful positions in the workplace and the community; (iii) to work towards a more evenly balanced mix of men and women in senior management roles and thereby help to improve the quality of management internationally.

In conclusion, according to Powell (1993), women's lack of advancement to high levels of management often results from their having less fully developed informal networks than men (1993: 207). Davidson and Cooper (1992) suggest that although networking with female contemporaries is a useful support system, until more women gain senior positions in management, women will have to learn how to successfully break into the male-dominated networking system, particularly at senior levels. Davidson and Cooper believe that breaking into the male-dominated networking system is important because "politics and networking are bound up with power, and unfortunately the power is still held predominantly by men" (1992: 129). Ledvinka and Scarpello (1991) similarly note that women may be as adept as men in forming networks,

but their networks are less effective because they are not as well integrated in organisations.

### 2.4.12 Sexual Harassment

In addition to the barriers outlined above, a further obstacle which prevents women from career advancement is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined in this section, and also findings regarding the linkage of power and sexual harassment in organisations are explored.

Sexual harassment is the term given to unwanted sexual attention, requests for sexual favours, and other conduct of a sexual nature, expressed or implied. It may consist of physical gestures or touching, it may be verbal, including sexual innuendoes and jokes (O'Donovan and Szyszvzak, 1988: 66). The Trades Union Congress in Britain has defined sexual harassment as:

> *Repeated and unwanted verbal or sexual advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually explicit remarks made by someone in the workplace which are offensive to the worker involved, which cause the worker to feel threatened, humiliated, patronised or harassed, or which interfere with the worker's job performance, undermine job security, or create a threatening or intimidating work environment* (in Davidson and Earnshaw, 1990: 23-27).

Until 1976, in the United States, there was no legal definition of sexual harassment. Since then, however, sexual harassment has been defined in two ways. The first is *quid pro quo* which involves demands for sexual favours in return for a job-related outcome. This involves an unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of unequal power, and has been defined by MacKinnon (1979) as:

> *Sexual harassment . . . refers to the unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power. Central to the concept is the use of power derived from one social sphere to lower benefits or impose deprivations in another . . .* (MacKinnon, 1979: 1).

The second aspect of sexual harassment involves a hostile work environment "where sexual attention is persistent and unwelcome, although the threat of actual loss of job or job benefits is not necessarily present" (Cleveland, 1994: 169). According to Cleveland, however, a hostile work environment is difficult to define. Recent surveys from the United States and Britain have shown that sexual harassment is widespread (Lach and Gwartney-Gibbs, 1993; Davidson and Cooper, 1992; Ryan and Kenig, 1991). Research indicates that the principal victims are women, while men are the most frequent harasser or perpetrator (Ryan and Kenig, 1991). Single or divorced women and women with a higher level of education report more sexual harassment experiences. Women in non-traditional jobs, including male-dominated management jobs, experience more sexual harassment which includes hostile and threatening sexual comments, which are designed to let the women know she is an outsider (Ryan and Kenig, 1991). In a detailed study of sixty female managers in Britain, Davidson and Cooper (1992) found that 52 per cent of the sample reported that they had experienced sexual harassment at work (1992: 112). In addition, Davidson and Cooper found that women occupying middle and junior level management positions in particular were more likely to have been victims compared to senior female executives (1992: 112). According to Lach and Gwartney-Gibbs (1993), an interpretation of these findings is that sexual harassment appears to be a form of retaliation against women for threatening male economic and social power (Lach and Gwartney-Gibbs, 1993).

The results of a 1981 survey conducted with 23,000 federal employees by The United States Merit Systems Protection Board revealed that 42 per cent of females and 15 per cent of males reported sexual harassment during the preceding two years. In Britain, the Equal Opportunities Commission received 151 complaints of sexual harassment in 1988, but most complainants felt unable to pursue the matter in a tribunal. The Equal Opportunities Commission in Britain suggested that this may represent only a small proportion of sexual harassment, as in many cases the victims will not report what has happened (in Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 111). Two other British studies note similar low instances of reporting, for example, Kingsmill (1983) found that only 25 per cent of women reported sexual harassment, and a survey which was conducted in Leeds revealed that 59 per cent reported sexual harassment at work, but only 14 per cent of employees had reported these incidents through official channels (Leeds TUCRIC Study, 1983). Davidson and Earnshaw (1990) suggest that some of the reasons for the lack of reporting of sexual harassment include: the seniority of the harasser, the fear of reprisals, the fear of the victim being blamed rather than the harassers, and the fear of not being taken seriously (Davidson and Earnshaw, 1990).

The concept of power is central to understanding sexual harassment (Cleveland and Kerst, 1993; DiTomaso, 1989; Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989; Kanter, 1977a). From an organisational perspective, sexual harassment is the improper use of power to obtain sexual gratification — it is coercive, exploitative, and women are treated as sex objects (DiTomaso, 1989). From a legal perspective, as mentioned above, sexual harassment reflects an exploitative use of power (e.g., *quid pro quo)*. A feminist perspective on sexual harassment also includes a power relationship, male over female, and “the potential for economic coercion that threatens women’s economic livelihood” (Cleveland, 1994: 175). Cleveland and Kerst (1993) suggest that three levels of power come together at work to provide the conditions for sexual harassment: societal,

organisational and interpersonal or personal power (1993: 49-61). Kanter (1977) noted that in organisations men normally hold positions of higher-status or power, and individuals who occupy higher-status positions are believed to be within their rights to make demands of those in lower-status positions. Sexual harassment may be viewed by those in high power positions as simply an extension of that right. In the informal work situation, as outlined above, there is evidence that managers acquire power through networking and mentors which are central to the organisation. These informal power structures exclude females and strengthen males organisational power (Kanter, 1977a). Cleveland and Kerst conclude that both the societal and organisational bases of power set the conditions of the work environment, which in turn interacts with the interpersonal or personal power of men and women. As outlined above, women are less likely to occupy positions where they have the opportunity to exercise power, which can lead to the reinforcement of the perceptions of their powerlessness. Societal, organisational and personal factors, therefore, combine to affect the perceptions of women as relatively powerless in the workplace, which increases the likelihood of sexual harassment (Cleveland and Kerst, 1993). Power differences, however, cannot be used to fully explain sexual harassment.

Tangri et al. (1982) have proposed three models for the explanation of sexual harassment, and have assessed them using a sample of 20,083 federal employees in the United States. These include the natural/biological model, the organisational model, and the socio-cultural model. The natural/biological model suggests that sexual harassment is a natural outcome of stronger male sex drives, and therefore men will more frequently initiate sexual contact. According to Tangri et al., an explanation arising from this model is that sexual harassment may be an outcome of a natural process, and that men do not intend to harass. Little empirical evidence, however, has been found to support this model (Tangri et al., 1982).

The second model proposed by Tangri et al. is the organisational model which is similar to the power explanation of sexual harassment proposed by Cleveland and Kerst outlined above. This model states that sexual harassment results from the "opportunity structures created by organisational climate, hierarchy, and specific authority relations" (Tangri et al., 1982: 35). This suggests that men and women have different positions in the organisation, with men in positions of greater power. Tangri et al. found from their empirical work that this division of power appears to be true at all levels of the organisation and across virtually all functional units, partial support was found for this model.

The third model proposed by Tangri et al. (1982) is the sociocultural model. This model suggests that power differences between men and women, supported by society at large, lead to sexual harassment. Men are rewarded for being assertive sexually while women are rewarded, both socially and economically, for being more compliant and passive. Partial support was found for the explanations put forward in this model. Tangri et al. conclude that each model provides some useful information about the reasons for sexual harassment but none of them provides a full explanation (Tangri et al., 1982).

As noted above, power does not fully explain sexual harassment, but Cleveland and Kerst (1993) believe that informal power differences among men and women occupying the same jobs can create conditions for harassment (Cleveland and Kerst, 1993). Co-workers can exercise power by providing or withholding information, co-operation and support. Pryor (1987) found that co-workers are the most frequent perpetrators of sexual harassment, but according to Cleveland and Kerst (1993) they tend to engage in less severe forms. According to DiTomaso (1989), men threatened by female co-workers may believe that an increase in power for women means a decrease in power for men (DiTomaso, 1989). Cleveland (1994) suggests that a strategy used to increase power is to

highlight a woman's sex role or sexuality over her gender role, which reminds her and others in the work group that she is a member of an out-group. Over time, Cleveland suggests that "the out-group member receives less challenging work assignments and may be less well informed than co-workers in the supervisor's in-group" (Cleveland, 1994: 177). Cleveland and Kerst (1993) suggest that because working well with one's co-workers is a requirement in many managerial positions, "co-workers can accumulate formal power bases and demand sexual favours from a woman in return for co-worker support and peer feedback to the supervisor" (Cleveland and Kerst, 1993: 269-270).

To conclude, targets or victims of sexual harassment are slow to report incidences of harassment. Personal outcomes of sexual harassment include general tension, anger, stress, disgust, anxiety, hurt, depression, sadness or guilt, fear and self-blame (Terpstra and Baker, 1991). Physical ailments often accompany psychological problems, which include nausea, headaches, tiredness, teeth grinding, binge eating, inability to sleep, loss of appetite, weight loss and crying spells (Gutek, 1985). According to Cleveland and Kerst (1993), sexual harassment may have an indirect effect on job performance. Harassment denies women access to informal social networks and to necessary feedback for job performance, and these may be important for managerial women who rely on such information (Cleveland and Kerst, 1993). Benson and Thomson (1982) suggest that long-term effects of sexual harassment include decreased career and organisational commitment (Benson and Thomson, 1982).

Much of the research cited in this section was from studies in the United States and Britain. Future research could possibly deal with sexual harassment issues in other countries. In Davidson and Cooper's (1993) study of women in management in eleven European countries, Britain was the only country to mention sexual harassment as an issue for female

managers. Future research could investigate if European women will encounter problems similar to women in the United States after gaining access to senior management positions. Chapter Four examines the phenomenon of sexual harassment in the careers of senior female international managers in a European context, as sexual harassment is reported to be one method for maintaining women's less favourable economic and occupational status within organisations.

It is clear from sections 2.4.3 to 2.4.12 above that although managerial women are as well educated and trained as their male counterparts, but, they are not entering the ranks of senior management at comparable rates. Women are gaining the necessary experience, but, still encounter a glass ceiling. It is also apparent that women experience bias and discrimination by the majority towards the minority in organisations. In addition, there is widespread agreement that a good manager is seen as male or having masculine characteristics. Discrimination in organisational policies and practices also affect the treatment of women and limits their advancement. These policies and practices include women's lack of opportunity and power in organisations, tokenism, work–family conflict, negative male managerial attitudes, lack of mentors, lack of networks and denial of access to challenging assignments. Overall, it is the impact of these subtle, and sometimes overt, experiences that limits women's career opportunities.

### 2.4.13 Women's Career Development

As outlined above, female managers face more overt and covert barriers to career advancement than their male counterparts. Because of these barriers the career development process for women is different from that of men and far more complex in terms of frequent shifts between home and work. The various career development theories relating to women in the world of work are briefly examined in this section.

In relation to women's career development, Perun and Bielby (1981) state that research on adulthood in women has focused on the family cycle at the expense of the work cycle. In their view, the outcome was that no formal theory of women's occupational behaviour existed. According to White et al. (1992), theoretical advances have been made since 1982, although most have received some criticism as career-development theorists have generally based their models on studies of men (1992: 15). Three main theoretical trends, have guided research on women's career development, (i) the classic model; (ii) the neoclassic model; and (iii) the dual-development model. Traditional career-development theorists such as Super (1957) and Ginzberg et al. (1951) originally based their theories almost exclusively on studies of male subjects. The result is what has been termed the *classic model* in which career patterns are typified by the careers expected of successful males (White, 1992: 15).

Gilligan (1979) argued that theories of the life cycle, that take the lives of men as their model, fail to account for the experiences of women, "implicitly adopting the male life as the norm, psychological theorists have tried to fashion women out of a masculine cloth" (1979: 432). Gilligan further stated that woman's place in man's life cycle "has been that of nurturer, caretaker, and helpmate, the weaver of those networks of relationships on which she in turn relies" (1979: 440). Women, she contended, are socialised to give primacy to nurturing roles, and career or achieving roles assume secondary or negligible priority. According to

White et al. (1992), the classic model ignores the family situation of women and places no significance on demands on women in the external work environment, and "as such, it cannot accommodate female experience" (White et al., 1992: 16).

The *neoclassic model* does acknowledge that competing family demands and individual preferences may interact with organisational needs, and thereby affect careers (White, 1992: 16). Super (1984) claims that the career patterns of men are essentially applicable to women if they are modified to take marriage and childbearing into account. He described the various patterns for women as "stable homemaking, conventional (working followed by marriage), stable working, double-track (working while homemaking), interrupted (working, homemaking, and working, either while home-making or after having given up homemaking), unstable, and multiple-trial" (1984: 215-6). By contrast, patterns found for men were: stable, conventional, unstable, and multiple-trial. Osipow (1983) noted that, although there are some similarities between the sexes in the career development process, there are enough differences to warrant attempts to develop distinctive theories for each, "at least until such time as true sexual equality of career opportunity exists and the results have permeated society at all levels" (Osipow, 1983: 263).

The *dual-development model* suggests that the understanding of women's careers requires an acknowledgement that women have fundamentally different situations in developing careers than men have (White et al., 1992: 17). Brooks (1984) suggests that family and competing demands which are external to the work environment need to be considered together with phenomena within the workplace which may distinguish men from women. Larwood and Gatticker (1986) propose that women's career development does not merely lag behind that of men, but, that it may proceed in a different manner. Literature on the psychology of women also indicates that career development for women may be different from

career development for men (Burke and McKeen, 1994: 67). Research studies have established that, for women, their career gains and professional accomplishments are complements, not substitutes, for strong inter-dependent relationships. While work may be central to men's sense of identity, the ongoing process of attachment to significant others is an important source of identity, maturity and personal power for women (Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1988; Josselson, 1987; Gilligan, 1982).

Fitzgerald and Crites (1980) believe that career development for women is more complex because of the differences in socialisation and in the combination of attitudes, role expectations, behaviours and sanctions that constitute it. Brooks (1984) observed that the socialisation of women to give primacy to nurturing roles and secondary or negligible priority to career or achieving roles leads to home-career conflict, lack of serious career planning, restriction of options to sex-stereotypical occupations (1984: 355-368). Astin (1984) also highlights the importance of early socialisation experiences for women regarding career development. Her proposition is that basic work motivation is the same for men and women, but that they make different choices because their early socialisation experiences and structural opportunities are different (1984: 118). Ginzberg (1984) found that for women, the tentative period of career development corresponded closely to the same period for men, occurring at approximately ages 11 to 18 and consisting of four stages: interests, capacity, value, and transition to the reality period. Following the capacity stage, however, in which the balance between interests and capacities begins to be considered, gender differences began to be apparent. By the transition stage the women were heavily oriented towards marriage. Many men were also oriented towards marriage, but for them traditionally there has been no conflict between marriage and career (1984: 169-191). Ginzberg concluded that the male model of career preparation and choice did not fit the female prototype as many women interrupted their

educational preparation for marriage and experienced frequent shifts between home and work.

Gutek and Larwood (1989) agree with earlier research, outlined above, that men — especially college-educated white men — have served as standards by which others, including women, were compared. Women are often studied to see how they depart from the male standard, both in choice of a career and in career development (Davidson and Cooper, 1987). Gutek and Larwood complain that, although it is likely that women's careers will be different from those of men, this does not mean that every study of women's career development should involve a comparison with men (1989: 10). Gutek and Larwood report that as more women enter the labour force, some theorists suggest that "women will behave more and more like men in the development of their careers" (1989: 10). Gutek and Larwood, however, believe that women's careers are different and are likely to remain different in the future for at least four reasons:

> *(i) There are differential expectations for men and women regarding the appropriateness of jobs for each sex that affect the kinds of jobs young men and women prepare for and select.*
>
> *(ii) Husbands and wives are differentially willing to accommodate themselves to each other's careers, with wives generally more willing to move or otherwise adapt to a husband's career needs than vice versa. To the extent that husbands receive more attractive job offers and their careers progress faster, this is a generally rational strategy to maximise total family career progress.*

> *(iii) The parent role is differentially defined for men and women; the mother role requires substantially more time and effort than the father role.*
>
> *(iv) Compared to men, women are faced with more constraints in the workplace, including discrimination and various stereotypes detrimental to career advancement* (Gutek and Larwood, 1989: 10).

Diamond (1989), in agreement with Gutek and Larwood, points out that a variety of attitudes and behaviours still set up barriers to women's optimal career development, and particularly to their participation in non-traditional occupations. Women are often discouraged from entry into non-traditional professions, and for those who do enter, they are subjected to harassment and hostile behaviour (1989: 23).

Bardwick (1980) and Gilligan (1982) believed in a distinct theory of female adult development. These researchers noted that women emphasise the importance of relationships and attachments and that, even for the accomplished professional and career women, traditional roles and interpersonal commitments remain a core part of female identity. Bardwick (1980) argued that there is a distinctly different phase of adult life for men and women between the ages of thirty and forty. For men, she argues, this is a period of enhanced investment in career, while women require much more than career and professional success. Roberts and Newton (1987) studied women's adult development by reviewing biographies of thirty-nine adult women in four unpublished dissertations. They also reported that the thirties age-group transition was of particular significance, with several patterns emerging, for example, for a large number of women, who emphasised career goals in their twenties, marriage and family became a priority in their thirties. Alternatively, for those women who opted for marriage in their twenties, their own career

and/or separation themes in relation to their husbands became priorities in their thirties. The thirties age-transition was particularly stressful for those women with limited relational and career accomplishments.

Henning and Jardim's study (1977) of one hundred senior women managers revealed that these women made late career decisions, approximately ten years into their working lives. As a result, the female managers talked of making the most of what developed, but they did not have a career plan. Similar findings emerged from the interviews of White et al. (1992) with forty-eight women who had achieved extraordinary levels of career success. Many of the successful women had not planned their careers in any detail. Thirty-one per cent of the women in that study had not planned their careers at all. Although most of the women interviewed had engaged in some form of career planning, 44 per cent believed that their planning could have been better. Davidson and Cooper's study (1983) of sixty female managers revealed that 50 per cent of all women managers had never set themselves a career life plan and only 25 per cent set themselves a career plan as their career developed. Freeman (1990) concluded that female managers do not plan their careers, because of the lack of opportunity structured by sex role stereotyping, and former social conventions whereby careers were seen to be reserved for male managers.

In summary, Gutek and Larwood (1989), following a review of the literature, comment that a clear picture of the career-developmental process for women has not yet emerged. Diamond (1989) and Larwood and Gutek (1989), however, suggest that there is a need to develop a theory of women's career development. Larwood and Gutek suggest that if a comprehensive theory of women's career development is to be developed, particular attention should be given to (i) career preparation, (ii) opportunities available in society, (iii) the influence of marriage, (iv) pregnancy and children, and (v) timing and age. Diamond (1989) also

suggests that more research is needed. Such research, however, “must not be based on the male model but must be relevant to the many unique aspects of women’s experience and involve broad enough samples of women to embrace all the pertinent variables — socio-economic, demographic, educational, environmental, biological and psychological” (Diamond, 1989: 25). Diamond suggests that the research should be tested empirically and longitudinally. Only then can the process of career development for women, and its similarities to and differences from the career development process for men, be more fully understood (Diamond, 1989: 25).

Table 2.9 highlights some of the difficulties that women experience in advancement to senior positions in *domestic* management, however, it is clear that female *international* managers encounter additional difficulties, as the number of senior female international managers remains considerably lower than those in domestic management. These additional difficulties are highlighted in the next section and provide the basis for much of the analysis in Chapters Four and Five.

**Table 2.9**
**Summary of Research Findings on**
**Career Experiences of Women Managers**

| ***Experiences*** | ***Representative Findings*** | ***Illustrative Sources*** |
|---|---|---|
| Career advancement | Women progress more slowly up the managerial hierarchy than men. | Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Morrison, White and Van Velsor, 1987. |
| Barriers to career advancement | Existence of a glass ceiling indicates that women face obstacles in their careers which are not faced by their male counterparts. | Morrison, 1992; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; Schwartz, 1989. |
| Salary | Women managers earn lower salaries than men.<br><br>Despite similar starting salaries, over time, women MBAs salaries average about 80% of those of men with MBAs. | Dipboye, 1987; Wirtschafswoche, 1985.<br><br>Simpson, 1995; Dipboye, 1987. |
| Marital status | Women managers are less likely to be married than men managers<br><br>Married male managers are viewed as assets, but female married managers are viewed as liabilities. | Parasuraman and Greenhaus, 1993; Davidson and Cooper, 1984.<br><br>Vinnicombe and Sturges, 1995. |
| Housework and child care | Women managers spend longer hours each week on housework and child care than employed men. | Davidson, 1989; Hochschild, 1989; Lewis and Cooper, 1987; Pleck, 1985. |
| Stress | Women managers face greater pressures than men managers. | Burke and McKeen, 1994; Davidson and Cooper, 1992; Scase and Goffee, 1989. |
| Efficiency and Performance | More similarities than differences in terms of managerial efficiency and performance of male and female managers. | Powell, 1993; Davidson and Cooper, 1992. |
| Mentoring | Lack of mentors available to women, as male mentors tend to choose those most similar to themselves. | Vinnicombe and Colwill, 1995; Arnold and Davidson, 1990; Ragins, 1989. |

## 2.5 Women in International Management

### 2.5.1 Introduction

> *Ideally, it seems a global manager should have the stamina of an Olympic runner, the mental agility of an Einstein, the conversational skill of a professor of languages, the detachment of a judge, the tact of a diplomat, and the perseverance of an Egyptian pyramid builder. And that's not all. If he is going to measure up to the demands of living and working in a foreign country, he should also have a feeling for the culture; his moral judgement should not be too rigid; he should be able to merge with the local environment with chameleon-like ease; and he should show no signs of prejudice* (Phatak, 1974: 183).

According to Izraeli et al. (1980):

> *The subject of female managers in multinational corporation subsidiaries has not received attention in the professional literature. Our survey of relevant research to the end of 1978 did not reveal a single study on the topic and hardly even a passing reference to women's presence as senior executives in international business* (Izraeli et al., 1980: 53-63).

Given the significant barriers and biases that women managers have to cope with in their home countries, as outlined above in sections 2.4.2-2.4.12, it is necessary to examine the additional difficulties experienced by women in international management. The fact that greater barriers exist for women in expatriate management is reflected by a comparison of the numbers of female managers, for example, in the United States approximately 40 per cent, and in Britain — approximately 27 per cent, with the number of female expatriate managers from both of these

countries between 3-5 per cent (Harris, 1995b: 243). According to Smith and Still (1996), the international human resource management literature has given very little attention to women as expatriates, “probably because international assignments have long remained a male preserve” (1996: 2). According to Dallafar and Movahedi (1996), up to the early 1980s, research on women in international management was primarily restricted to the role of the expatriate wife — especially the wife of a western manager — in facilitating or hindering her husband’s performance overseas (1996: 547). Harris also notes that very little research has been carried out concerning female expatriates, mainly due to their relative scarcity (1995b: 243).

Izraeli and Adler (1994) also suggest that the investigation of women’s progress in management internationally is relatively new. This research strand began in the United States in the 1970s, in western Europe in the early 1980s, in Asia towards the mid-1980s, and in the former Communist countries of eastern Europe, as well as in the People’s Republic of China towards the end of the 1980s (1994: 4). Research conducted in North America by Adler (1994; 1987; 1986; 1984) has provided the most comprehensive examination of the role of women in international management to date. Adler defined the term expatriate to mean male and female managers on foreign assignments of six months or longer (Adler, 1984b). The results (1984) of North American research of 13,338 expatriates from the United States and Canada showed that in the United States 97 per cent were male and only three per cent were female, and in Canada an even lower percentage of expatriate managers was recorded as female at only 1.3 per cent. British research conducted by Harris did not specifically focus on female expatriate *managers.* The majority of expatriates in her survey were categorised as ‘technical’ workers (57%), ‘managerial’ expatriates accounted for only 20.5 per cent, while the remaining 22.5 per cent were categorised as ‘others’.

Adler argues that as a result of a historical scarcity of local female managers in most countries, organisations have often questioned whether women can function successfully in cross-border managerial assignments (Adler, 1993a). According to Brewster (1991), another negative reason for not appointing women in international management positions may result from a tendency of organisations to confuse the role of female expatriate managers with that of the female expatriate partner, whose frequent failure to adapt has been one of the most commonly cited reasons for premature expatriate returns (Brewster, 1991; Tung, 1982). Harris (1995), however, suggests that an investigation beyond these two main negative reasons reveals a combination of organisational and socio-cultural factors which can play a large part in the under-representation of women in expatriate management (Harris, 1995b: 243). Other frequently quoted reasons, in the research literature, for not sending women on international assignments are: (i) senior home-country managers' perceptions of the suitability of women in international management positions, (ii) senior home-country managers' perceptions of foreigners' responses to women as international managers and problems relating to women's marital status, (iii) the effect of an organisation's formal policies on women's opportunities in international management in terms of selection and training of potential international managers, (iv) the influence of informal organisational processes in determining women's participation in international management, and (v) women's own wishes and desires whether or not to participate in international assignments. Each of these arguments is examined in greater detail below.

### 2.5.2 Senior Home-Country Male Managers' Perceptions of Women in International Management

The assumptions of home country senior management regarding women partaking in international management are examined in this section. Additional difficulties experienced by female managers because of the stereotypical image of the international male manager created by home-country senior management are highlighted.

According to Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993), the structure of the expatriate managerial role may allow senior home-country management to discriminate against women. The role of the expatriate involves even more uncertainties than that of the domestic manager, and as uncertainty increases the need for trust, this is perceived as having further implications for limiting women expatriate managers (Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993: 85). According to Lipman-Blumen (1984) and Kanter (1977a), the need for certainty motivates managers to select others who are most similar to themselves, and presumably more likely to be trustworthy and predictable. Situations of uncertainty also increase the likely use of stereotypes, and in the absence of reliable knowledge about future performance, or in situations where past experience is limited, stereotypical beliefs about the characteristics and abilities of men and women are employed by home country senior managers. These stereotypical beliefs result in women's deselection for more senior managerial international positions (Izraeli and Izraeli, 1985). It is suggested that the greater the uncertainty, the smaller the probability that a multinational will assign a woman to an expatriate role, and under conditions of high uncertainty, headquarters will prefer men as expatriates (Izraeli and Zeira, 1993: 41).

According to Dallalfar and Movahedi (1996), much is assumed by home-country senior managers about the requirements of international managers and the abilities needed for fulfilling such roles. These assumptions typically cast women in a relatively disadvantaged position in the corporate structure (1996: 557). In particular, assumptions and perceptions by home country managers are reinforced by the traditional profile of the typical male international executive, who is approximately thirty-one years old when he first goes abroad, is married with a trailing spouse who is mobile and committed, spends at least three years on each foreign assignment, and has three such assignments during his career (Harris, 1995a: 28). Similarly, interviews conducted by Adler (1988) with fifty-two female expatriate managers, while on assignment in Asia or after returning from Asia to North America, showed that perceived disadvantages of being female in these cases had more to do with the attitudes of their own companies than with the international assignments themselves.

Adler and Izraeli (1994; 1988) found that, while organisations may be prepared to promote women through their domestic managerial hierarchy, few women are given opportunities to expand their career horizons through access to international careers. Mandelker's (1994) term the 'glass border' describes stereotypical assumptions by home-country senior management about women as managers and about their availability, suitability and preferences for international appointments (1994: 16). Adler (1994) suggests that rather than deliberately exclude women, home-country senior management may not even contemplate the possibility of considering them and, despite formal equal employment opportunity policies, informal policies and practices may adversely affect women (Harris, 1995a; Smith and Hutchinson, 1995). Women may also miss out on international appointments because they lack mentors, sponsorship, role models and access to appropriate networks, all of which are commonly available to men (Harris, 1995b; Adler, 1987).

According to Harris (1995), research shows that senior management chooses managers who have 'high potential' in their home organisations as future international managers. Initial assessment of 'high potential' takes place at an early stage in an employee's career (Harris, 1995b: 243). Given the problems and biases women managers have to contend with in their home countries, and the different models of career development which exist for men and women, outlined above, it can be seen that women face additional barriers before being picked for having 'high potential'. According to Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993), other strategies used by home country senior management to reduce risk under conditions of uncertainty include the limiting of the woman's expatriate assignment to internal rather that to external client contacts and to a short-term rather than to an extended stay, or even to define her assignment as temporary (Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993: 86). These strategies are designed by organisations to reduce uncertainty for the woman expatriate manager, even though uncertainty may actually be increased by the adoption of these strategies thus increasing the likelihood of failure (Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993: 86). Adler stated:

> *Although this defining the job as temporary may appear to be a logically cautious strategy, in reality it tends to create an unfortunate self-fulfilling prophecy. As a number of women reported, if the company is not convinced that you will succeed it will communicate its lack of confidence to foreign colleagues and clients as a lack of commitment. The foreigners will then mirror the company's behaviour by also failing to take you seriously* (Adler, 1987: 169-192).

According to Izraeli et al. (1980), expatriate managers generally rotate every four to five years, and this however, raises special difficulties for women. Gaining recognition for personal authority for the male and female manager requires time; a male manager must confirm expectations of his success, whereas a female manager must often

disconfirm expectations for her failure as perceived by senior-home country managers (Izraeli et al., 1980: 53-63). Adler (1984c) surveyed human resource vice presidents and managers from sixty of the largest North American multinationals, and over half of the respondents reported that they hesitate to send women abroad because (i) their commitments to husbands and children limit their mobility and (ii) they believe that foreigners would not accept them. Almost four times as many reported being reluctant to select women for international assignments than for domestic management positions. Eighty per cent of surveyed managers of United States firms reported that they believed that women would face disadvantages if sent abroad (1984c: 79-85). Adler further suggests that because only three per cent of expatriate managers are women, many home-country senior managers question whether women can succeed in international assignments (Adler, 1993a).

In summary, research evidence on the impact of senior home-country managers' perceptions regarding the suitability of women in international management is inconclusive. The available literature does, however, draw attention to the potentially negative effect that such perceptions can have on women's opportunities in international management (Harris, 1995a: 29). It has also been argued that the tendency for management styles to be equated with masculine qualities will negatively affect managers' perceptions of the ability of women to hold international management positions (Adler and Izraeli, 1993; Heilman, 1980; Heilman and Guzzo, 1978).

### 2.5.3 Senior Home-Country Male Managers' Perceptions of Foreigners' Responses to Women as International Managers

Another frequently cited reason given by home country-senior management for the low participation rate of women in international assignments is that foreigners will not accept women as international managers in the host country. The studies which have been carried out to test this assumption are reported in this section.

According to Moran et al. (1988), the belief of policy makers in corporate headquarters that women expatriates will be hindered by cultural prejudice in the host country creates a serious obstacle to women's progress in international assignments (Moran et al, 1988). Research by Adler (1994) suggested that one of the major reasons cited by managers of North American multinationals for the low participation rates in international assignments by women was that host-country nationals are prejudiced against female managers. Harris (1995) noted that research on the issue of host-country cultural prejudices as a major barrier to female expatriate managers appears to have been conducted solely where women have been assigned to traditionally male-dominated cultures. Harris pointed out that little research has been carried out on the experiences of women in countries with ostensibly similar cultural values, for example, British women expatriates in North America or Europe (Harris, 1995b: 245).

Adler (1994) argues that it is incorrect to generalise from a culture's treatment of local women to how it would treat foreign women (1994: 27). Foreigners will be seen as foreigners, and different to local people. Like their male colleagues, female expatriates are seen as foreigners, not as local people. A woman who is a foreigner is not expected to act like a local woman. The societal and cultural rules governing the behaviour of local women which limit their access to managerial positions and responsibilities do not apply to foreign women. Adler points out that the

female expatriate has a triple identity. She is a manager, a foreigner and a woman. There are conditions when being a woman will be less conspicuous than her other identities, as "local managers see women expatriates as foreigners who happen to be women, not as women who happen to be foreigners" (Adler, 1994: 36). According to Adler, a woman's presence as a manager, rather than a female, is more likely to be seen as uppermost when she is in a senior position or perceived to be a highly qualified expert in her field.

Adler surveyed over a hundred women managers from major North American firms who were on expatriate assignments in Asia and almost half of the respondents (42 per cent) reported that being female served as more of an advantage than a disadvantage, and suggested that they benefited from a 'halo effect' (1994: 32). The majority of local managers, foreign colleagues and clients had never met or previously worked with a woman expatriate manager. They assumed, therefore, that the women would not have been sent overseas unless they were 'the best', and therefore expected them to be "very, very good" (Adler, 1994: 32). Adler's research also revealed that the difficulties experienced by these expatriate women involved the women's relationship with their home organisations, not with their foreign colleagues and clients. Some organisations, for example, out of supposed concern for the woman's safety, limited her travel in foreign countries, which in turn limited the scope of her regional responsibility. More than half of the women expatriates experienced difficulties, especially at the initial stages of the assignment, in persuading their home companies to give them responsibilities equivalent to those given to their male counterparts (Adler, 1994: 33). Another problem involved home-country senior managers initially limiting the duration of the women's assignments to six months or a year, rather than offering the more standard two to three years thereby communicating the company's lack of confidence to foreign colleagues and clients (Adler, 1994: 33).

Research by Smith and Still (1996), based on a study of 1,053 Australian expatriates — conducted by means of a questionnaire which was mailed to human resource managers of the top 1000 Australian companies by employee size — revealed that 93 per cent of these expatriates were men and seven per cent women. Smith and Still reported that "for expatriates, as in the national arena, women are concentrated at middle, rather than senior levels of management" (1996: 8). The most common destination for Australian expatriates was Asian countries, but, only five per cent of women expatriates were based in these countries. Women tend to be employed in the 'safer' (i.e., less risky in terms of posting) English-speaking countries of North America, Britain and New Zealand. Based on their experience of employing women, 38 per cent of all respondents in the survey reported that no country was inappropriate for women expatriates. Fifty-two per cent disagreed with the statement that 'foreign prejudice renders women expatriates ineffective'. Smith and Still, however, point to the dichotomy revealed between the proportion of human resource managers disagreeing with the view that foreign prejudice renders women expatriates ineffective, yet agreeing that women are inappropriate for certain countries (1996: 9). Smith and Still propose to conduct further research by means of interviews which may assist in clarifying this issue.

Scullion (1992) conducted a study of forty-five British and Irish international firms and his results revealed that two-thirds of the companies had experienced shortages of international managers and over 70 per cent indicated that future shortages were anticipated (1992: 62). Despite the shortages, however, no company claimed to have more than three per cent female expatriates, and the study suggests that multinationals do not intend to increase the proportion of women managers because of home-country senior management fears that women will not be accepted in some countries (Scullion, 1992: 64). The under-representation of women in these firms is illustrated by a quote

from a female human resource executive of a British pharmaceutical company:

> *In the UK, the majority of marketing staff are women. By contrast, in our foreign operations, the vast majority of marketing staff are male. Companies still tend to shy away from using female expatriates because of fears that women will not be accepted in some countries and the major problem of disrupting the career of their partner* (in Scullion, 1992: 64).

Scullion concluded his research by noting that "the lack of willingness to recruit and develop women as international managers is worrying as recent research suggests that, in many ways, women are well suited to international management" (1992: 65). Research by Barham and Devine also suggest that women are more sensitive to cultural differences and are therefore more able to work effectively with managers from other countries (Barham and Devine, 1991: 24).

Westwood and Leung (1994) conducted a study with women expatriate managers in Hong Kong. According to these researchers "the twin problems of trying to succeed as managers in a setting where women are in a minority, both because of their gender and because of their status as foreigners, represents an interesting research terrain" (Westwood and Leung, 1994: 64). The forty-five semi-structured interviews which they conducted established that close to half of the respondents said they had no special difficulties because of their gender. Many held the view that, if you were perceived as a competent manager and could do the job, gender was incidental. The study also confirmed Adler's (1987) observation, that expatriate female managers are seen primarily as foreigners and not as women. The results reveal that the expatriate women managers are considered foreigners and to be different *on that dimension*; expectations and responses of locals are geared around that fact, rather than around the gender dimension (Westwood and Leung,

1994: 76). About two-thirds of respondents did not feel there were any specific barriers or resistances to women in management in Hong Kong. Local male managers were seen as more open-minded and pragmatic than home country senior managers (1994: 78). They noted, however, while there may be many female managers in Hong Kong, the senior levels are still mostly occupied by men.

Westwood and Leung concluded their study by noting that the expatriate female managers had a very positive view of their experiences. Problems associated with their gender did not materialise and did not prove any significant impediment to their effective managerial performance in ways that might have been anticipated by home-country senior managers. "The excuse used by some companies for not sending women on overseas assignments namely, that local values are antithetical to such female participation, appears to be unfounded" (1994: 81). Most women in the study believed that the situation for women managers was better in Hong Kong than in their home countries, and that the worst forms of sexism they encountered came from expatriate, not local males (1994: 81).

In summary, it would appear from Adler's (1987) research and Westwood and Leung's (1994) studies that women expatriates' performances in overseas assignments are successful and that women are regarded first as managers and second as women. It seems that concerns about women being accepted as expatriate managers arise more from male managers in the home-country organisation blaming other cultures for their own prejudices. Further research needs to be undertaken to clarify the argument put forward by many home-country senior managers that women will not perform successfully in expatriate management positions as a result of host-country cultural prejudices. Research could also investigate whether the restrictions encountered by North American females working in Asia are unique to Asia or if similar restrictions are imposed in other overseas countries.

### 2.5.4 Problems Relating to Female Managers' Marital Status in International Management

This section is in two parts. First, an examination of the assumption, often made by senior home-country managers, that women in dual-career marriages do not want an international posting is assessed. Second, the perception that single women in international management are more vulnerable than men to harassment and other dangers is examined.

Seventy per cent of respondents in Adler's (1984b) research undertaken with vice-presidents and managers from sixty of the largest North American multinational organisations expressed a belief that the difficulties faced by international 'dual-career couples' are insurmountable (Adler, 1984b). This was because for most couples it meant creating alternatives that had never, or rarely, been tried in the particular company. According to Rapoport and Rapoport (1969), the characteristics of dual-career couples are that each partner pursues a career, defined as a job which is highly relevant personally, has a developmental sequence and requires a high degree of commitment (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1969). Punnett et al. (1992) note there has been little research on international career moves made by dual-career couples (1992: 585). Research has focused on dual-career couples and job transfers in domestic transfers, while research on international transfers has usually assumed that the spouse would be a non-working spouse, and considered the wife as the spouse (Adler, 1991; 1987; 1984). As more women move into management positions, the 'trailing spouse' is increasingly likely to be the male partner, that has to put his own career 'on hold', and some organisations expect dual-career status to generate greater employee hostility to geographical relocation (Smith, 1994).

Research has shown that female managers who marry or live in long-term relationships are more likely than their male counterparts to have partners with professional or managerial careers (Brett et al., 1992; Davidson and

Cooper, 1983). This means that more female than male managers must deal with the issues associated with the management of two careers and family life. Spouse-related problems for married females are therefore perceived as being more serious because male partners generally have careers and it is difficult for many men to adjust to the role of secondary bread winner or homemaker, as may be necessary if they cannot work in a foreign location (Paddock and Schwartz, 1986). According to Bielby and Bielby (1988), these roles are more socially acceptable for women, and women, even those with careers, may make the transition to these roles more easily than men (Bielby and Bielby, 1988). As the majority of expatriate managers is still male, the non-working expatriate spouse group is largely female, and the non-working husband may find himself the lone man in a group of wives. In addition to these concerns, work-permit restrictions by some host countries make it difficult for a spouse to work, for example, the United States, Australia and Switzerland, seldom grant work permits to both spouses. In other countries it may be socially unacceptable for the male partner to be the homemaker and the traditional volunteer activities that wives have been encouraged to undertake may not be available or appropriate for males in some countries (Punnett et al., 1992: 586).

According to Handler and Lane (1997), currently most dual-career couples' problems are left up to the couple to resolve, with no help from the parent corporation. This is problematic because multinationals who ignore policy-making on dual-career issues may find it difficult to recruit and maintain high standard expatriate managers (Handler and Lane, 1997: 69). Researchers have suggested that dual-career couple issues should be highlighted as a major expatriate concern and the management of dual-career couples has been identified as one of the five most important human resource challenges for future years (Caudron, 1991; Reynolds and Bennett, 1991).

Research by Adler (1984a), who surveyed more than a thousand MBA graduates, found that, although there may have been a difference in the past, at the time of her study both female and male MBAs were equally interested in international management, including expatriate assignments (1984a). Similarly, Australian research based on twenty-seven semi-structured interviews with human resource managers, dual-career employees and their line managers, by Pierce and Delahaye (1996), indicated that organisations may no longer be able to assume that the male partner's career will always take precedence, and conversely that the female partner will always subordinate her career aspirations to those of her partner. In this study, reports of the female partner's career being the determinant of the couple's geographic location were just as frequent as that of the male's career. The decision for the couples in their study regarding which partner's career should take precedence was primarily an economically rational one, based on either current or future potential earnings (Pierce and Delahaye, 1996: 20).

Increasingly, more couples who are unable to meet both spouses' career goals in the same location have chosen to set up two households in different locations and reunite when schedules permit. Such an arrangement has been variously termed in the literature as 'two-location', 'long-distance', or 'commuter' marriage (Gerstel and Gross, 1982). While a weekly separation pattern is most common, some couples separate for longer periods, with a few seeing each other less than once a month (Gerstel and Gross, 1984; 1982). During the days away from home, the commuter is totally involved in work, with no interference from family demands. During the weekend time, however, time and attention are focused on the family and household tasks (Taylor and Lounsbury, 1988: 409). Commuter marriage is likely to be least stressful when couples have been married enough years to have a shared history which provides a sense of stability, and where children are not in the home (Taylor and Lounsbury, 1988: 410).

Overall, therefore, it would seem that home country-management is not supportive of dual-career couples. Senior-home country managers are apprehensive about sending married women abroad because they presume that married women will have even greater spouse-related problems than married men. The management of dual-career employees is increasingly becoming a challenge for home-country senior managers. Although home-country senior management recognises the conflicts and stresses of dual-career couples, few managers attempt to provide job placement assistance for the trailing spouse or relocation and repatriation counselling for all family members. The low participation rate of women in international assignments who are in dual-career marriages, therefore, may be as much the result of the attitudes and perceptions of home-country managers rather than issues arising from dual-career marriages.

#### 2.5.4.1 Problems Relating to Single Women in International Management

According to Izraeli and Zeira (1993), when women's suitability for international assignments is being discussed marital status becomes an issue. They observe that 'stereotypical thinking and the double standard' are evident, whether single or married, the female expatriate's family status is presumed to be problematic (Izraeli and Zeira, 1993: 36). It has been suggested that male managers tend to believe that a single woman, away from the social influence of her home country, is more vulnerable to harassment and other dangers than a man. In contrast, if a married woman accepts an international assignment, home-country senior managers are concerned with tensions in the family, and the problems associated with dual-career issues discussed above in section 2.5.4 (Izraeli et al., 1980).

In the case of single women in international management, some human resource executives expressed concerns about women's physical safety

and the hazards involved in travelling in underdeveloped countries (Adler, 1984b). Four years later, Adler reported — from the results of interviews with fifty-two expatriate women working in Asia, nearly two-thirds of whom were single — that they had difficulty persuading their companies to consider them for a foreign assignment. Once overseas, they found that the company did not give them the same flexibility as their male colleagues and that their opportunities or scope of activity or period of stay abroad was limited. Some of the women sent overseas held very junior positions, and in no firm did a woman expatriate hold her company's number one position in the region or in any country (Adler, 1987). Additionally, concerns were expressed by senior home-country management regarding single women's loneliness, isolation and physical safety, which excluded them from working in remote and underdeveloped countries (Westwood and Leung, 1994; Stone, 1991; Adler, 1987).

Historically, therefore, it seems that one of the most difficult aspects of an international assignment for women, either married or single, is getting the assignment in the first place, even though the proportion of women interested in working abroad has been found to be identical to that of men (Adler, 1994: 37). Adler (1994) reports despite the many reasons given by organisations for not sending women on international assignments and for expecting them to fail or be ineffective, that women generally report having succeeded in their assignments. For most organisations, the women expatriates were 'firsts'. This meant that neither the women nor the companies had the luxury of role models or of following previously established patterns. Only ten per cent followed another woman into her international post. Perhaps the best indicator of the success of these individuals is that a large proportion were sent on a second mission (Adler, 1994: 30).

In summary, both married and single female managers have expressed a willingness to relocate internationally. Difficulties regarding their marital status, however, still persist in their home countries as senior managers continue to be concerned about a woman's ability to function effectively in a foreign country. As seen from Adler's (1994) research above, women can succeed in other national cultures, regardless of their marital status, therefore, home-country senior managers may need to reconsider their assumptions of the traditional profile of a male international manager.

### 2.5.5 The Effect of an Organisation's Formal Policies on Women's Opportunities in International Management

The effect of an organisation's formal policies, such as recruitment and selection, career development and leadership programmes, have on women's opportunities in international management are examined in this section. According to Harris (1995), these policies have effects similar to organisational policies concerning women's managerial careers within their home organisations (1995: 28). As outlined above in section 2.4.7.1, it has been widely argued that organisations select managers, firstly for domestic assignments, by methods which appear to have distinctive male biases (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995; 1994; Webb, 1987). According to Chusmir and Frontczak (1990), because men hold most upper level management positions, they do most hiring, including sending individuals on overseas assignments, and they may not be willing to offer career advancement opportunities to women subordinates (1990: 295). Potential international managers are often identified at early stages in their careers, where separation of work from family and chronological career timetables are seen as important for career development (Lawrence, 1984). According to White et al. (1992), the concept of career has traditionally been reserved for men. If women worked, it was expected that this would be a secondary activity, as they would have a 'job' rather than a 'career'.

A career, as distinct from a job, represents a sequence of attitudes and behaviours associated with work-related experiences and activities in which there is a relatively high personal commitment; “it has a developmental character and the assumption is that career takes precedence over private life” (White et al., 1992: 182).

Research has shown that some women have difficulties adhering to progressive, linear career models, which are geared to traditional male career paths, due to their interrupted career patterns, for example, for child bearing and rearing (Harris, 1995; White et al., 1992; Gutek and Larwood, 1987). This may lead to occupational segregation in organisations which allows senior management to assume that women have difficulty in partaking in international assignments and other such specialist roles (Harris, 1995a: 28).

Research conducted by Barham and Oates (1991) in forty-eight international organisations revealed that a number of attributes are considered to be universally desirable in an international manager. Several of the qualities that companies listed as high priorities fall under the general category of leadership (Barham and Oates, 1991: 78). Female managers in the multinational conglomerate that Kanter (1977a) was observing, however, showed that formal organisational policies created difficulties for women in achieving leadership positions. Kanter observed that female managers tended to be placed in dead-end positions, or token positions and managerial positions in which they were given no real power. Women who found themselves in these positions tended to be bureaucratic rule-keepers rather than strong leaders. The quality of leadership was not determined by gender, it was determined by the organisational resources and organisational support that was accorded to the manager (Kanter, 1977a).

Marshall (1984) believes that women have different leadership styles to men. She believes that, in their leadership styles, women managers emphasise the interpersonal, intuitive and co-operative skills, but that these are often seen as inferior when compared to the predominant male style of leadership, which in turn hinder women's career progress (Marshall, 1984). Vinnicombe's study (1987), at Cranfield School of Management, of the differences in male and female working styles, employed the Myers-Briggs type indicator (MBTI) which showed marked differences in the working styles of women and men managers (Vinnicombe, 1987: 14). The study revealed that 56.9 per cent of male managers showed a preference for the 'traditionalist' managerial type, defined as sharing preferences for 'sensing' and 'judgmental' traits. The women managers did not show a distinct preference for a particular managerial type, but more women managers are described by Vinnicombe as 'visionaries' and 'catalysts'. Visionaries are supposed to be the 'natural' strategic managers and share preferences for intuition and thinking. Catalysts all share preferences for intuition and feeling, and are seen to link directly with the stereotypical model of female managers (Vinnicombe, 1987: 20). Bates and Kiersey point out the effectiveness of catalysts in an organisation:

> *Catalysts are excellent in public relations and shine as organisational spokespersons since they work well with all types of people. They are excellent in the top position if given free reign to manage, but they may rebel and become disloyal if they perceive themselves as having too many constraints* (Bates and Kiersey, 1984: 149-150).

Vinnicombe suggests that organisations need different management types to be effective. She cautions, however, that if these different styles of management are not recognised and appreciated by organisations that women managers "will be squeezed out of organisational life" (Vinnicombe, 1987: 20). Bates and Kiersey conclude that without "visionaries and catalysts organisational life is cold, sterile, joyless and

dull" (1984: 150). Adler (1993) and Izraeli and Adler (1994) argue that organisational assumptions and policies regarding the suitability of an individual as an international manager are based on societal assumptions about men and women. This results in situations where organisations do not perceive women as natural leaders, and the strength of these ingrained assumptions about gender roles in organisations means that few people question the continuation of such a system. They further suggest that managerial beliefs are shown to privilege the life-style that societies most frequently reserve for men. Beliefs, such as, that successful managers must prove their worth by their early thirties, that career breaks to care for family members indicate a lack of organisational commitment, and that being the last person to leave at night demonstrates organisational commitment, "all advantage a life-style more easily pursued by men than by women" (Izraeli and Adler, 1994: 12). According to Izraeli and Adler, the widely supported belief by male managers that typical male characteristics are necessary for effective management means that management is typically equated with masculinity (1994: 13). The managerial role in the West for most of the twentieth century has 'a masculine ethic':

> *This 'masculine ethic' elevates the traits assumed to belong to some men to necessities for effective management: a tough-minded approach to problems; analytic ability to abstract and plan; a capacity to set aside personal emotional considerations in the interests of task accomplishment and a cognitive superiority in problem-solving and decision-making* (Korabik, 1988: 20-1).

According to Izraeli and Adler (1994), the assumptions of these traits cause problems for female managers, for example, when senior managers assume that men have a tougher-minded approach to problem solving than women, they tend to hire mostly men for managerial positions, which they believe require such tough-mindedness. They then

interpret women's absence from such positions as evidence of an inherent shortcoming among women, that is, that women lack a sufficiently tough-minded approach to problem solving. This segregation of men and women to different categories of jobs has been considered to be institutionalised discrimination (Izraeli and Adler, 1994: 13). Once such a segregation pattern is established, senior managers then use women's absence from certain managerial positions, including international assignments, to justify women's continued exclusion from such positions. Women may also experience further organisational discrimination as a result of the considerable uncertainty regarding what an international manager should do, the qualifications required for getting the job and the skills required for the job. As outlined in section 2.5.2, there is a tendency for managers to promote people who most resemble themselves. According to Izraeli and Adler (1994), senior male executives perceive women as being different and not being completely like them, so they tend not to select women for international positions, as "only similarity can form a basis for trusting new managers, rather than any form of more precise performance measurement" (1994: 14). According to Offe (1976), selecting international managers on the basis of similarity secures the status quo regarding the distribution of rights, privileges and rewards for the primarily male cohort of managers (Offe, 1976).

In conclusion, a review of international human resource management literature suggests that formal organisational policies are formed by wider gender-based societal assumptions regarding the suitability of men or women for international managerial assignments. The negative perceptions by male managers of differences in female leadership styles and career development have been highlighted. Finally, the formal organisational discrimination that female managers have initially to overcome in their home countries and subsequently the discriminatory policies women encounter in seeking international assignments have been emphasised.

### 2.5.6 The Effects of an Organisation's Informal Processes on Women's Opportunities in International Management

> *Becoming a manager generally requires appropriate credentials, whereas becoming an executive requires, among other things, belonging to the appropriate networks* (Izraeli and Adler, 1994: 8).

The influences of informal organisational processes which may effect the participation of female managers in international management will be examined in this section. Among the most important of these informal processes are the influences of networking and mentoring. First, the significance of networking will be assessed. Second, the effect of informal mentoring for women as international managers will be discussed. These two areas are included, as studies have identified the lack of mentoring and networking relationships as the most significant barriers facing women managers in their transition from middle to senior management (Dreher and Ash, 1990; Noe, 1988; Levinson et al., 1978).

As outlined above in sections 2.4.9 and 2.4.11, informal socialisation processes for managers include informal networking and informal mentoring, which provides training in managerial career norms and helps individual managers to gain membership of their career group (Marshall, 1985). Barham and Oates (1991) stress the importance of networking skills in particular for the international manager because he or she will need to be able to exploit information, expertise and other resources wherever they might be found in the organisation world-wide. They suggest that the international manager must have "an aptitude for developing a network of co-operative relationships and informal alliances across an organisation" (Barham and Oates, 1991: 84). Barham and Oates further suggest that while a lot can be done at a corporate level to

encourage the formation of networks, it is up to managers themselves to create informal networks. Managing relationships outside the formal chain of command calls for some special characteristics and interpersonal skills. These include initiative; willingness to share leadership; the ability both to talk and listen in conversations; willingness to take risks in expressing ideas and sharing information; and the need to understand and accept differences. Barham and Oates caution that informal networking across borders requires that individuals should have an awareness of how their own cultural roots might affect the way that they interact with others. They also suggest that successful networking requires bypassing formal hierarchy structures and forging informal relationships (Barham and Oates, 1991: 84).

Bradford and Cohen (1989) suggest that, in addition to technical knowledge, the international manager should also develop informal communication channels and international networks and an interaction style for dealing with people whom managers wish to influence (Bradford and Cohen, 1989). Atamer et al. (1994) emphasise the necessity for creating transnational and interpersonal networks among managers in order to facilitate exchanges between individuals "who are geographically distant but yet feel close to one another" (1991: 226). They suggest that the feeling of closeness is based on the sharing of common professional values, mutual credibility and respect, and emotional factors such as mutual trust, good-companionship and friendship. In this regard, Unilever's chairman views interpersonal networks as having two main functions: first, to ensure world-wide corporate unity, and second, to create autonomous networks of informal exchanges:

> *In practice, this network — as represented by both the company's formal structure and the informal exchanges between managers — may well be one of the ingredients in the glue that holds Unilever together* (Maljers, 1992: 50).

According to Harris (1995), however, female international managers may be disadvantaged in accessing informal career networks — as an important aspect of the informal socialisation process is sharing with members of a group who are similar to themselves and who have similar backgrounds. In this regard, women are seen as 'non-typical, and therefore risky' by men who comprise the majority of informal networks (Harris, 1995a: 28-9). A further obstacle to building up informal networks, as experienced by female international managers, is the duration of their international assignment. As outlined in section 2.5.2 above, research by Adler (1988) indicated that female managers are generally assigned to short-term or temporary assignments. Atamer et al. (1994) suggest, however, that networks of interpersonal relationships are created during long-term assignments (three to four years on average) and that these relationships remain strong after the departure of the manager (1994: 229). This suggests that because of shorter assignments female managers are further disadvantaged in building up long-term interpersonal relationships.

Davidson and Cooper (1992) suggest that networking is bound up with power in organisations, and "unfortunately the power is still held predominantly by men" (1992: 129). An earlier study by Edstrõm and Galbraith (1977) also suggested that networks influence the distribution of power in organisations. They suggested that some multinational organisations use international transfers of managers as a method of control based on socialisation. In this process 'socialised' managers create international 'verbal' information networks which will influence the distribution of power in organisations. The process of socialisation is achieved by frequent transfers which forces the manager to sacrifice many of the advantages of a stable domestic life (Edstrõm and Galbraith, 1977: 248-63). According to Harris (1995b), however, female managers are 'doubly disadvantaged' under such circumstances. First, as cited above in section 2.4.11, women are often excluded from informal

organisation networks and as a result have less access to positions of power in organisations. Second, the requirement for frequent transfers may be more difficult for women because of their traditional family responsibilities of child-bearing and child-rearing (Harris, 1995b: 244). Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993) suggest that the requirement of continuous employment is another characteristic of the managerial career that conflicts with women's family roles in every country (1993: 65).

It is apparent, therefore, that the informal networking facilities which are available to male international managers are not equally available to female managers. If women are excluded from informal networks they may lack information, advice, influence, and power which are important for international career success. Networking may be particularly important for career and personal development for female managers as a significant number of women may not have had mentors. Although the impact of informal networking processes remains an under-researched area, it is clear that managerial women are still less integrated in organisational networks, and it is these networks which can influence promotion and acceptance.

The second informal process which may effect women's participation in international management is mentoring. According to Barham and Oates (1991), continuing attention is needed from home-country senior management in assessing how the manager learns from international experience. Their research showed that companies do this through mentoring, 'contact managers' and 'godfathering' schemes. Companies try to assist the learning process of the international manager by 'pairing' them for a period of time with an experienced managers, believing that 'managers develop managers' (1991: 172). According to Holden (1992), for example, there is a strong emphasis on formal and informal mentoring in Japan:

> *Japanese managers spend up to thirty per cent of their time, in and outside normal office hours, educating their younger colleagues and initiating them in the lore and wisdom of the company, preparing them functionally and psychologically for operations outside the firm* (Holden, 1992: 31).

Female Japanese managers, however, may be hindered in forming mentoring relationships as "they are not always well accepted in the Japanese corporate environment" although women are well-represented among university graduates in Japan (Schneider and Barsoux, 1997: 134). According to White et al. (1992), in all countries most mentoring relationships are informal, although formal mentoring schemes are becoming increasingly popular in private and public organisations (1992: 136). Arnold and Davidson (1990) found that male and female managers considered their mentors important for introducing them to the informal network of power relations which existed in organisations. Women, however, may be disadvantaged in setting up informal mentoring relationships because of gender related issues, such as male mentors not selecting female protégées because of the difficulties associated with cross-sex relationships as discussed in section 2.4.9. It appears, however, that mentoring relationships are more important in international management than domestic management. Schein's (1971) work on career movement suggests that expatriates might have a more difficult time crossing the 'inclusionary boundary' in organisations. This inclusionary boundary refers to a manager's position in the informal information and influence networks. Feldman and Thomas (1992) agree with Schein and note that the expatriate is in a foreign country and is on the periphery culturally as well as organisationally:

> *All foreign cultures have different norms about openness to outsiders and willingness to trust newcomers. Thus, the informal information that is most critical in helping newcomers adjust may be the information least likely to be given readily to expatriate managers* (Feldman and Thomas, 1992: 272).

Feldman and Thomas in their mail survey of 297 managers (of which there were only three females) found that respondents highlighted the importance of having a mentor in their domestic site who was looking out for their best interests while they were overseas which helped avoid the feeling of 'out of sight, out of mind' by their home organisation (1992: 283).

It is evident from this analysis, therefore, that informal mentoring relationships in international management are important for the success of the overseas assignment. Mentors provide the opportunity of making managers more visible to senior management, which in turn helps career progression. Mentors also provide access to informal networks, the benefits of which have been outlined above. Establishing informal mentoring relationships, however, for female managers may be problematic, such as the difficulties for women in cross-gender relationships, as specified above. Same-gender mentoring may eradicate these problems, but due to the lack of women in senior positions finding a female mentor can also prove difficult.

### 2.5.7 Women's Wishes and Desires to Partake in International Management

A review of the research pertaining to the motivation of female managers in pursuing international management positions is presented in this section. According to Barham and Oates (1991), the degree of success that companies achieve in their globalisation policies will depend on their approach to international human resource management (1991: 20). Studies have indicated that the number of required skills for international management is greater than those for domestic management and include a variety of cross-cultural skills as well as spouse and family qualities needed for adapting to a different cultural environment (Mendenhall et al., 1987; Zeira and Banai, 1985). Firms, however, are encountering shortages of the high-quality people they require primarily because of concerns about dual-career problems and disruption to children's education (Scullion, 1995; Barham and Oates, 1991; Coyle, 1988). Despite these shortages, however, firms are reluctant to develop females as international managers (Scullion, 1992; Adler, 1984).

Because of the additional barriers faced by women expatriate managers in dual-career relationships, Adler (1984) suggests that a belief widely shared by both women and men is that women do not want to be international managers. Adler labelled this belief a 'myth' because its accuracy had not been tested. Adler (1984) did, however, test this myth by conducting a survey of more than a thousand graduating MBAs from seven top management schools in the United States, Canada, and Europe to investigate if women are less interested than men in pursuing international careers. The results showed that female and males displayed equal interest, or lack of interest, in pursuing international careers. The results also revealed that more than four out of five MBAs, male and female, want an international assignment at some time during their careers, — Adler concluded that this myth was, in fact, truly a myth

(Adler, 1984). In the same study, Adler found that men perceived greater organisational rewards for pursuing an international career, including more recognition, more status, a higher salary, and faster career progress. Women perceived that they had significantly less opportunities for obtaining international assignments, almost 90% of the responding female MBAs felt that men's chances of being selected were better than theirs (Adler, 1984a). According to Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993), such beliefs may discourage female managers from competing with men for international assignments. They conclude that "women would have to want international assignments much more strongly than men to overcome the multiple dampers on their student-day motivations" (1993: 83). Kanter also suggests that the minimal participation of women in international management may not be due to a lack of motivation, but may be due to blocked opportunities (Kanter, 1977a). Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993) found that women are often employed in non-technical and lower ranked occupations which makes it more difficult for them to meet the organisations' criteria, such as rank or specialisation, for selection to international assignments (Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993).

As outlined above in section 2.4.6, women in dual-career couples face additional difficulties regarding work–family conflicts and the perceptions of senior management therefore, may be that these women do not wish to partake in international assignments. According to Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993), senior management in domestic organisations believe that entry into a new job requires total involvement and longer than usual hours of work; the expatriate woman is, therefore, likely to be even less available to her family abroad than in her domestic duties (1993: 84). Adler (1993), however, suggests that some of the role overload experienced by female managers in their home countries can be alleviated in expatriate assignments by the availability of domestic help which they could not afford in their home countries (1994: 38).

As stated above, international assignments are generally offered to managers in senior management roles. From the limited research available on women in management and business within the European Union, women in corporate environments tend to be at the lower level of the managerial hierarchy, even after ten years or more in management jobs, fewer than five per cent are in senior management roles, as illustrated in Table 2.10.

**Table 2.10**

**Working Females as a Percentage of all Women in Management and Business in the European Union**

| Country | Managers % | Middle Managers % | Senior Managers % | Entrepreneurs/ Self-employed % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Britain | 26 | – | 2 | 25 |
| Ireland | 17.4 | – | – | 31.5 |
| Denmark | 11 | 10 | 5 | – |
| Netherlands | 13 | 18 | – | 24 |
| Germany | 6 | – | – | 17 |
| France | 25 | 44 | 4.6 | 16 |
| Belgium | – | 12.5 | 5 | – |
| Greece | 14 | – | 8 | 14 |
| Italy | – | – | 3 | 25 |
| Portugal | – | – | – | – |
| Spain | 10 | 5 | 5 | 37 |

Source: in Davidson and Cooper, 1993, p. 13

'–' = no data

Davidson and Cooper (1993) note that although some progress is being made to develop strategies to help women managers, these barriers have also encouraged many to consider setting up their own business. As can be seen in Table 2.10, between 15 per cent and 30 per cent of

entrepreneurs or business owners in the European Union are women (1993: 13). Regarding this finding, Davidson and Cooper suggest that it is due, perhaps, to the flexibility and control that owning their own business — which is a greater attraction to working women, particularly those with children, than a hierarchy-driven corporate culture (1993: 14). Maruani (1992), while noting that "throughout Europe, women are continuing to enter the labour market by the millions" stated:

> *This does not mean that women have won occupational equality. Also throughout Europe, women are gearing up under the sign of discrimination. Discrimination and segregation continue to reign. The feminisation of the working world has not led to a real equal distribution of jobs between the sexes, any more than it has reversed the tranquil current of occupational inequality of all sorts. Finally, whilst the employment crisis has not chased women off the labour market, it has not protected them from the unemployment and precarious positions either. Women are now working more in the EC, but they are also unemployed more: more today than yesterday, more than men, and longer than men* (Maruani, 1992: 2).

It is clear from the preceding discussion that women throughout Europe aim to have careers, both nationally and internationally, despite the many obstacles to be overcome. Similarly, Adler's (1984) study — with human resource vice presidents and managers from sixty of the largest North American multinationals — established that most women said that they needed to encourage their companies to consider the possibility of assigning international positions to women in general, and to themselves in particular. Further research by Adler (1994) with over one hundred expatriate female managers revealed than in more than four out of five cases, the woman initially suggested the idea of an international

assignment to her boss and company. For only six women did the company first suggest the assignment (1994: 30). Adler concluded that the proportion of women interested in working abroad is identical to that of men and can be predicted to increase over the coming decade (1994: 37).

In conclusion, and from the limited empirical evidence available, it is apparent that the wishes and desires of female managers to partake in international assignments are equal to those of male managers. The career paths of female managers, however, are still compared with those of their male counterparts, despite women in dual-career marriages inevitably having to face more difficulties when partaking in overseas assignments. Home-country senior managers may assume that because of these barriers women may not want to partake in international assignments.

**Table 2.11**
**Summary of Research Findings on**
**Women in International Management**

| ***Representative Findings*** | ***Illustrative Sources*** |
|---|---|
| The number of female expatriate managers coming from Europe and the United States is estimated at about 3-5% | Smith and Still, 1996;<br>Harris, 1995;<br>Adler, 1994;<br>Adler, 1984. |
| The International Human Resource Management literature has given very little attention to women as expatriates | Dallafar and Movahedi, 1996;<br>Smith, 1996;<br>Harris, 1995. |
| Organisations may be prepared to promote women through their domestic managerial hierarchy, but not internationally | Harris, 1995;<br>Adler and Izraeli, 1994,<br>Mandelker, 1994; 1988. |
| Management styles tend to be equated with masculine qualities which negatively affect managers' perceptions as to the ability of women to hold international management positions | Adler and Izraeli, 1993;<br>Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993;<br>Korabik, 1988;<br>Heilman, 1980;<br>Heilman and Guzzo, 1978. |
| Female expatriate managers are seen primarily as foreigners and not as women | Westwood and Leung, 1994;<br>Adler, 1987;<br>Moran, 1985. |
| Despite shortages of international managers firms are reluctant to develop females as international managers | Scullion, 1992;<br>Adler, 1984. |

## 2.6 Summary

A review of European Human Resource Management literature was presented in the first section and examples of various typologies of management systems in Europe were examined. It is clear that national management systems still remain strong, and these can be categorised into three broader models of European management. These are the *Anglo-Saxon* model, the *Latin* or *Southern Europe* model, and the *Northern Europe* model.

The focus of the second section was on the role of women in management. As European women are generally still concentrated in junior and middle management positions, a review of the literature revealed that female managers encounter many barriers to their advancement. These barriers create a glass ceiling which is subtle but yet so strong as it prevents many women from moving up the managerial hierarchy. The invisible barriers include: the persistent stereotype that associates management with being male, a lonely and non-supportive working environment, and attitudes and behaviours that discourage females from pursuing managerial careers. More overt barriers include the difficulties of balancing work and family commitments, bias in recruitment and selection processes, lack of formal and informal mentoring, lack of networking relationships, and sexual harassment. From a review of the literature, it is apparent that a further difficulty for female managers exists, namely, career development. A career-development process for women has not yet emerged, and the professional life cycle of the male is still considered as the norm, which of course does not take marriage and childbearing into account.

A review of the limited research findings available on women in international management was presented in the third section. It is estimated that only three to five per cent of female managers partake in

expatriate assignments. Most of the previous research on women in international management concentrated on the role of the expatriate wife. Management research on the progress of female international managers is relatively recent. When female managers wish to partake in international management, however, they face further difficulties. The main difficulty is getting the assignment in the first place, due to the negative perceptions from home-country senior male managers. Many home-country managers assume that foreigners will not accept females as managers because of host-country cultural traditions. Home-country management tends to believe that marital status of female managers is problematic. If the female manager is in a dual career marriage, there are extra problems when the trailing spouse is male, by contrast if the woman is unmarried, difficulties are expressed regarding physical safety and loneliness. Home-country senior management also tends to assume that women do not wish to partake in international management. This assumption however, is unfounded, as the studies cited above reveal that equal numbers of men and women have expressed desires to partake in overseas assignments.

It is clear from the review of the literature presented that a number of research issues emerge. These gaps in the literature can be summarised in three broad categories as follows: international human resource management; women in management; and career theory.

***(i) International Human Resource Management Literature***

- There is a dearth of empirical research detailing the *senior* female international career move in Europe, research conducted in North America has also concentrated on female managers who have not yet reached senior managerial status;

- There is a lack of empirical evidence of the barriers cited in the international human resource management literature which prevent female managers from progressing to international managerial positions;
- The effects of the lack of mentors, networks and role models for females in *domestic* managerial positions have been well documented in the women in management literature, however, these areas have not gained much research attention for females in *international* management;
- The impact of senior home-country managers' perceptions regarding the suitability of women in international management has been cited as a barrier for women in international management, however, there is a lack of data detailing how females cope with and overcome this difficulty;
- International human resource management literature detailing the re-location process has concentrated on the male managerial career. The impact of managing dual-careers when re-locating to facilitate the female career has not received much attention in the research literature;
- The characteristics of successful female international managers have not been examined in the literature;
- There is a lack of empirical research on the impact of expatriation on the female manager's career, detailing the advantages and disadvantages of the experience;
- The periods before during and after repatriation, and coping with the particular problems associated with repatriation do not receive much attention in the international human resource management literature.

***(ii) Women in Management Literature***

From a review of the women in management literature conducted it is apparent that this literature is largely based on the barriers which prevent women from reaching senior managerial positions. From an analysis of this literature, however, other areas which have not gained research attention are:

- The development of effective strategies which make it possible for female managers to gain access to senior managerial positions;
- The advantages for both female managers and organisations when flexibility is incorporated as part of their overall strategy;
- The positive and negative effects of work on family and vice versa;
- The factors which determine the type of occupation a woman enters;
- The psychological and social factors which cause a woman to undertake a male-dominated occupation;
- The personality traits and stress outcomes in female managers;
- The development of an organisational model based on part-time employees.

***(iii) Career Theory Literature***

A review of the career theory literature showed that little research attention has been given to the following specific areas:

- The development of a career model based on female managers experience;
- Career preparation for women as senior managers;
- The career development of female entrepreneurs;
- Career opportunities for female managers.

The gaps which have been identified in these three literature fields, together with the questions posed in Chapter One, will be used to conduct the empirical work for this study, which attempts to provide a model of the senior female international managerial career move.

## *Chapter Three*

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 The Philosophy of Research Design

According to Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) 'research design' is more than the methods by which data are collected and analysed. It is the overall configuration of a piece of research: what kind of evidence is gathered from where, and how such evidence is interpreted in order to provide good answers to the basic research question (1991: 21). In the current study, the answers provided to the chosen research question are those of fifty senior female international managers throughout Europe. In choosing a research design Buchanan (1980) suggests that the researcher must be prepared to use her own judgement continually — and this is one of the most important outcomes from the use of research projects (Buchanan, 1980: 45-8). Furthermore, Easterby-Smith et al. advise that it is unwise to conduct research without an awareness of the background philosophical and political issues. They contend that it is possible to give advice about research methods, but, that this can rarely be definitive (1991: 2). Some of the philosophical issues involved in choosing a qualitative approach are discussed below.

A number of authors point to the philosophical requirements in relation to research design. Easterby-Smith et al. suggest that a knowledge of philosophy can help the researcher to recognise which design will work and which will not (1991: 21). Morgan and Smircich (1980) observe that the appropriateness of a research approach "derives from the nature of the social phenomena to be explored" (1980: 491). Burrell and Morgan (1979) state that all organisation theorists approach their work with a 'frame of reference' consisting of a series of assumptions, whether they

are explicitly stated or not (1979: x). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), these assumptions come from theory and experience and often from the general objectives of the study envisioned (1994: 18).

## 3.2 The Roots of Qualitative Evaluation Methods

Two major theoretical perspectives have dominated the social sciences. One, *positivism*, traces its origins to the social theorists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and especially to Comte and Durkeim. The positivist seeks the *facts* or *causes* of social phenomena with little regard for the subjective states of individuals. Positivistic views hold that the social world exists externally, and that its properties should be measured through objective methods "not inferred subjectively through sensation, reflection or intuition" (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991: 22). The second theoretical perspective, which, following the lead of Deutscher, is described as *phenomenological,* stems most prominently from the work of Max Weber. The phenomenologist is concerned with *understanding* human behaviour from the actor's own frame of reference. The phenomenologist examines how the world is experienced. For him or her the important reality is what people imagine it to be (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 2). The phenomenologists focus on how we put together the phenomena we experience in such a way as to make sense of the world and, in so doing, develop a worldview. There is no separate (or objective) reality for people. There is only what they know their experience is and means. The subjective experience incorporates the objective thing and a person's reality (Patton, 1990: 69).

Since positivists and phenomenologists approach problems in different ways and seek different answers, their research will typically demand different methodologies. The positivist searches for 'facts' and 'causes', through methods such as survey questionnaires, inventories, and demographic analysis, which typically produce quantitative data and which

allow him or her to statistically prove or disprove relationships between variables. The phenomenologist, on the other hand, seeks understanding through such qualitative methods as participant observation, open-ended interviewing, and personal documents. These methods yield descriptive data which enable the phenomenologist to "see the world as subjects see it" (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 2).

Qualitative methods in management owe their origins most directly to the ethnographic and field study traditions of anthropology and sociology. More generally, the philosophical and theoretical perspectives which undergird qualitative methods include phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and naturalistic behaviourism, ethnomethodology and ecological psychology. An integrating theme running through these perspectives is the notion that the study of human beings is fundamentally different from other scientific inquiries, such as agricultural and natural sciences (Patton, 1990: 20).

As mentioned above, qualitative methods have their philosophical origins in phenomenology or subjectivism (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 22). A phenomenologist views human behaviour as a product of how people interpret their world. The task of the phenomenologist, and of qualitative methodologists, is to capture this *process* of interpretation (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 14). Van Maanen (1983) defines qualitative methods as an "array of interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (1983: 9).

Qualitative methodologies refer to research procedures which produce descriptive data: people's own written or spoken words and observable behaviour. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1975), this approach directs itself at settings and the individuals within those settings holistically; that

is, the subject of the study, be it an organisation or an individual, is not reduced to an isolated variable or to an hypothesis, but is viewed instead as part of a whole (1975: 4).

Bogdan and Taylor also argue that the methods by which we study people affect how we view them. They add that when we reduce people to statistical aggregates we lose sight of the subjective nature of human behaviour. Qualitative methods allow us to know people personally and to see them as they are developing their own definitions of the world. We experience what they experience in their daily struggles with their society (Bogdan and Taylor 1975).

The philosophical roots of qualitative methods emphasise the importance of understanding the *meanings* of human behaviour and the social-cultural context of social interaction. The phenomenologist, therefore, views human behaviour — what people say and do — as a product of how people interpret their world. To do this requires empathic understanding or an ability to reproduce in one's own mind the feelings, motives, and thoughts behind the actions of others. In order to grasp the meanings of a person's behaviour, "the phenomenologist attempts to see things from that person's point of view" (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 14).

According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), those who conduct qualitative research face a challenge. There are no explicit, guaranteed recipes to follow for pulling together a coherent, convincing, winning research study. Proponents of qualitative research designs do best by emphasising the promise of quality, depth, and richness in the research findings (1989: 19). Geertz (1973) advises that researchers who are convinced that a qualitative approach is best for the question or problem at hand must make a case that 'thick description' and detailed analysis will yield valuable explanations of processes (1973: 5). Guba and Lincoln (1981) have made the point that qualitative methods are preferable to

quantitative methods when the phenomena to be studied are complex human and organisational interactions and, therefore, not easily translatable into numbers. When researchers use such methods as interview, observation, use of non-verbal cues and unobtrusive measures they use tacit as well as propositional knowledge to ascribe meaning to the verbal and non-verbal behaviour that is uncovered (Guba and Lincoln, 1981: 88).

Qualitative data have been described by quantitative researchers as ‘soft’, ‘unscientific’ and ‘non-reproducible’; while to the qualitative researcher neither the data nor the method are ‘soft’ or ‘unscientific’, they are ‘rich’. Fineman and Mangham (1983) suggest that, in their experience, it has been the ‘soft’ qualitative parts that have saved many of the research studies of the day, not the ‘hard’ quantitative parts. Whereas qualitative data can be both ‘rich’ and ‘deep’, quantitative data which are obtained at a distance from everyday activities may have ceased to ‘live’ (Fineman and Mangham, 1983: 297). Wells (1976) identifies the crucial aspect of qualitative data as the richness of the information generated: “Compared to words, numbers are sort of round and smooth. They don’t have little fish-hooks of meaning standing out all over them” (1976: 13-6). In support of a qualitative approach, some researchers (Van Maanen, 1983; Fineman and Mangham, 1983; Geertz, 1973) make reference to the thick description, rich insight and full, rich, earthy holistic and real data which arise from qualitative studies.

Disadvantages associated with the qualitative method include its labour intensive nature; possible difficulties with analysis and interpretation of the data; and in the past, policy makers gave low credibility to studies based on a qualitative approach (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991: 104). This credibility problem, however, appears to be changing as management research moves into the post-positivist era (McCracken, 1988: 14).

According to Filstead (1970):

> *the qualitative perspective in no way suggests that the researcher lacks the ability to be scientific while collecting the data. On the contrary, it merely specifies that it is crucial for validity — and, consequently, for reliability — to try to picture the empirical social world as it actually exists to those under investigation, rather than as the researcher imagines it to be* (1970: 4).

According to Bennett (1991), when choosing a research methodology it is important to know if the research is concerned with exploring what might be, or verifying what is, and to choose methods appropriate to this. There are other points that should be borne in mind when choosing an appropriate research method. These include:

*Answering the research questions* The method chosen must allow the research questions to be answered. It is clearly important to know and thoroughly understand what questions researchers are seeking to answer. A clear statement of the research questions will enable both the level of research and level of rigour to be more adequately determined. It will also enable a check to be made on the understanding of the nature of the research problem involved.

*Current state of knowledge* If little is currently known about the nature of the variables involved in the research problem then it is likely that more qualitative, exploratory research methods will be needed. If, on the other hand, a review of the literature shows that a good deal is already known, it is then possible to isolate the key variables involved. This would then determine the extent to which a hypothesis or hypotheses could be established and made available for testing. This in turn would lead to a choice of method which allowed hypothesis testing to be carried out.

However, even where the variables are known in advance their very nature may prevent the use of experimental research methods.

*The nature of the variables involved* The choice of method will also be governed by the extent to which the variables involved can be manipulated and measured in a controlled way. In the physical sciences it is often possible to make the subject of the research do what you want it to do. In the social sciences this is not always the case (Bennett, 1991: 89).

In summary, the purpose of qualitative research, and in particular the qualitative interview, is not to discover how many, and what kinds of, people share a certain characteristic. How many and what kinds of people hold these categories and assumptions are not the compelling issues. Qualitative research is much more intensive than extensive in its objectives (McCracken, 1988: 17). The qualitative researcher uses a lens that brings a narrow strip of the field of vision into very precise focus. The quantitative researcher uses a lens that permits a much less precise vision of a much broader strip (McCracken, 1988: 16). In qualitative research, the investigator serves as a kind of 'instrument' in the collection and analysis of data (Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Cassell, 1977). This metaphor has proven to be a useful one because it emphasises that the investigator cannot fulfil qualitative research objectives without using a broad range of his or her own experience, imagination, and intellect in ways that are various and unpredictable (Miles, 1979: 597). Qualitative data are normally relatively messy, unorganised data. Qualitative research demands techniques of observation that allow the investigator to sort and 'winnow' the data, searching out patterns of association and assumption. This process of detection is hard to mechanise (McCracken, 1988: 19).

Following the above outlined advice of Bennett (1991) and McCracken (1998), the in-depth interview technique was found to be an appropriate methodology to answer the research questions in the current study, as interviews, semi-structured or unstructured, are appropriate methods when:

(i) it is necessary to understand the constructs that the interviewee uses as a basis for her opinions and beliefs about a particular matter or situation;

(ii) the step-by-step logic of a situation is not clear;

(iii) the subject matter is highly confidential or commercially sensitive;

(iv) the interviewee may be reluctant to be truthful about issues other than confidentially in a one-to-one situation (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991: 74). Details of the interview technique used in this study are discussed below.

## 3.3 The Long Interview

According to McCracken (1988), the long interview is one of the most powerful methods in the qualitative armoury. For certain descriptive and analytic purposes no instrument of inquiry is more revealing. The method permits us enter into the mental world of the individual manager in order that we might begin to see the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world. It can also permit us into the 'lifeworld' of the individual, to see the content and pattern of daily experience. The long interview gives the opportunity to step into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do (1988: 9).

The depth interview is a highly unusual speech event, one that makes for a most peculiar social relationship. There is no question that certain aspects of this event and relationship must be crafted very exactly to serve the interests of good qualitative inquiry (McCracken, 1988: 12). According to Burgess (1982), the depth interview is a conversation in which the researcher encourages the informant to relate, in their own

terms, experiences and attitudes that are relevant to the research problem. It provides:

> *. . . the opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply to uncover new clues, open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience* (1982: 107).

Easterby-Smith et al. suggest that one of the main reasons for conducting qualitative interviews is to understand:

> *. . . how individuals construct the meaning and significance of their situations . . . from . . . the complex personal framework of beliefs and values, which they have developed over their lives in order to help explain and predict events in their world* (1991: 73).

Researchers must, therefore, be able to conduct interviews so that the opportunity is present for these insights to be gained. Failure to achieve this could result in a superficial exchange of information, which might have been better and more cost effectively achieved via a semi-structured questionnaire (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991: 73).

The first step of the detailed, qualitative interview begins with an exhaustive review of the literature. According to McCracken, a good literature review has many obvious virtues. It enables the investigator to define problems, assess data and provides the concepts on which subjects' precepts depend. A thorough review of the literature allows the data of one's research project take issue with the theory of one's field and it is a way to manufacture distance (McCracken, 1988: 29-31).

Literature reviews are not simple exercises in idea collection; they are a form of qualitative analysis. They are also critical undertakings in which

the investigator exercises a constant scepticism. Reviews search out the conscious and unconscious assumptions of various authors. They determine how these assumptions force the definition of problems and findings. The good literature review is a critical process that makes the investigator the master, not the captive, of previous scholarship (McCracken, 1988: 29-31).

Another purpose of the literature review is to aid in the construction of the interview questionnaire. The literature review establishes the areas the interview will explore and aids in specifying categories and relationships that may organise the data. A review helps to determine what the inquirer should ask about and what he or she should listen for. By the end of the literature review, the investigator should have a list of topics from which questions must be prepared (McCracken, 1988: 31). This list of topics allows for the creation of the interview guide.

## 3.4 The Interview Guide

An interview guide is a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview. The questions which formed the interview guide for this study are listed in the Appendix. An interview guide is prepared to make sure that essentially the same type of information is obtained from a number of people by covering the same material. The interview guide provides topics or subject areas about which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. Perhaps the most fundamental use for the interview guide is to serve as a basic checklist during the interview to make sure that all relevant topics are covered. The interviewer is thus required to adapt both the wording and sequence of questions to specific respondents in the context of each actual interview *as it occurs*. The interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject

area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style — but with the focus on a particular predetermined subject (Patton, 1990: 111). Perhaps the primary advantage of an interview guide is that it can help to make sure that the interviewer has carefully decided how best to use the limited time available in an interview situation. The interview guide helps make interviewing different people more systematic and comprehensive by delimiting the issues to be discussed in the interview (Patton, 1990: 111).

Jones (1985) also recommends the preparation of an interview guide which can be used as a loose structure for the questions to be used in the 'live' interviews. She advises that, although researchers are to some extent tied to their framework, they shouldn't be "tied up by them" (1985: 75). Based on the literature review in this study (Chapter Two), an interview guide was created by the author which attempted to provide an appropriate structure for questioning, ensuring that the author included what were considered to be the more pertinent issues in the literature (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991: 73; Patton, 1990: 111). The label 'qualitative interview' has been used to describe a broad range of different types of interviews, from those that are *non-directive* or *open,* to those where the interviewer takes a prepared list of questions and is determined to ask these questions. In between these two extremes is an *abyss of practice* which provides theory about the purpose and nature of the qualitative interview (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991: 73). The interview technique used by the author in the current study could be considered as falling within this *abyss of practice,* using a loosely structured interview guide to discern the perceptions of the interviewees.

## 3.5 The Interview Pool

A key difficulty in qualitative research utilising the interview technique is to determine the precise number of interviewees (Mintzberg, 1979: 584). The approach adopted in selecting the number of interview participants for this study was based on a strategy called 'theoretical sampling', where the actual number of cases studied is relatively unimportant (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 69). McCracken, for instance, endorses the use of small samples, and states that "for many research projects, eight respondents will be perfectly sufficient" (1988: 17). According to Seidman (1991), there are two criteria for "enough". The first is sufficiency. Are there sufficient numbers to reflect the range of participants and sites that make up the population so that others outside the sample might have a chance to connect to the experiences of those in it? The other criterion is saturation of information, when the interviewer begins to hear the same information reported and she is no longer learning anything new (Seidman, 1991: 45). Douglas (1985) suggested from his studies that if he had to pick a number it would be twenty-five participants. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), what is important is the *potential* of each case in aiding the researcher to develop insights into the area being studied (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 56). The selection of the respondents must be made accordingly. Mason (1996) suggests that qualitative samples are usually small for practical reasons to do with the costs, especially in terms of time and money, and for generating and analysing qualitative data (Mason, 1996: 96).

Recently published interview studies in Management show the number of interviewees tends to be between fifteen and twenty-five. This number may be due to a combination of the time and resources available for the investigation and of the 'law' of diminishing returns in research (Kvale, 1996: 102). Seidman (1991) suggests that because hypotheses are not being tested, the issue is not whether the researcher can generalise the finding of an interview study to a broader population. Instead the

researcher's task is to present the experience of the people she interviews in compelling enough detail and in sufficient depth that those who read the study can connect to that experience, learn how it is constituted, and deepen their understanding of the issues it reflects (Seidman, 1991: 41). Mason (1996) suggests that the interviewer is likely to be making certain kinds of epistemological assumptions about the interaction between oneself as a researcher and those who are being interviewed, which suggest that semi-structured interviewing is appropriate (Mason, 1996: 40). Mason further suggests that the interviewer may wish to conceptualise one's role as active and reflexive in the process of data generation, rather than as a neutral collector, and analyse one's role within this process (Mason, 1996: 41).

## 3.6 The Sample

The key research question in this study focuses on senior female international managers in a European context. Fifty senior, female managers were selected for inclusion in this study. A listing from *Fortune 500* top companies provided the starting point for targeting interviewees. Initially, an introductory letter was sent to the Chief Executive Officers of these companies in England, Belgium, France and Germany (for practical reasons, such as time and travel), detailing the criteria for inclusion in the study. These were that, first, the women had to be part of the *senior management team* and second, they had to have made at least *one international* career *move*. Another source used for targeting interviewees in Ireland was *The Marketing Guide to Ireland 1997*. One-hundred and eighty letters were sent in total. One hundred and twelve responses were received, and of these, fifty-eight replied that they did not have female managers with international experience in their organisations. The responses from both of these listings ensured that the original target of fifty was drawn up quite speedily. Table 3.1 presents employment details of the fifty senior managers interviewed:

**Table 3.1** (first part)

**Nationality, Prior Employment Locations, Present Location and Current Organisation of the Fifty Managers Interviewed**

| Manager No. | Nationality | Prior Employment Locations | Present Location | Current Organisation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Manager 1 | German | Germany<br>England<br>Japan | Germany | Deutsche Morgan Grenfell |
| Manager 2 | Scottish | Scotland<br>England<br>United States | England | Sainsburys |
| Manager 3 | Irish | Ireland<br>United States | Ireland | Department of Foreign Affairs |
| Manager 4 | German | Germany<br>South Africa | Germany | BMW |
| Manager 5 | American | United States | Belgium | Ernst & Young |
| Manager 6 | Irish | Ireland<br>Switzerland<br>Britain<br>United States<br>Cayman Islands | Ireland | Irish Tourist Board |
| Manager 7 | American | Unites States | Ireland | Aughinish Alumina |
| Manager 8 | Belgian | Belgium<br>United States<br>Asia | Belgium | Solvay |
| Manager 9 | Irish | Ireland<br>Germany | Ireland | Helsin Birex |
| Manager 10 | American | United States | Ireland | Digital |
| Manager 11 | English | England<br>France | England | NCR |
| Manager 12 | French | France | England | Thomson Training & Simulation |
| Manager 13 | English | England<br>Singapore<br>Japan | England | British Telecom |
| Manager 14 | Irish | Ireland<br>United States | Ireland | Sensormatic |
| Manager 15 | Irish | Ireland<br>Germany<br>United States<br>Switzerland<br>Spain<br>Mexico<br>Brazil | Ireland | Sandoz |

**Table 3.1** (contd)

**Nationality, Prior Employment Locations, Present Location and Current Organisation of the Fifty Managers Interviewed**

| Manager No. | Nationality | Prior Employment Locations | Present Location | Current Organisation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Manager 16 | Irish | Ireland<br>England | Ireland | Kodak Ireland |
| Manager 17 | English | England<br>France | England | Thomson Training & Simulation |
| Manager 18 | Canadian | Canada | Belgium | Federal Express |
| Manager 19 | American | United States | Belgium | AirTouch Europe |
| Manager 20 | Swedish | Sweden | Belgium | European Commission |
| Manager 21 | French | France<br>United States | Ireland | GSI |
| Manager 22 | English | England<br>United States<br>Hungary. | England | Thomson Training & Simulation |
| Manager 23 | Irish | Ireland<br>United States | Ireland | Beaumont Hospital |
| Manager 24 | English | England<br>Australia<br>Japan | England | British Telecom |
| Manager 25 | Canadian | Canada<br>United States | Belgium | Federal Express |
| Manager 26 | Scottish | Scotland | Belgium | Ingram Micro |
| Manager 27 | Irish | Ireland<br>France | Ireland | IBM |
| Manager 28 | Irish | Ireland<br>France<br>Belgium | Ireland | IBM |
| Manager 29 | Irish | Ireland<br>England<br>Canada | Ireland | APC |
| Manager 30 | Irish | Ireland<br>Holland<br>Singapore<br>Germany | Ireland | Sensormatic |
| Manager 31 | Dutch | Holland | Ireland | Gateway 2000 |
| Manager 32 | Irish | Ireland<br>Scotland<br>England<br>United States | Ireland | Novell |

**Table 3.1** (contd)

**Nationality, Prior Employment Locations, Present Location and Current Organisation of the Fifty Managers Interviewed**

| Manager No. | Nationality | Prior Employment Locations | Present Location | Current Organisation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Manager 33 | American | United States<br>England | Ireland | Sandoz |
| Manager 34 | American | United States | Ireland | Digital |
| Manager 35 | American | United States | Ireland | Bupa |
| Manager 36 | Canadian | Canada<br>United States | Ireland | Microsoft |
| Manager 37 | French | France<br>Czech Republic<br>Japan | Ireland | Banque Nationale de Paris |
| Manager 38 | Irish | Ireland<br>United States | Ireland | Motorola |
| Manager 39 | Canadian | Canada | England | BAT Industries |
| Manager 40 | Swedish | Sweden | Belgium | European Commission |
| Manager 41 | English | England<br>Germany | Belgium | Zimmer Europe |
| Manager 42 | Scottish | Scotland<br>France | England | Shell U.K. Limited |
| Manager 43 | German | Germany<br>United States<br>France | Germany | Landeszentralbank in Hessen |
| Manager 44 | Scottish | Scotland<br>England | Ireland | Motorola |
| Manager 45 | German | United States<br>Holland | Belgium | Bristol-Myers Squibb Int. Corporation |
| Manager 46 | English | England<br>Germany | Belgium | CEN |
| Manager 47 | Belgian | Belgium<br>Africa<br>Asia<br>China | Belgium | Generale de Banque |
| Manager 48 | Belgian | Belgium<br>Portugal | Belgium | Generale de Banque |
| Manager 49 | English | New Zealand<br>England | Ireland | Esat Telecom |
| Manager 50 | Scottish | United States<br>England | Ireland | Irish Life Ireland & UK |

The fifty senior managers who participated in this study were representative of a broad spectrum of industries including: alumina mining, software engineering, pharmaceutical/chemical manufacturing, financial services, car manufacturing, tourism, electronic components manufacturing, management consultancy, international retailing, telecommunications, mobile telephone manufacturing and distributing, oil refining, computer manufacturing, and medical and state-owned enterprises. At the time of the interviewing (January to June 1997), twenty-five of the participants were based in Ireland, thirteen in Belgium, nine in England and three in Germany. All interviews were conducted in the countries where the participating managers were then based. Table 3.2 categorises the number of interviewees by marital status, number of children and career status relative to their partners.

**Table 3.2**

**Marital Status, Number of Children and Career Status of Interviewees Relative to their Partners**

| Marital Status | No. of Children | Relative Career Status |
|---|---|---|
| 10 Single | None | – |
| 31 Married | 11 with no children<br>7 with one child<br>10 with two children<br>3 with three children | 18 main careerists (incl. 2 sole careerists)<br>11 "equal" careerists<br>2 secondary careerists |
| 8 Divorced or Separated | 3 with no children<br>3 with two children<br>2 with three children | –<br>–<br>– |
| 1 Widow | 1 with two children | – |

'–' = not applicable

## 3.7 Gaining Access

Martin has argued that “the venerable university name is as much a factor in gaining access as anything else” (1985: 15). For the purpose of this study, a direct approach to gaining access was adopted. This approach took the form of an introductory letter to provide institutional legitimisation. A few days later the author made follow-up telephone calls to the companies to establish if there were managers who fitted the criteria for inclusion in the study and if they would be willing to be interviewed.

## 3.8 Arranging Dates

In reporting their survey of élite personnel, Grøholt and Higley (1970) underline the problems of timetabling a series of interviews. Élite personnel are prone to last-minute changes in schedules; it is therefore important to build some ‘slack’ into a programme of interviewing. Interviews with senior business executives typically have to be arranged some time in advance, since the respondents can often be away on business. This is even more important if the interviewer has to travel long distances to conduct an interview or a series of interviews in a given area. It is recommended that initial contact should be made three to four weeks in advance of the time the researcher wishes to conduct the interview (Grøholt and Higley, 1970). The author followed this recommendation of making initial contact three to four weeks in advance of the interview. This was necessary because of the international schedules of many of the interviewees. The interview dates and times were then confirmed by letter and, finally, the day before each interview was due to take place the author telephoned interviewees to ensure that their schedules had not changed and that interview would go ahead at the time agreed.

## 3.9 Arranging Times and Timing the Interview

According to Hart (1991), it is unwise to arrange appointments shortly before lunch or at the end of the day unless the interview can be completed with *certainty*. Hart's research experience suggests that respondents' impatience can be problematic, and such arrangements are risky if the respondent is late for the interview (Hart, 1991: 192). She also suggests that, generally, arriving 'just on time' is unsatisfactory where the interviewee's time is restricted. In many instances, the interviewee is not called until the interviewer has arrived, at which point the secretary or receptionist has to locate the respondent, who might often be in a meeting or making an important telephone call. Ten or fifteen minutes can often elapse before the respondent is free, which could cause problems when he or she has stipulated an hour for the interview. Arriving about a quarter of an hour early compensates for this and allows extra time for gleaning valuable information at the reception (Hart, 1991: 193).

Hart also suggests that the location of the interview is not without importance and suggests that most interviewees will suggest a quiet office as an interview venue (Hart, 1991: 193). For this study, the author followed the timing suggestions made by Hart (outlined above), and arranged mutually suited times to conduct the interviews. Forty-four of the interviews were held in participants' offices, four were held in hotels in city centres adjacent to participants' work places, and two were held in participants' homes. All interviews ranged in length from one hour to an hour and a half.

## 3.10 Interview Procedure

According to McCracken (1988), the opening of the interview is particularly important, because in the opening few minutes of the interview it must be demonstrated that the interviewer is a benign, accepting, curious (but not inquisitive) individual who is prepared and eager to listen with interest (McCracken, 1988: 38). In a research setting, it is up to the interviewer to create, in a short time, a contact that allows the interaction to get beyond merely a polite conversation or exchange of ideas. The interviewer must establish an atmosphere in which the subject feels safe enough to talk freely about his or her experiences and feelings (Kvale, 1996: 125). A way to create this atmosphere is to make the opening questions simple, informational ones. A few minutes of idle chatter at this stage is welcome, as it gives the respondent a chance to have a grasp of the interviewer before they allow themselves to talk freely, exposing their experiences and feelings to a stranger (Kvale, 1996: 128). For this study, a few minutes of idle chatter before the opening stage of each interview were engaged in, to give the respondent a chance to feel comfortable with the interviewer. This is an important time to reassure the respondent because it is in these opening stages that he or she sets his or her defences (McCracken, 1988: 38).

Once the preliminaries are completed, the interviewer must deploy the grand-tour questions, and the 'floating' and 'planned' prompts (McCracken, 1988: 38). He or she must take care to see that data are collected for all of the categories and relationships that have been identified as important. In addition to these categories and relationships, the respondent must also be prepared to identify and cultivate data on categories and relationships that have not been anticipated. McCracken also notes that the interviewer encounters salient data in the midst of a very crowded and complicated speech event. There is virtually no opportunity for unhurried identification or reflection. What the investigator does not capture in the moment will be lost forever. This is a challenging

occasion because mistakes are both easy to make and impossible to rectify (McCracken, 1988: 38). What is required of the investigator within this structure is to listen with great care. The interviewer must listen for many things, including impression management, topic avoidance, deliberate distortion, minor misunderstanding, and outright incomprehension, taking, in each case, the necessary remedy to deal with the problem (Briggs, 1986).

## 3.11 The Degree of Structure

Jones (1985) highlights a number of issues that researchers will need to consider in order for interviews to be successful. The first is the problem which all researchers must resolve — how much structure to put in the interview. She makes the point that:

> . . . *there is no such thing as presuppositionless research. In preparing for interviews researchers will have, and should have, some broad questions in mind, and the more interviews they do and the more patterns they see in the data, the more likely they are to use this grounded understanding to want to explore in certain directions rather than others* (1985: 47).

As mentioned above, the degree of structure for this study was achieved by adherence to the interview guide. Although there were some deviations from the sequence in order to follow interesting lines of inquiry and to facilitate an unbroken discussion, the author attempted to cover all the issues mentioned in the interview guide. This required that the author needed to be perceptive and sensitive to events, so that lines of inquiry could be changed and adapted during the interview. Finally, on the subject of structure, Jones advises that the researcher should be warned against assuming that a 'non-directive' interview, where the interviewee talks freely without interruption or intervention, is the way to achieve a clear picture of the interviewee's perspective. This is more likely to

produce no clear picture in the mind of the interviewee of what questions or issues the interviewer is interested in, and in the mind of the interviewer of what questions the interviewee is answering. Too many assumptions of this kind lead to poor data which are difficult to interpret. Researchers are therefore likely to be more successful if they are clear at the outset about the exact areas of their interest (Jones, 1985: 75).

## 3.12 Tape Recording Interviews

According to Patton (1990), a tape recorder is part of the indispensable equipment of evaluators using qualitative methods. Tape recorders do not tune out of conversations, change what has been said because of interpretation, or record more slowly than what is being said (Patton, 1990: 137). In addition to increasing the accuracy of data collection, the use of a tape recorder permits the interviewer to be more attentive to the interviewee. The interviewer who is trying to concurrently write down everything that is said will have a difficult time responding appropriately to interviewee needs and cues — and the pace of the interview can become decidedly non-conversational, as the interactive nature of in-depth interviewing is seriously affected by the attempt to take verbatim notes during the interview. The use of a tape recorder does *not* mean that the interviewer can become less attentive to what is being said (Patton, 1990: 137).

Similarly, Lofland (1971) outlines the benefits of tape recording the interview:

> *One's full attention must be focused on the interview. One must be thinking about probing for further explication or clarification of what he [or she] is now saying; formulating probes; linking up current talk with what he has already said; thinking ahead to putting in a* new *question that has now arisen and was not taken account of in the standing guide (plus*

> *making a note at that moment so one will not forget the question); and attending to the interviewee in a manner that communicates to him [or her] that you are indeed listening. All of this is hard enough simply in itself. Add to that the problem of writing it down — even if one takes shorthand in an expert fashion — and one can see that the process of note-taking in the interview decreases one's interviewing capacity. Therefore, if conceivably possible, tape record; then one can interview* (Lofland, 1971: 89).

McCracken is also in favour of interviews being recorded on tape. He suggests that interviewers who attempt to make their own record of the interview by taking notes may create an unnecessary and dangerous distraction. A verbatim transcript of the interview testimony *must,* in McCracken's view, be created (1988: 41).

All fifty interviews for this study were recorded on tape. This relieved the interviewer from the burden of intensive writing at the time of the interview, in order to concentrate on the interview process. The author agrees with Martin who notes that, by comparison with note-taking, which involves a good deal of on-the-spot selection, and which undermines the reliability of the data collected, tape-recording ensures complete transcriptions for analysis (Martin, 1985: 13-23).

## 3.13 The Interviewer–Respondent Relationship

According to McCracken, the best manner in which to conduct an in-depth interview is to strike a balance between formality and informality for each of the participants in question. A certain formality in dress, demeanour, and speech is useful because it helps the respondent cast the investigator in the role of a 'scientist', someone who can end up asking very personal questions, not out of personal but professional curiosity. This formality

also helps to reassure the respondent that the investigator can be trusted to maintain the confidentiality that has been promised to the respondent. A certain, balanced informality is useful because it reassures the respondent that for all of his or her professional training, the investigator is not a cold, distant creature unacquainted with or indifferent to the complexities and difficulties of the respondent's lifeworld. Naturally, the formality-informality balance will have to be tuned up or down according to the particular demands of special contexts (McCracken, 1988: 26).

In this study, the above guidelines were followed in order to strike a balance between formality and informality. Respondents generally spoke formally at the beginning of the interview, and whenever they outlined company policies and procedures. As the interview progressed respondents spoke more informally of their personal experiences, ambitions and achievements. As Stebbins (1972) noted, the qualitative interview gives the respondent the opportunity to engage in an unusual form of sociality. Suddenly, they find themselves in the presence of the perfect conversational partner, someone who is prepared to forsake his or her own 'turns' in the conversation and listen eagerly to anything the respondent has to say (Stebbins, 1972). This characteristic of the qualitative interview leads to other benefits, including the opportunity to make oneself the centre of another's attention and to state a case that is otherwise unheard (Ablon, 1977). Together, these advantages suggest that there are, for most respondents, benefits to compensate for the risks of the qualitative interview (McCracken, 1988: 28).

## 3.14 Maintaining Control of the Interview

Time is precious in a research interview. Long-winded responses, irrelevant remarks and getting side-tracked in the interview will reduce the amount of time available for focusing on the particular issues being addressed. This means that the interviewer must maintain control of the interview. Control is maintained by the interviewer by (i) knowing what it is that he or she wants to find out, (ii) asking the right questions to get the information needed, and (iii) giving appropriate verbal and non-verbal feedback (Patton, 1990: 130).

Knowing what information is required means having the ability to recognise and distinguish appropriate from inappropriate responses. It is not enough just to ask the right questions. The interviewer must listen carefully to make sure that the responses received provide answers to the questions that are asked. The first responsibility, therefore, in maintaining control of the interview, is knowing what kind of data one is looking for and directing the interview in order to collect that data (Patton, 1990: 131). For this study, control of the interview was maintained relatively easily as the author adhered to the prepared interview guide which determined the data that was required.

Giving appropriate feedback to the interviewee is essential in pacing an interview and maintaining control of the interview process. Head nodding, taking notes, ‘uh-huhs’, and silent probes (remaining quiet when a person stops talking) are all signals about how the interview is progressing. On the other hand, it is often necessary to stop an unfocused respondent who strays off the track. The first step in stopping the long-winded respondent is to cease giving the usual cues mentioned above that encourage talking — by ceasing head nodding, or by interjecting a new question as soon as the respondent pauses for breath (Patton, 1990: 132). On a few occasions in this study, the author had to provide the cues mentioned

above to stop the over-talkative interviewee and to ensure that all the topics on the interview guide were covered. All fifty participants in the study were very forthcoming with data and were also very enthusiastic about taking part in the research.

## 3.15 Interviewer Bias

According to Jones (1985), an interview is a complicated, shifting, social *process* occurring between two individual human beings, which can never be exactly replicated. We cannot get at some 'objective truth' that would exist if only the effects of interpersonal interaction could be removed (1985: 48). Yet the matter is not straightforward. Are we not concerned in some ways with avoiding the bias of imposing our own definitions to the extent that we do not see those of our respondents? The answer has to do with the way in which we understand and use the concept of bias — not as something to be avoided at all costs — but as something to be used, creatively, contingently and self-consciously. We use our 'bias' as human beings in creative and contingent ways in order to develop particular relationships with particular people, and in order that they can tell us about their worlds and we can hear them. In doing this we use ourselves as research instruments to try and empathise with other human beings. No other research instrument can do this (Jones, 1985: 48).

Jones (1985), suggests that if we as researchers want to obtain good data it would be better that the persons we are interviewing trust us enough to believe that we will not use the data against them. She also suggests that we must ensure the interviewees that we will not regard their opinions as foolish. Jones further suggests that researchers must be aware that interviewees do not produce a well-rehearsed script that tells very little about what actually concerns and moves them; or that they do not see an opportunity to manipulate us to suit certain personal ends of which we are

unaware. Thus, the stress in much that is said about interviewing is on the need to assure respondents of confidentiality, on using and developing the social skills (verbal and non-verbal) which we have all used at some time or other to convince others that we want to hear what they have to say, take it seriously, and are indeed hearing them (Jones, 1985: 51).

As noted earlier, for the purposes of the current study the author adhered to the interview guide derived from a review of the literature. The author believes that this guide helped to reduce interview bias. The author also believes that it is possible to develop a style which combines an informal conversational approach with the formal interview guide which together helps keep possible interview bias to a minimum.

## 3.16 The Period After the Interview and Transcribing the Interview

The period after the interview is critical to the rigour and validity of qualitative methods. This is a time for guaranteeing the quality of the data. The first thing to be done after a tape-recorded interview is to check the tape to make sure it was recorded properly (Patton, 1990: 139). For this study, the author followed this advice and checked each tape before leaving the interview to ensure that the data was recorded properly. This period after the interview is a critical time of reflection and elaboration: “It is a time of quality control to guarantee that the data obtained will be useful, reliable and valid” (Patton, 1990: 140).

Since the raw data of interviews are quotations, the most desirable kind of data to obtain would be a full transcription of interviews. Although transcribing is time consuming, transcripts can be enormously useful in data analysis, or later, in replications or independent analyses of the data

(Patton, 1990: 138). In this study, all interviews were transcribed verbatim immediately or shortly after each interview by the author. Each interview transcript typically ran to ten single-spaced typed pages, totalling five hundred pages in all.

## 3.17 Organising Qualitative Data for Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data is a creative process, there are no formulas, as might be the case in statistically driven research. It is a process demanding intellectual rigour and a great deal of hard, thoughtful work (Patton, 1990: 146). Many researchers after collecting qualitative data spend a great deal of time turning it into numbers or otherwise attempting to quantify it. They recognise that numbers have a seductive air and, sometimes, thinking politically of the acceptability of their findings, they gear their data to quantitative statements. Others argue that doing this spoils the richness of the data, often so painstakingly collected, and fails to give the holistic view so important in qualitative research (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991: 105).

According to Piore (1979), the analysis of qualitative data is perhaps the most demanding and least examined aspect of the qualitative research process. The exact manner in which the investigator will travel the path from data to observations, conclusions, and scholarly assertion cannot and should not be fully specified. Different problems will require different strategies. Many solutions will be ad hoc ones (Piore, 1979: 595). The object of analysis is to determine the categories, relationships, and assumptions that inform the respondent's view of the world in general and the topic in particular. The investigator comes to this undertaking with a sense of what the literature says ought to be there, a sense of how the topic at issue is constituted in his or her own experience, and "a glancing sense of what took place in the interview itself" (Piore, 1979: 595). The investigator must be prepared to use all of this material as a guide to what

exists there, but he or she must also be prepared to ignore all of this material to see what none of it anticipates. If the full powers of discovery inherent in the qualitative interview are to be fully exploited, the investigator must be prepared to glimpse and systematically reconstruct a view of the world that bears no relation to his or her own view or the one evident in the literature (McCracken, 1988: 42).

According to Easterby-Smith et al. (1991), there are two basic methods of analysing qualitative data. The first method is known as content analysis, whereby the researcher 'goes by numbers' and 'frequency'. The second method is known as 'grounded theory', whereby the researcher goes by feel and intuition, aiming to produce common or contradictory themes and patterns from the data which can be used as a basis for interpretation. This second approach is much less bitty: researchers need to stay close to the data and any observations made have to be placed carefully in context. Classically, the data used in this type of research is kept out 'on the table' and available for scrutiny (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991: 105).

## 3.18 Grounded Theory

Glaser and Strauss (1967) perceived an undue emphasis by researchers on verification of theory and not enough on discovery. They developed the *grounded theory approach* in which researchers would seek to generate theory on the basis of observations made in the course of conducting research (1967: viii). The *grounded theory approach* methodology begins with qualitative data (e.g., a transcript) and then engages in a "process of sifting and categorising in an attempt to develop hypotheses grounded on the data" (Beard and Easingwood, 1989: 3). Easterby-Smith et al. consider the grounded theory approach particularly good for dealing with transcripts. This approach recognises that the large amounts of non-standard data produced by qualitative studies make data analysis problematic (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991: 108). Jones (1987)

comments that grounded theory works because “rather than forcing data within logico-deductively derived assumptions and categories, research should be used to generate grounded theory, which “fits” and “works” because it is derived from the concepts and categories used by social actors themselves to interpret and organise their worlds” (1987: 25).

Glaser and Strauss argue that grounded theory should be developed in such a way as to “facilitate its application in daily situations by sociologists and laymen” (1967: 327). First, it should:

> *. . . closely fit the substantive area in which it would be used. Second, it must be readily understandable by laymen concerned with this area. Third, it must be sufficiently general to be applicable to the multitude of diverse daily situations within the substantive area, not to just a specific type of situation. Fourth, it must allow the user partial control over the structure and process of daily situations as they change through time* (1967: 237).

A model of data analysis, developed by Easterby-Smith et al. based on the grounded theory method, was chosen for the analysis of data in this study. There are seven main stages to analysis of the data according to this model, these stages are:

1 *Familiarisation:* The first step of analysis meant re-reading the interview transcripts. This enabled some first thoughts to emerge and notice what was of interest. This stage however was essentially exploratory, where questions began to be framed (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991: 108).

2 *Reflection:* This stage meant a process of evaluation and critique as the data were evaluated in the light of the literature review in Chapter Two. The kind of questions that the author asked herself at this stage were: Does the data support existing knowledge?; Does it challenge it?; Does it

answer previously unanswered questions?; Is it different?; What is different? The stage is distinctive because of the volume and range of hypotheses, explanations or solutions which are still very much at the instinctive 'gut feelings' stage. These still need thinking about and might be substantiated, but haven't yet been rigorously tested (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991: 109).

*3 Conceptualisation:* According to Easterby-Smith et al. (1991: 109), at this stage there is usually a set of concepts or variables which seem to be important for understanding what is going on. However, the researcher will not yet be sure just how reliable or valid these concepts are: do they really relate in a consistent way to show how the individual views an issue, or has there been misinterpretation of what has been said? At this stage the researcher may well come across more concepts which were previously missed, and these can be added to the list. In this current study, this meant that the author needed to go back to the data and search for concepts and methodically highlight them where they appeared. Different coloured pens were used to highlight the different concepts.

4 *Cataloguing concepts:* Easterby-Smith et al. (1991: 110) suggest that once it is established that the concepts identified do seem to occur in people's explanations, then they can be transferred onto cards as a quick reference guide. In this study, this meant that the author established concepts from the interviewees and coded and catalogued them accordingly.

5 *Recoding:* At this stage all the references to particular concepts are known, therefore it is possible to go back quickly and easily to those places in the data to see what was actually said. This meant that the author went back to the data and compared what was actually said in order to redefine and recode the concepts. This is called *laddering.*

Laddering took place both up and down the databank, this meant enlarging or collapsing the codes selected (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991: 110).

6 *Linking:* According to Easterby-Smith et al. (1991: 111), by now the analytical framework and explanations should have become clear, with patterns emerging and concepts spotted that could fit together. There should be a clearer hypothesis based on the evidence which has been gathered and organised. In this study, this meant linking all the variables which were identified as important into a more holistic theory. This involved linking the empirical data with more general models in the literature review, and took the form of going backwards and forwards between the literature and the evidence collected in practice.

7 *Re-evaluation:* At this stage, Easterby-Smith et al. (1991: 111) note that in the light of the comments of others, the researcher may feel that more work is needed in some areas. For example, the analysis may have omitted to take account of some factors or have over-emphasised others. This meant that the author re-evaluated the already highlighted concepts to ensure that relevant data had not been overlooked or omitted.

Glaser and Strauss (1967), therefore, argue that theory about the social world which 'fits and works' is that which is generated inductively from the data. Categories emerge out of the examination of the data by researchers who study it without firm preconceptions dictating relevances in concepts and hypotheses before-hand (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 45). Similarly, Patton (1990), suggests that:

> *The cardinal principle of qualitative analysis is that causal and theoretical statements be clearly emergent from and grounded in field observations. The theory emerges from the data; it is not imposed on the data* (1987: 158).

This process of data collection is *controlled* by the emerging theory, whether substantive or formal. The initial decisions are not based on a preconceived theoretical framework (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 45).

## 3.19 The Importance of Coding Data for Analysis

Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasise that another way to convey credibility of the grounded theory approach is to use a codified procedure for analysing data, (as outlined above), which allows readers to understand how the analyst obtained his or her theory from the data. When no codified procedure is used in qualitative analyses, the transition from data to theory is difficult, if not impossible to grasp. Without this linking process in mind, the reader is likely to feel that the theory is somewhat impressionistic, even if the analyst strongly asserts he or she has based it on hard study of data gathered during months or years of field or library research (1967: 229).

Coffey and Atkinson (1996), caution that coding should not be seen as a substitute for analysis. The term *coding* encompasses a variety of approaches to and ways of organising qualitative data (1996: 27). Coding can be thought about as a way of relating our data to our ideas about those data. Because codes are thus links between locations in the data and set of concepts or ideas, they are in that sense heuristic devices. Coding reflects our analytic ideas, but one should not confuse coding itself with the analytic work of developing conceptual schemes (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 27). Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that coding constitutes the 'stuff of analysis' allowing one to "differentiate and combine the data you have retrieved and the reflections you make about this information" (1994: 56). They argue that coding is a process that enables the researcher to identify meaningful data and set the stage for interpreting and drawing conclusions. They describe codes as:

> *. . . tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes usually are attached to "chunks" of varying size — words, phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting. They can take the form of a straightforward category label or a more complex one (e.g. metaphor) (*Miles and Huberman, 1994: 56).

They go on to suggest how they see codes being used to retrieve and organise data:

> *The organising part will entail some system for categorising the various chunks, so the researcher can quickly find, pull out and cluster the segments relating to a particular research question, hypothesis, construct or theme* (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 57).

In summary, the main goal of coding is to facilitate the retrieval of data segments categorised under the same codes. Coding in the current study was essentially indexing the interview transcripts, reducing the data to equivalent classes and categories, and in some cases expanding and teasing out the data in order to formulate new questions and levels of interpretation. Segmenting and coding the data enabled the author to think about the data, to break the data apart in analytically relevant ways in order to lead toward further questions about the data. This coding procedure assisted the author to think creatively with the data and generated theories and frameworks.

An example of the coding process used in this study when the issue of 'dual-career marriages' emerged from the data serves to illustrate the coding process for all of the interview data collected and its categorisation. The research theme regarding dual-career marriages was intended to examine if personal and institutional factors inhibit female

managers, who are in a dual-career marriage, from attaining an overseas assignment. Clearly, coding the data according to dual-career marriages was essentially a data reduction task. Segmenting and coding the data according to dual-career marriages allowed the author to characterise what each stretch of the interview was about in terms of general thematic content. Such wide, generic categories facilitated the retrieval of different segments of data that dealt with dual-career marriages. The nature of qualitative interview data meant that data relating to one particular topic were not found neatly bundled together at exactly the same spot in each interview, therefore, sifting through vast amounts of data to find preliminary codes was a slow process. These codes, however, were a useful introduction for more detailed analysis later.

Initially using dual-career marriages as codes or categories allowed a number of sub-categories to be generated and utilised in segmenting the data. Some of the more detailed codes came from the respondents' own words, for example, codes like 'trailing spouse'. These more detailed sub-categories overlapped with one another and the same sub-category was applied several times in a single interview, and the same segment had more than one code attached to it. According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996), these overlapping sub-categories are characteristic of code maps of qualitative data. They note that in conversational talk when we segment the data by attaching codes, topics run into one another and there may be multiple issues to concern ourselves with simultaneously (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: 37).

When the author had decided on the aspects of the data to tag with codes, the next decision to be made was what levels of generality or detail to go into. Weaver and Atkinson (1994), suggest including codes of different degrees of generality so that the data retrieval could be undertaken at different levels (Weaver and Atkinson, 1994: 32). The author followed this suggestion and used codes of varying degrees of

generality to provide links between particular segments of data and the categories that were used in order to conceptualise those segments.

Strauss (1987) suggests that the process of coding is about asking oneself questions regarding the data, and those questions help to develop lines of speculation and hypothesis formation. He suggests that in the course of coding, a researcher takes a topic or according to Strauss a 'phenomenon' and attempts to identify its dimensions, its consequences, and its relationships with other phenomena (Strauss, 1987). In the current example of dual-career marriages, the author asked herself such questions as 'do female managers who are in dual-career marriages *want* an overseas assignment?', 'what are the views of home-country senior management on female managers applying for an overseas assignment?', 'what are the implications for the trailing spouse?' It can be seen, therefore, that the code dual-career marriages was linked to other phenomena, as indeed were all of the other codes which emerged from the interview transcripts. This process used for linking the data after cataloguing, coding, and recoding the interview transcripts in this study was part of the seven stages of the grounded theory method outlined above.

## 3.20 Analysis of Data for this Study

As indicated earlier the questions developed in the literature review chapter were used to design the interview guide. This guide provided the basis for the discussion of the topics in Chapter Four. Direct quotations from the interviews are presented, following Patton's observation (1987) that direct quotations are a basic source of raw data in qualitative evaluation. Patton also noted that direct quotations can help to reveal the respondents' levels of emotion, the way in which they have organised their worlds, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions (1987: 11).

According to Miles, the analysis of qualitative data is perhaps the most demanding and least examined aspect of the qualitative research process (1979: 595). The author agrees with McCracken (1988) that the exact manner in which the investigator will travel the path from data to observations, conclusions, and scholarly assertion cannot be fully specified (McCracken, 1988: 41). As outlined above, the analysis of data for this particular research study was based on the *grounded theory* approach, and on the model of data analysis developed by Easterby-Smith et al. This approach recognises that the large amounts of non-standard data produced by qualitative studies make data analysis problematic (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991: 108). The challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (Patton, 1990: 371). The problem is that "we have few agreed-on canons for qualitative data analysis, in the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying their sturdiness" (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 16). As the existing literature contributed to the initial design of this study, the author found it appropriate to revisit the relevant literatures to help focus the analysis of data and to examine what was learned from the data collected, in order to make a contribution to (i) women in international management, (ii) women in management, and (iii) career theory literatures.

The next step was cross-case analysis which meant grouping together answers from different people to common questions and analysing different perspectives on central issues. As an interview guide approach was used, answers from different people were grouped by topics from the guide. The interview guide, therefore, provided a descriptive analytical framework for analysis. The author agrees with Patton (1990) who suggests that there is not typically a precise point at which data collection ends and analysis begins. In the course of gathering data, ideas about possible analysis occur; those ideas constitute the beginning of analysis

and they are part of the record of field notes (Patton, 1990: 378). When data collection had formally ended, analysis of the data began by organising analytic insights and interpretations that emerged during data collection. This provided the beginning of organising the data into topics. Patton (1990) noted that this process of labelling the various kinds of data and establishing a data index was a first step in content analysis — while the content of the data was being classified. Patton further suggested that “a classification system is critical; without classification there is chaos. Simplifying the complexity of reality into some manageable classification scheme is the first step of analysis” (Patton, 1990: 382). In this study, various categories emerged from the classification scheme which enabled the data to be coded. These codes were then used to retrieve and organise the data and enable the author to locate segments relating to a particular research question. The cataloguing and coding procedures detailed in section 3.19 were particularly useful for obtaining theory from the data. From the data analysis in this study, twelve main themes emerged and the findings relating to these themes are presented and analysed in detail in Chapters Four and Five.

In summary, the use of interviews was particularly advantageous in the context of this research study, as interviews provide depth; information from non-verbal behaviour; opportunity to probe; greater sensitivity to misunderstandings; and, more spontaneity in the answers given — all required given the complexity of the research question addressed in this study (McCracken, 1988: 65). As a research technique, however, interviewing consumes large amounts of gross and net time — arranging, travelling to and from each interview, actual interview time, transcribing, analysing, and collating overall findings (Miller, 1991: 161).

In this study, the author believes that the particular strengths of interviewing, however, far out-weigh any weaknesses, especially in the use of immediate follow-up questions, and the yield of rich sources of data on people's experiences, opinions, aspirations and feelings (May, 1993: 91), as revealed in Chapter Four.

# *Chapter Four*

# FINDINGS

## 4.1 Introduction

The main findings from the interviews are presented thematically in this chapter. The fifty subjects interviewed are all employed in *senior* management positions and all have experience of at least one overseas assignment. Direct quotations from the managers are presented. In order to respect the identity of the interviewees, each quotation is identified by the broad industry sector in which the manager is employed. A full transcript of each interview is available from the author.

This study has attempted to assess new developments in the study of the international senior managerial career move by conducting empirical research with fifty female *senior* international managers in Europe. In doing this, the findings contribute to filling an empirical gap in the international human resource management literature, where researchers such as Scase and Goffee (1990) noted that "without empirical research, such discussions [about the international career move] are often sterile and do not contribute to policy formulation and action-setting agendas" (1990: 124).

Prior research has called for additional empirical work, particularly across occupations, organisations and national cultures, in order to increase our knowledge of women in international management (Harris, 1995; Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli, 1993; Punnett et al., 1992; Scase and Goffee, 1990). International human resource management literature has been criticised by Kochan et al. (1992), as focusing too narrowly on functional activities, and, overall, defining the field too narrowly. These researchers argued that a new field of international human resources studies should be built around a broader set of questions. Brewster and Scullion (1997) also stated that, on the basis of these criticisms of previous research, there is a need for a new research agenda in the study of expatriation.

They suggested that this should cover both new developments in international human resource management and the expatriates themselves (1997: 36).

## 4.2 Breaking The Glass Ceiling

As detailed in Chapter One, a number of questions were identified and categorised into three main literatures to help further an understanding of the senior female international career move in Europe. This section is the first of the dominant themes to emerge from analysis of the data and addresses the following questions outlined in Chapter One:

- Does the glass ceiling still exist in Europe?
- What are the barriers which prevent female managers from progressing to senior management positions?

As the study found that all fifty managers interviewed were very aware of 'hitting the glass ceiling' in their home organisations at the early stages of their careers, the quotations selected in this section reflect the sentiments of all the interviewees. The following quotations typify the shared views of the participants:

> *Let me tell you the glass ceiling is there and it is harder than glass. As far as the term is concerned, every time I hear it I think you've got to be kidding; we're talking concrete here. Sometimes we are talking plywood, but, don't minimise it, it is not glass, it is not a glass ceiling* (Manager, Software Company).

> *The glass ceiling is still there, in the sense that there are so few women in global terms that have gone to real positions of seniority in companies* (Manager, Oil Company).

*I don't think I have broken through the glass ceiling. As I moved up the ceiling has moved up, and I would not say that I have broken through the glass ceiling at all. I would say that it is definitely still present* (Managing Director, Telephone Company).

*The glass ceiling is still in place for women, and not a glass one, but absolutely a concrete one. There is no question in my mind but it is firmly, firmly there, and not just here in Ireland, but, in America too. There is no question about that* (Director, Health Insurance Company).

*The glass ceiling is still there for women today. I think here in Belgium it is significant, it is not cracking here* (Partner, Management Consultancy Firm).

*Certainly, there are invisible barriers there today because if one looks at senior management one will find very few women, and there is no real reason why they should not be there. Some domains are easier for women to be working in, being a lawyer is difficult and engineering is also difficult. Sometimes one does not have the camaraderie that one would have in other domains* (Legal Director, Manufacturing Company).

*In our generation the obstacles are not very overt. I think they are quite covert. There was one job that I did not get and I think it was because I was a woman and I was pregnant; that was in the States. I believe there was covert discrimination there. I think every woman comes across both covert and overt discrimination, and I have experienced it both in my academic life and in my medical life* (Medical Consultant).

*The glass ceiling is still in place here in this company because of top management. It is what they promote and it goes right down through the organisation. One has to be better than men. The men in this organisation are very, very critical. They would tear you to pieces at the least opportunity, even when you get into more senior positions than them* (Vice President, Computer Company).

Thirty-one of the interviewees in this study are married and believed that there are additional sacrifices to be made by female managers who partake in international management as balancing a career, marriage and child care from a distance is much more difficult. Twenty-six of the interviewees have children. The quotations below indicate some of the additional barriers which prevent female managers from progressing to senior management positions:

*Balancing home life is difficult if you have children. I must say that I have done more homework for the children around the world by fax than most people. It has never been unusual for faxes to arrive at my hotel room wherever I am, usually with a note from my son to ask if I can read his assignment, or sometimes saying that he cannot understand what he has to do for his homework. So you have to allow extra amount of time for that type of thing* (Human Resources Manager, Manufacturing Company).

*It is definitely more difficult for women to have a senior career position and to have children also. That is another obstacle for women to overcome. Women have to sacrifice more. If you take myself and my partner, for example, when I met him I would have been the one in a more senior position, then our son came along, life did not change for my partner, but life totally changed for me. My whole life was turned upside down. I did hire a nanny for the first two years, and I continued on as*

*though I didn't have a child, but that was not satisfying for me personally. I felt that I couldn't leave the child with a nanny because the sacrifice was too great in the formative years. I wanted to give my kids every chance. I had watched my friends who had kids before me not being able to talk to their kids in their teenage years, and I did not want that to happen to me, so I had a big issue with that. I believed that a balance was needed, I either gave fifty per cent to the job and fifty per cent to the kids, or I gave it all to the job and let the nannies rear the kids, or I gave one hundred per cent to the kids for a number of years. So, I decided that I would give one hundred per cent to the kids for five years. There is no doubt about it, but, women have this guilt feeling. My partner travels all the time, he comes back at weekends exhausted and now that I am back working again I feel a bit more guilty. I try to spend more time with the kids, but my partner does not feel one bit of guilt about the kids* (Human Resources Manager, Computer Company).

The managers also spoke of the difficulties they faced in choosing between their careers and personal lives:

*My husband works in London and I work here in Dublin, so that is quite a tough decision to make because it does affect one's marriage and it does affect one's relationship. The fact that my husband is still in Britain is difficult, because I am a married person here and acting like a single person. But, if I had children I couldn't do what I have done. Where would the children live, would they live in Dublin or London? I think a lot of women have to choose between career and family* (Managing Director, Manufacturing Company).

> *The engineering industry is a very difficult industry to combine work and family. There is no recognition of any kind of child-care facilities and flexible working hours, so, women have to choose between career and family. In my experience most of the responsibility of child rearing falls on the women* (Senior Engineer, Manufacturing Company).

> *I believe that women choose between career and family. In my case it was my dream to have an international assignment. Earlier in my career an international assignment came up, but, I could not take it because I was married — as my former husband was in his second marriage and he had kids, and I played a big role with his kids, and at the time I had to choose between the family and work. At the time I let the work opportunities go because of the family and then I separated two years ago. Fortunately this international assignment came up and I was free to take this because I did not have any family commitments now* (Human Resources Manager, Financial Services Company).

The managers also expressed their views on isolation and loneliness, factors which they believed contributed to the glass ceiling:

> *I feel isolated sometimes. My sister who is a doctor and my friends who are teachers and nurses all seem to have loads of women friends, but I don't. Because of where I work I don't meet very many women. Women don't tend to have the type of networking back-ups that men have, and that is a lack* (Senior Engineer, Software Company).

*It is isolating for women in senior management. In a team, for example, when you are the only woman it is not quite as natural for a woman to go and do the typical things the guys might do after work, like having three or four beers together. The guys can sit there knocking back the beers giggling, and talking about sports. It is slightly lonely* (Account Executive, Technology Company).

*I am constantly aware that I am a woman in a man's world, and that there are barriers that need to be overcome. I find that I have to prove myself and I believe that a man would not have to do this* (Vice-president, Pharmaceutical Company).

The fifty managers in this study, all of whom have reached senior management positions, believed that they need to be as well qualified, or in some cases more qualified, more ambitious and more mobile than male managers. The respondents suggested that, in addition to these traits, they broke through the glass ceiling in their own careers because (i) they persistently asked for their next career move, rather than waiting to be offered the next move, and (ii) they were better than their male counterparts at balancing a number of functions at the same time. The respondents believed that:

*Women have to be much more outspoken about what they want. When men come to promote people, they look to people like themselves. The women might be achieving the results, but, they are not shouting about it, so they don't get promoted. And that is why women need to be much more self-confident, and say what they want, and say things like 'if that job ever come up, I want to be considered for it'. If women don't do that, they are going to continue to be left behind. I don't think*

*enough women do this. But, for myself, I am very career minded and I go forward and say 'this is what I want'. I ask where is my next career move? And I keep on asking and badgering people until I get answers and I think that is very important, and I don't think enough women do that. They sit back and they wait. You must let your intentions be known. I constantly keep saying what I want. After my first appraisal in the company I said to my manager, who was the financial controller, 'I want to be running my own division'. I thought he would collapse off the chair. I said, 'I don't know how long it is going to take me to get there, but, that is my ultimate aim'. Another thing is that, on the personal front, you have to get yourself known and that is part of pushing yourself. Overall, flexibility, getting known and letting people know your career aspirations are important to break through the glass ceiling* (Managing Director, Manufacturing Company).

*I always went ahead and looked for the next promotion. That is important. In my previous job when I did a job at a certain level and after one or two years I would get bored and I would go and ask for the next promotion. I would always ask for a chance. And then when I made progress I realised that I was very lucky to be given a chance and I took advantage of that. A lot of women do not do this* (Partner, Management Consultancy Firm).

As stated above, the managers believed that in order for them to break through the glass ceiling they needed to be better than male managers at balancing a number of functions simultaneously. The respondents suggested that they developed this ability from their childhood experiences and their socialisation as children. The respondents recalled from their childhood socialisation their fathers being singularly focused on

work outside the home, whereas their mothers needed to develop the ability to balance a number of different responsibilities:

> *The glass ceiling is all about hidden, unspoken and indirect things. The invisible barriers are discomfort, lack of trust and generally convincing men in the organisation that you are powerful enough to run the organisation and achieve results. Men are all concentrating on achieving results and really they don't want anything to get in their way. Their whole life is like that. So, they only want people on the team who can achieve results. As a female entering the organisation for the first time or coming to a new country you are very much going to be tested. Women, blacks, Jews, all minorities are tested. But, I think men are concentrating on results, whereas women are much better at balancing a number of things and that is very discomforting for men. Men are only concentrating on one thing, that is, achieving results, and they get very discomforted with women. All of this goes back to our socialisation, and all of it has to do with our mothers who could and had to manage fifty things all together, and that was the only thing we ever saw. Whereas, we were very aware that our fathers had only one thing to do: he went out to work and came back again. It all goes back to our childhood. And women are much better at keeping a number of different balls in the air* (Chief Executive, Insurance Company).

> *There is no question about it, for women to break through the glass ceiling they have got to be better at balancing more things. I think there are more obstacles, particularly in the initial stages of an international career move. There are difficulties in trying to be accepted, trying to understand the culture, getting your arms around the business, understanding different ways of doing things. I have to balance all of that with two little*

*children, one is fifteen months and the other is three and a half. I don't think the main obstacle is child care, however, but I think the biggest challenge for us is balancing all of that with my husband's circumstances. One of the biggest problems is the spouse as they are not working and their expectations and their careers are put on hold when they move with their wives* (Managing Director, Manufacturing Company).

The findings also illustrate that many of the barriers which prevent female managers from reaching senior managerial positions in their home organisations are similar to those experienced by female international managers. The findings further reveal that it was necessary for the participants to have senior managerial experience in their home organisations before being considered for international managerial positions:

*We have 7,000 employees, and at my level there are not very many female managers. I certainly had many barriers getting to my position in my home organisation because of my gender. The company is not particularly women friendly. A woman is supposed to have the necessary senior experience before she is given the chance of an international position, whereas a man who is working in area A is often given the chance of an international promotion to area B or C, where he has no experience at all. Whereas, a woman would be told that she does not have the qualifications. That sort of thing has gone on* (Managing Director, Telephone Company).

*I had a senior position in the Swedish administration system before I came here. I do not think that I would have been given the opportunity for an international position if I did not have this position first, in Sweden, because men tend to recruit men. It has nothing to do with intellectual ability* (Director, European Commission).

> *We have 250 employees here right now, with only three women in senior management positions. The company is Swiss, so they have a lot of male managers. It is unusual for them to have a woman in senior management. I remember once when I went to a meeting and they didn't know what to do with me as I was the only woman. I am an American and I worked in England for five years and before that I gained senior managerial experience in the States. I believe that if I did not have this experience I would not be here today. There is a programme in the company for people with high potential who are chosen to go to a lot of companies all over the world. But, it is mostly men that are chosen. Maybe this will change, but I think it will be a long time before things really change regarding societal attitudes to women having careers* (Financial Controller, Pharmaceutical Company).

In summary, the findings illustrate that the barriers which prevent female managers from progressing to senior managerial positions in domestic and international management are (i) balancing home and work life, (ii) isolation and loneliness, (iii) constant awareness of being a woman in a man's world, (iv) having to prove oneself, and (v) having to work harder and to be better than their male counterparts. The respondents shared the view that the glass ceiling in home countries is a contributory factor to the low participation rate of women in international management.

In addition to the difficulties discussed above, further barriers prevent female managers from moving internationally. A significant obstacle for married female managers arises when the male partner becomes the trailing spouse. The next section presents the findings from the interview data in relation to the male trailing spouse. As thirty-one of the interviewees in the study are married, the data reveals the various coping strategies used by the managers to overcome this difficulty.

## 4.3 The Trailing Spouse

As highlighted in Chapter One, a number of questions remain unanswered in relation to the senior female international career move. The fact that the international assignment may require that the trailing spouse gives up the structure and continuity in their life can make dual career issues highly problematic for the expatriate couple. This study regards the 'trailing spouse' as the partner in the secondary professional role. Each dual-career couple faces different difficulties, for example, the couple's marital status, host-country work-visa laws, and the trailing spouse's occupation. This section presents data from the interviews to help answer one of the questions posed in Chapter One:

- Are there additional difficulties for female international managers when the male partner is the trailing spouse?

> *Women may turn down international career moves because of the concept of the trailing spouse. If you are a two-career family then having a trailing spouse is a fairly significant move* (Human Resources Manager, Automotive Energy and Component Company).

> *Obviously, it is more difficult for women to move if they are part of a dual-career couple. There would have to be an agreement between the couple and they would have to work that out and that is why women are taking international assignments less and less. No company is going to accept responsibility for two people and it is a very rare occasion when the second person can find a job. There might be problems with work visas for the second person also* (Chief Executive, Insurance Company).

*I believe that it is extra difficult having a male trailing spouse because it is more unusual, and the pressure is really on him to a large extent and that is all the more reason why I am eternally grateful to him. I don't think that a lot of men would be prepared to do this. It takes very special men, and men that can put up with the sort of comments that people make about the situation. He has come across a lot of comments from people. People say it to him openly that they cannot believe that he is a trailing spouse. People say all these 'wonderful' things to him like that he must have the patience of a saint, and that makes it worse then* (Counsellor, Government Department).

The managers also suggested that it is considerably more difficult when it is the male partner's career that is 'being put on hold', as the norm is not for the female partner's career to have priority:

*In Germany it is very, very unusual if the husband's career takes second place. One of my colleagues here in the bank is married and she has one child and she works here full time. Her husband works half days and a lot of people have been surprised with this. It is not the normal way (Bank Manager).*

Of the thirty-one *married* respondents in this study, sixteen respondents believed that the progression to the top of their managerial careers was facilitated by the careers of their spouses becoming the secondary career. These interviewees stressed that they were both lucky and unusual in that their careers took *priority* over their partners', and they believed that this undoubtedly contributed to their career success:

*I have a husband and that is another challenge. It has been extremely difficult for us. I guess it was a surprise that the actual move would be difficult because we considered ourselves pretty worldly and flexible and we found the move*

*much more difficult than we thought it would be. My husband originally had a job lined up here in Brussels, but that fell through. We are now here three years and since we have been here he hasn't had a full-time job. I would come home at night and he would be extremely frustrated and unhappy and he would say things like "I hate this place", and that is very much an extra strain on me because it isn't something that I could offer any support on. He would say to me "you just don't know what it is like, you have someone to talk to all day and I have no-one". So from his standpoint the international move has not been a positive experience. Also, since there are so many men that move rather than women, there are a lot of women groups that my husband cannot go to. He has found a group of men here who are the partners of high-flying women, but, they are mostly older retired men, and my husband is not yet forty. My husband and I made a conscious decision to allow my career to have priority and that was also a difficult position to reach, because my husband's career had to take second place. I think that is another reason why many women do not take international career moves, because their husbands' careers have to take second place, and especially if couples are planning on having children it puts the female in an awkward position* (Manager, Freight Carrier Company).

*My husband retired when we moved and undoubtedly that made it so much easier for me. I would say that is the single largest factor which allows me to perform to my full ability at my job. The one outside factor that has made all the difference to my job has been the support of my husband. He is fabulous. He cooks for me all the time. When we moved here to Brussels he got involved with the STUDS (Spouses Trailing Under Duress Successfully) group, and this meant that we had a*

*whole new social element and that was really nice. There are about sixty men in this group who follow their high-flying partners around the world. I think, number one, STUDS helped us to make new friends and, number two, if you look at any of the research on expatriates you will see that the ones that don't make it are the ones where their spouses don't settle. If the spouses and families don't make it, then the employees don't make it* (Managing Director, Telephone Company).

*When I moved from England to the United States my husband came with me. I would not have gone without him. My husband had to give up his job and the company did not compensate for all that. My career has always taken precedence all through my married life, and I know that I am very lucky with this. We don't have any children, which helps, as I can do a lot more things. I think that if we had decided to have children it would have been very difficult for us because I don't think organisations are flexible enough for women with children* (Manager, Retailing Company).

*Most people think that having an international career is exciting. In Canada it sounds quite exotic to say that you are going to live in Europe for a while. But, the reality is quite different, because it means that the husband has to sacrifice his career for three or four years. If you have small children it is vital that both parents share in the responsibility in bringing up those children, and you have to think of the children's education. My husband is actually working here now. He works as a consultant which means that he is quite flexible. When he took this job he said that our children would be his priority and he would have to do the school runs and that type*

*of thing. So, my career has priority for these four years at least. One career has to have priority because of the huge amount of travel involved in an assignment like this and because of the school breaks as one does not have the support network of family. I missed this a lot when I came here first* (Managing Director, Freight Carrier Company).

Eleven of the thirty-one married interviewees stated that their careers were *equal* to their partners, and because of this three couples decided to have commuter marriages, meeting only at weekends rather than sacrificing one career:

*It is very interesting when you fly from Dublin to London on Friday night and back on Monday morning to see how many other people are also doing it; there are quite a few people. I know one woman who commutes from France to New York every week. Before this she commuted from Paris to London for five years. I think if people want to do it they can, but, it is very tough* (Managing Director, Manufacturing Company).

*I am responsible for the overall site here in Ireland, but, I am also director for international quality assurance, which means that I manage groups in the United States, Tokyo, Beijing and Taiwan. So, I always have too much travelling. I wake up in the middle of the night and I look in my briefcase for my ticket to see where I am! I followed my husband's career for several moves, but now I am here in Ireland and my husband and son are in the United States. In the summer all of the family are together here in Dublin for a month or two. My son has an Irish nanny, he is eight going on forty, he sends me e-mail messages and fax messages every day* (Director, Computer Company).

Only two of the interviewees acknowledged that their partners' careers were the main careers. This created further difficulties in planning their own careers. The findings also showed that achieving a balanced life-style is important, but difficult for dual-career couples:

> *I went to New Zealand with my husband, as he had a job to go to and I didn't have a job. I decided that I would look for a job while I was there and I got a job after three weeks, so I was very lucky as it just worked out for me. When you are in a dual-career relationship it is very difficult balancing two careers. We have come to the conclusion that somebody has to take the lead and somebody has to take the second role, because you can't operate two executive careers at the same time. Then my husband was moved to London, so I moved with him again. I got a very good promotion in a company which I had been working for in London in October 1993, but in November 1993 my husband was moved to Dublin. So after a month we had this dilemma about what we were going to do. We decided that he would travel to Dublin and I would stay in London. We had a young child and two countries to commute between. My husband found it very difficult when I was not with him. He felt that there was a lack of commitment from me to the relationship, and I found it very difficult because I was managing a home, a job and I became pregnant again. It was not a planned pregnancy so it was all very difficult. That was a very tough year, so then I decided that I was not going to work at all. I decided that I was going to take time out and move to Dublin, and that was really the hardest thing of all, adjusting from working so hard to doing nothing at all. I did that for two years, and then I came back to work again. I look at the number of people who are separated or divorced in my peer group and most of the causes have been people living two separate lives. My husband has a very good job, but he is*

*away a lot. He goes to work at 6.30 in the morning and is not home until late at night, and if you have got two of you doing that your paths just do not cross. So, I think that you have to make some trade-offs, like where are your priorities going to be and I decided it was going to be my family first. So, my husband's career now takes precedence, because if one stands back one has to decide which career is going to be the main career. With two small children now, that suits me at the moment, but, in ten years' time it might be quite different, who knows?* (Marketing Director, Telecommunications Company).

Forty-nine of the respondents believed that most dual-career problems are left to the couple to resolve, with no help from their organisations. Of the fifty managers interviewed, only one had experience of the trailing spouse being facilitated:

*I think our company is quite good because it has started putting various policies in place and looking at what assistance we can give the spouse. I know of two occasions here where the trailing spouse has been the husband. One case worked out very well, but, the other case ended up in divorce. Our company will now pay for the education fees of the trailing spouse at university and that is a good package as some of the education fees can be quite expensive. It is a good idea also because if there is a problem with working visas what are the spouses going to do* (Human Resources Manager, Automotive Energy And Component Company).

Overall, therefore, it is evident that additional difficulties exist when the male partner is the trailing spouse, but, as the above evidence illustrates these difficulties are not insurmountable.

## 4.4 International Career Versus Relationship and Child-bearing Conflicts

As detailed above in section 4.3, the male trailing spouse is more problematic than the female trailing spouse for international mangers who are in dual-career relationships. Additional difficulties, however, also affect female unmarried managers. The interview data presented in this section first explore the challenges faced by unmarried female international managers and suggest that they have more difficult life-style choices to make than their male counterparts. Second, the findings confirm that international mobility for the married female manager is further restricted when there are children to be considered. In particular, this section addresses one of the questions posed in Chapter One:

- What responsibilities do female managers have in relation to home and family members?

As discussed in Chapter Two, work–family conflict is not only experienced by married female international managers, but, being single also presents its stresses and pressures, for example, in maintaining personal relationships:

> *The main difficulty for me, as a woman, is combining my career with my private life. Firstly, a lot of men can't handle this, and, secondly, my job is so hard that during the weekend I don't go out. I get up at 5.20 a.m., I am at my office at 6.45 a.m., and I work through until 6.00 p.m. or 7.00 p.m. I then go to a sports club and after that I fall into bed. So, it is very difficult to maintain a social life. But, all of this is a challenge. It is definitely more difficult for women to try to balance everything because there is no woman who has a problem with a man having a nice career, whereas, men have problems with women having careers. For me, for example, it is very difficult.*

*My boyfriend is in London, I am here in Frankfurt, my apartment and my car are still in London, but, I will keep them there for the moment, as I can go there at weekends. I am only here two weeks and so far I have been on a training course in Orlando, a conference in Berlin and I am going to London for the weekend, so it is very difficult. Quite a few of my previous relationships have broken up because I work too hard, and I couldn't do traditional housework like sweeping the floor and being awake at night with a baby* (Bank Manager).

*I moved from France to England three years ago. The move was difficult firstly because of the language, and secondly I was given only short notice. I was wondering what would happen and how would it all work out for me. Socially it was difficult for me. It was more difficult because I am a woman and I came alone. Because I am single I don't fit socially here. I missed my relations. At the beginning I worked fourteen hours a day so that I could get on top of everything and I did not have time to feel lonely. Then I was so tired going home I did not have time to miss people; it was survival that mattered* (Legal Director, Manufacturing Company).

Ten of the participants in this study were single, another eight were separated or divorced, and one was a widow. The single managers believed that by remaining single they were limiting their conflicting roles. They also believed that it was easier for them to partake in international assignments as they had only themselves to consider in the relocation process. The following quotation typifies the unmarried managers in the survey:

*I think the more moves you make the easier it gets. I have had a good number of moves and I travel a lot within this job, but, most of my working life has been 'have bag will travel'. I have never had a problem due to gender while travelling abroad; you just look after yourself* (Manager, Tourism Promotion Agency).

The twenty married respondents with children, in this study, believed that partaking in international assignments created more conflict for them, and they were always conscious of the difficulties their careers caused for family members:

*It is much easier to move if you are single when you have no ties. I can see it with people around me who are single. It is a breeze for them, whereas, most of the people who are married have the trauma of organising the family. If you are single you can have fun and a great social life. There are none of those extra worries. It is because of family reasons that a lot of women do not take an international assignment. I have told my children that there is always a possibility of moving. When I told my eleven-year-old daughter recently that we are moving to New York, and that she would be near her grand-parents so that it would be the easiest of all possible options, she said "You have ruined my life". Then, her second point was that not only would she be the only new kid in the new school that she would have to go to in September, but, in four or five years' time, she would be the only new kid again in a new school in Dublin. So, really, the family is the most difficult aspect of moving for women. You can see all the dimensions of family life that are affected by the move. Your heart bleeds when your children have to leave their friends at school, and maybe go to school in a different language, that is a big factor that a lot of people have to deal with. In fact, a colleague of mine said that*

*when he discussed the possibility of going abroad, his sixteen-year-old daughter put her foot down and said that if he was going she was not going to go. So, what do you do?* (Counsellor, Government Department).

*You have to organise yourself very well and you have got to think of the professional side and the home side of things, so balancing the two is not always easy. That is one of the main difficulties and I can tell you, from my friends also, that is the main difficulty. And I think a lot of women end up giving up their careers because they find so much pressure on them trying to balance everything, and definitely it is a lot harder for them than for men. Men do not have to think about all the home things when they go away. Men just don't think the same way. It is a lot, lot easier for them professionally. If I compare myself to any of my colleagues, I wish I had a wife at home. I find that when I am travelling I still have to rush home to get a case ready, whereas for men their wives will sort out their case of clothes, and the men do not have to sort out the food for the children, or baby-sitting, so I feel it is totally different. When you live abroad it is an extra difficulty because you do not have the support systems of home* (Vice President, Computer Company).

*Women have a lot more things to think about if they have a family. They have to think about the dual-career situation. They have to think about schools. Children are not always mobile. They are mobile up to the age of ten or eleven, and after that you have to think about how they are going to get their qualifications for life, and life shouldn't be too disruptive for them. But, most of the housework falls to the women. We have got someone who comes in once a week to clean, but I do most of the work around the house in comparison to my*

*husband. My husband is very good, he picks our daughter up from the crèche more days than I do, but, I would spend more time with her. My life is an absolute helter-skelter. It really is. It is a complete helter-skelter, and I would love to get off. But, I'm not sure how long I would be happy if I got off. I think I would love to stop, I really do. But, I am not sure about what I would do. I have a mother who is 83, who lives on her own in Northern Ireland, and I go up every fortnight to her and spend the weekend with her. I think women bear those things more than men, also. My mother is staying with me now for a fortnight and that is more work; for example, I got up this morning and made her lunch for her before heading to work* (Human Resources Manager, Computer Company).

*I have a three-year-old little girl, so with the move my personal life was harder than my work life. Actually, when I looked at this job I was working in the United States and I told the managing director who interviewed me that unless I could find good child care for my child I wouldn't move. I told the managing director that I had to be happy about the child minder or I wouldn't come here otherwise. First of all I came here to look at the work situation and I also looked at child minders before I finally accepted the job. If I were a man, that wouldn't have come into it* (Financial Controller, Pharmaceutical Company).

*It is always, always women that will take care of the family and the children, even in families where there is supposed to be an equal relationship. This is why I believe that women do not accept international career moves — of course it is. The woman is always to blame if the children are unhappy. There is also a guilt feeling that women experience. I don't know if this is a biological thing or not* (Director, European Commission).

The thirty-one married interviewees firmly believed that the main obstacles for women in international management are marriage and, particularly, family. The decision concerning the career-related dilemma, of whether to start a family or not, was highlighted by twenty-five of the respondents:

> *I have seen my friends balancing things off because I think there are always conflicts. I am not married yet, so I will make my choice about children when the time comes. I do see my female friends going through a lot of angst and a lot of conflict and a lot of guilt about the choices they make. Because, if you make one choice, of course, you are giving something else up; you can't do something else as well. I believe there is a lot of pressure to be all things possible and to do the balancing that men don't still have to do. Women tend to take on the lion's share of trying to balance everything. From my experience of looking at my friends and my contemporaries it is a massive challenge for a woman to hold down a very big job like some of my friends do, and have very young children, and run a house, and have a social life. It is awe inspiring* (Manager, Oil company).

> *I was at the height of my career when I became pregnant . My pregnancy was not planned, as I had never planned to have children in my life. In fact, I had been told numerous years before that I wouldn't be able to have children. So it was quite a shock to the system, but, once it had sunk in, I accepted that I was going to go ahead with the pregnancy. But, I was told by my boss to take myself off the succession plan within the organisation because I was a woman and I was pregnant. Having children definitely slowed down my career, but, if I had stayed in the business I feel my family would have suffered badly. I made the decision not to stay in the business and, yes, it slowed down my career, as I then had a second baby and*

*I was nearly six years out of the business. I don't know how I stayed sane while I was at home. I drank more red wine in those years that I don't know how I have a liver left. Behind closed doors with two babies is very, very difficult. During those years I set out to achieve two things, I wanted to learn to horse ride and I wanted to do a Master's degree. I achieved the Master's, but, I am still not very good at horse riding, but, those two things got me back out. After studying for the Master's I realised that I could not stay at home. I struggled through the five years and it was not for me. I was unhappy and I realised that if I did not get back to work my kids would suffer long-term and my relationship would suffer. I am back at work only four months now in this new organisation and I am tireder than I have ever been and I am probably stressed out, but, I am alive, and it is the true me. I am totally exhausted and totally overworked and totally under-staffed, but, I love it. I now have to re–establish myself here in Ireland and to prove myself again which will take a lot* (Human Resources Manager, Computer Company).

The fifty respondents also perceived organisations to be too inflexible towards balancing work and family:

*The main obstacles for women are marriage and family. I ask myself if we had kids would we still have moved from London to the States. I got four weeks' notice to move, there is no way that we could have organised kids in that length of time, schools and everything. If I had children it would be very much more difficult. And if I had children would I still work the hours that I work? Probably not, because I would not want my children to be with a minder so much, so you have that dilemma also. Women feel torn between what they should and*

*should not do. We have a couple of women here where the husbands look after the children, but, it is very, very rare. I think a lot of women choose between career and family. I think that if we had decided to have children it would have been very difficult for us. We don't have any children, which helps, as I can do a lot more things. We have chosen not to have any. I am fond of children, but, I like to give them back after a few hours. I don't think organisations are flexible enough for women with children* (Manager, Retailing Company).

As mentioned above, eight of the interviewees were separated or divorced and one was a widow. Being a working widow with two children also had its challenges:

*I was in a very difficult position because I lost my husband twelve years ago, one year before I entered the bank, and I had two small children. The only sentence my boss used when he saw me was 'How are your children?', and I was very unhappy about that, he never said things like that to my male colleagues. There was no difference between me and the other male managers. In fact, I was often in earlier than them and my boss never saw that. My flexibility was never appreciated. I worked very long hours even though I had very difficult family circumstances. Then, I would see my male colleagues when their wives had to go abroad and they made a big fuss about it. At 4.00 p.m. they would say "I have to go home", and then they would say very bluntly "I am a widower today", and I would say "I am a widow the whole year", and they would look at me and say nothing. It is extra difficult for women balancing a career and home. You must make your choices and you must not look for second best, and if you really want to have the best at home and the best at work you cannot make a distinction between both. I found it very difficult, but I learned to live with it* (Bank Manager).

The eight separated or divorced interviewees in this study perceived that their husbands felt threatened by the career success of their wives, and these managers also spoke of the guilt that was associated with their long working hours:

> *My career was a big threat to my husband. I was the major money earner, and it came to a point where I did everything. I had the children. I did the house. It was crazy. When I look back on what I have done, no woman in her right mind should ever contemplate doing all of that. I brought up three children as well as continuing with my work, and it was very, very difficult. I was riddled with guilt especially with the first two, not so much with the third, but, I managed to get through that. I had a terrible time from my ex-husband who was thoroughly confused about the situation and who was proud of me, threatened by me, wanted me at home — but of course all of that doesn't go together. I don't know how I ever did all of that, but, I did. I had lists everywhere and my pledge was to the children, and they could rely on this one hundred per cent, and whatever I said I would never let them down. So, I was the one after work that carried them to their various activities. I did everything. During my lunch time I was rushing around buying cards and presents to allow them to go to birthday parties. I would say that my intention has been to look after my children in all of their needs, but, the drive in my life is my career, for myself, and for my self-development and I am very excited about this* (Manager, Standardisation Organisation).

> *I always worked, but, like most women, what was most important to me was my husband and family. But then, there came a divorce when I was forty-four years old, and I found myself in Belgium with three small children and absolutely no*

*support from my ex-husband. It was not easy. After a divorce especially, you have all kinds of self-pity and you feel upside-down and so on. I also had this guilt feeling about my children. My daughter was thirteen or fourteen years old and she had to take care of the younger ones when I was away, because we could not afford baby-sitters. I would cook on Sundays for the rest of the week, but, all of this was very difficult and also the guilt feeling was always there. It was very difficult for me. One day I would be on a business trip and the next day I would be on a site, and that would mean that I would be away for two nights. I would ring the children at night and I would ring them in the morning to call them so that they would not miss school. So, it was very, very difficult on the children and especially on my little one, as she used to say to me "I wish you were at home making cookies", and I would feel horrible about it. But, I explained to her what I had to do and she now understands what I had to do, and that I did not have a choice. In fact for the past thirteen years I have a suitcase in my bedroom and it has everything ready in it, and all I have to add are two blouses. With young children that is very difficult. When I had three young children, I still did it. I did it because I had no other choice, I needed the money* (Associate Director, Pharmaceutical Company).

As can be seen from the interview data, reported in this section, conflict between work and family prevents many female managers from partaking in international management. Work–family conflicts, however, are not the only barriers to the senior international career move. Other significant obstacles which were highlighted by the respondents will now be discussed.

## 4.5 Mentors

The data from the interviews regarding the role of mentors, in the senior female international career move, is presented in this section. The findings suggest, in addition to the important role of mentoring relationships in the career success of female international managers, that mentors may have a special role in improving the quality of organisational life for female managers. The interview data provides answers to one of the questions posed in Chapter One:

- What role do mentors have on the career of the senior female international manager?

In this study, forty of the interviewees had the experience of either formal or informal mentoring relationships. Twenty-eight of the managers had been mentored by males only, six had been mentored by females only, and six had been mentored by both males and females. All ten interviewees who did not have mentors believed that they would have benefited from such a relationship, especially in the early stages of their careers. The sentiments of ten managers, in current study, who did not have mentors can be summarised as follows:

> *I wish I had a mentor in my career. It is important to have one. I could possibly go with either a male or female mentor. In the early years in particular it was something that I could have done with. With a mentor you would be able to put the local issues on the table, for example, how would I handle this or that, and it is something that I lacked. If I had a mentor it would have been more beneficial to my career* (Account Executive, Technology Company).

*I haven't had a formal mentor in my career. I have had people that I can sound off my ideas with and I still do that. I believe that mentoring is a very good idea and I also believe that there should be a formal mentoring system in organisations. But, people should not be forced to be mentors, because that would not work. I would be very happy to be a mentor for younger people. I don't think it should matter if the mentor is male or female* (Managing Director, Manufacturing Company).

*I never had a mentor in my career. But, I think if I had one, I would have benefited from it* (Vice-president, Computer Company).

Seven of the interviewees in this study suggested that their mentoring relationships were informal, and mentors were usually senior managers or bosses who had given guidance to them:

*Long before the word* mentor *was invented, I was fortunate to have a couple of bosses who were helpful in that way. It was very informal. What you need is someone to discuss issues with and whom you can trust and who sometimes helps you to find a way out and to help you solve problems. I have two sons, and when they were very young it was not acceptable for me to go home and pick up the children from school, so sometimes there were very difficult situations. But, I was very fortunate that I had a boss who arranged meetings so that I could leave when I needed to, and accepted that I took papers home and did work at home, without talking to anybody else about it. So it worked thanks to a very good attitude from his side* (Director, European Commission).

*I had a male mentor, but it was not that formalised. We had a process at one point in the company where there was this idea of 'godfathering', whereby we would be allocated a senior manager whom we would be able to go to in our sector and bounce ideas off. Mine has always been very informal, with a boss that I worked with a number of years ago, before I moved abroad, and whom I have kept very close to. I would consider him as a mentor. I don't think that this is as important for one's career as much as for one's level of sanity. I have had two mentoring relationships, and they have both been with men. I have found these relationships particularly useful in situations which I have found difficult or if I have been going through a rough patch in my career. These men have tended to be a bit longer in the tooth and a bit older in career terms, but, I have found that invaluable* (Manager, Oil company).

Thirty-eight of the interviewees said that females are more likely to be mentored by males, because of the lack of women in senior management positions:

*In a previous job I had a mentor and it was somebody who didn't see me as a female, but, treated me as a professional. He gave me things to do and I initially thought that I couldn't do that, as he put me in situations where I was going to be really stretched, and I thrived on it, and it definitely helped my career. He gave me more faith in myself. I realised that I could do more than I originally thought I could and I became personnel manager and vice-president because of him. He also gave me a lot of international opportunities. I have to say that I never worked for a woman boss, because they are generally not there. I normally work on the board and again because the board is mainly composed of males I have never really worked with females* (Director, Manufacturing Company).

*I have always had mentors. They have always been male. I have never had a female mentor. They are not there at senior levels. I have never come across a female mentor. I always look for a mentor in the first couple of months in my new job and I suss people out quickly. To me it doesn't matter about their personality, but what matters to me is their business brain* (Human Resources Manager, Computer Company).

*I always had mentors in my career. When I would have been making my way up in organisations, they would have been powerful males at that time. And, certainly, in the organisation in which I spent most of my young career there were some men who were very good at mentoring. It is important for everyone to have a mentor, in particular for women, because it gives them information about the organisation which they are not used to having. A lot of research which has been done in the States showed very clearly that women who first made it to the top in big organisations tended to have received formative information from their fathers whom they were closer to, information like how organisations work. The one thing that is hard for women is that there are not enough women in senior positions for them to have a female mentor. But, there are men in organisations who are suited to this purpose, and I really don't think it matters too much whether the mentor is male or female as long as they can provide the information, and a lot of men tend to think that information is power* (Chief Executive, Insurance Company).

*When I was 28 years old I was working as a Marketing Manager in one of New Zealand's biggest companies. The marketing director at the time was fired, so I was appointed marketing director, but the senior management did not want to give me the same package as my predecessor. This was because of my age and probably being female and not being Australian, because the company was run by Australians at that time. I think there were a whole host of other reasons, like lack of confidence in me, for example, whether I was really going to be able to deliver and make such a big leap in job terms. The man who stuck his neck out and gave me the opportunity was a very good mentor to me. He really kept me in touch with what was going on, and what the important issues were, what different people's feelings were, and how to approach things so I would get the best chance within the group. I learned an awful lot, but, had it not been for the kind of feedback I got from my mentor it would have been much more difficult. A year later I was appointed marketing director and it was only then that I realised what I had been missing out on, in terms of the whole package and the benefits and so on, and the kudos from it. So, that is a very good example of having a mentor. An example of where I did not have that kind of relationship was when I was working for a company in England. I went into that company at a very senior level, working part time. Later they asked me to work full time, which I did. But, I was given what was an impossible job. That is really the only time where I ended up really struggling with my career. I didn't have access to anybody who was able to point me in the right direction. It was a very political organisation and it was as big disadvantage for me not to have a mentor. If I had been male it would have been different because in that organisation it was all about male bonding and male drinking and so on. I had a small child at the time, so I worked very hard to get my job done and to get home. The last thing I wanted was to go to the pub* (Marketing Director, Telecommunications Company).

Six of the interviewees who had been mentored by both males and females believed that they were fortunate to have had the experiences of mentoring relationships by both genders:

> *Having a mentor is important. I had one formal mentor and a number of different informal mentors. The formal mentor acted as a career manager for me. I think when you are overseas a home-based mentor is someone who provides that link to when you are going to return. Having a home-based mentor, while I was overseas, kept me in touch with what was happening back home in the company, and I think that is incredibly important. Sometimes, if you want to find solutions or if you want to sound things off and you have a close relationship with your mentor, you can use that person in a confidential situation to sound things off. I think this is very important. Three of the mentors I had were men and two were women. I think it is more to do with their different personalities and the different things that they bring rather than their gender. I think of the two women mentors that I had, one has children and I think it has been really refreshing for me to see that she is very senior, that she has kept a balance in her life and she hasn't become macho. She is not working towards all these macho things like the different images of the long hours and all the rest of it, so it is quite good to see. So, I suppose it is refreshing to see that you can get there and not sacrifice yourself in getting more like men* (Human Resources Manager, Telecommunications Company).

Only one interviewee cautioned about any possible disadvantage of a mentoring relationship, though admitting to its support role:

> *I think people can become over dependent on a mentor. I believe that the best thing to do is to take the very best from everybody. I think taking somebody under your wing to get them started is a help, but long-term I don't know* (Director, Computer Company).

Ten of the managers in this study are now providing a mentoring role for junior staff members, generally for younger females:

> *I love to mentor people. Most of them are women, but not all. It is a different interaction if one is mentoring a male or female. I believe that I have a lot in common with women, because we face some of the same challenges in terms of how we communicate, how we react to things, our family situations, children and the balancing of chores* (Partner, Management Consultancy Company).

> *I have a lot of females working for me, which is just a coincidence because they were in the department when I took it over. I try to spend some time mentoring them* (Human Resources Manager, Computer Company).

> *I have also been a mentor myself. I was officially a mentor for men. Unofficially I have been a mentor for women who have been asking me to mentor them. I would spend some hours discussing their situations and problems. I believe the women have chosen me because there are not very many senior women managers* (Director, European Commission).

In conclusion, the research findings also reveal that managers who do not experience the benefits provided by a mentor, as discussed above, could in turn be a contributory factor in explaining the scarcity of female managers in international management.

## 4.6 Tokenism and Lack of Female Role Models

As highlighted in section 4.5 above, there is a scarcity of senior female managers to provide mentoring support to junior managers. The data presented in this section deals with the additional difficulties experienced when (i) female international managers are in the minority group and (ii) the lack of female role models for senior international managers. The research findings help to provide an understanding of two of the questions posed in Chapter One:

- Are there additional difficulties for the female international manager as part of a minority group?
- Does the lack of female role models have an impact on the senior female international manager?

Thirty of the interviewees reported that they were the first females to represent their companies in international assignments. Forty-six interviewees spoke of the additional problems they experienced which were associated with tokenism, isolation and exclusion, which they believed their male counterparts would not have to endure. Only four of the interviewees believed that they did not experience a sense of isolation:

*I believe that I am in an artificial environment in human resources because there is a large proportion of women there. My colleagues are female, so it is difficult for me to comment on how it feels to be a senior female in the engineering part of the company. I imagine that at times it can be a bit isolating, but, I haven't come across that* (Human Resources Manager, Telecommunications Company).

Forty-six managers in this study suggested that tokenism, isolation, lack of role models and being test cases for future international female managers were significant contributory factors in explaining the scarcity of women in international management:

> *When I worked for a very large firm in New Zealand I felt quite isolated because the group Managing Director there said to me that he happened to have a point of view that women in senior management were actually a bad thing. He was happy to agree with me, however, that there are exceptions to that rule, but, as a general principle he does not think it works. I think that he was a chauvinistic male. He was in his fifties, so a man of a different generation. He liked the status quo and he did not see any reason why it should change. He also said that if I quoted him, he would deny it. And that was quite isolating. I also remember attending a conference of the top fifty companies in New Zealand and I was the only woman executive there, there were forty-nine men* (Marketing Director, Telecommunications Company).

> *I feel a sense of isolation as a woman manager and also this cultural hierarchical system here in Belgium whereby you are not friends with your boss. Coming from my culture in Sweden it is not a matter of grades. Sometimes I feel the staff here do not understand my behaviour when I walk around the corridor*

*and get friendly with them. I don't even know the difference of who is an A, B or C grade, and I don't see that as important. What I lack here is discussion with other women in senior positions. There are a few other Swedish women here in the Commission and sometimes we meet and complain, like when we are tired. Last week, I felt tired and I thought I would quit, as I didn't want to take anymore. Then I met with some of the other women who are doing my kind of work and we discussed things, and I felt support through these women and then I felt strong again* (Director, European Commission).

*I am constantly aware that I am a woman in a man's world, and that there are barriers that need to be overcome. I find that I have to prove myself more than a man would have to. This is because I am very visible and also because of the impression that I am very young. I get the impression that the company believes that it took a risk in taking me, because of gender and age. My predecessor was a male and he looked older than I do. The way you look is the way people perceive you. I am constantly fighting this thing that I look relatively young. It has to be said that most of the men at my level are ten to fifteen years older than me, in my direct peer group, therefore, I am very young for my position. Sometimes the male managers are patronising to me. They have been known to say things like 'you are very good, but', and there is always a but, and then I feel like punching them on the nose* (Vice-president and Controller, Pharmaceutical Company).

*When I joined this firm I believed that I was being treated differently because I was a woman. One time it had to do with promotion and salary. When I was to be made a partner — in fact the first woman consulting partner in Chicago — I was held*

*back a year, because senior management was concerned that I would fail. So, they decided not to take the risk and let me as a senior manager for one more year, and then promoted me the next year. I was very disappointed when I was kept back a year, I was very frustrated. The only reason that I was held back was because of my gender* (Partner, Management Consultancy Company).

*In Ireland there are certainly not enough women in senior management to act as role models for younger women. There are a few, obviously, but one could count them on one hand, the most obvious one being Mary Robinson. But, in business, there are few women who are role models and who have done exceptionally well. There is no reason why there should not be at least as many women at the senior level as there are men* (Manager, Tourism Promotion Agency).

As discussed above, women in international management, typically, do not have female role models to follow. Forty interviewees believed that having a female role model would have been advantageous to their international careers. These interviewees believed that, because of their senior positions, they could now act as role models for younger female international managers. The forty respondents all stressed that they did not want to sound 'over important' when regarding themselves as role models, but, as there was a scarcity of senior female international managers, to date, they now considered it necessary for them to fill this vacancy in order to help other female managers:

*To an extent I would consider myself as a role model in the organisation, for other women. For women who work here in the organisation I would make a special effort to coach them.*

*I don't know if they regard me as a role model, but I would like to think that they do. I would talk to them, and if I felt they were doing something that was not helping their career I would take them aside and say to them that this leads to this and so on, which I think is helpful* (Plant Manager, Pharmaceutical Company).

*I would never have considered myself as a role model until I came back from my international assignment. Now people are approaching me on a daily basis asking me what were my experiences like. When I came back from my international assignment I was given a high step promotion ahead of a lot of people. So I would say yes, I would be a role model in terms of seeing success coming from this role* (International Assignment And Repatriation Manager, Telecommunications Company).

*I think I am a role model, whether I like it or not. I never really realised what impact you have as a manager, because you don't really think that you are doing anything so brilliant, because you have grown into the role, and because you feel comfortable in it. I never realised what my responses would have on certain people. I never realised before that people know exactly what you are doing and what you are saying and what you are wearing. There is no formal dress code within our organisation, Friday is jeans day. I don't abide by those rules, I always try to look smart, because that is something that comes to me naturally* (Customer Services Manager, Computer Company).

*Very definitely I see myself as a role model here in the organisation, but I didn't come to the organisation with that in mind. Women have come to me and asked if they could talk to me. As a woman they ask if I can help them because as women there is a bond there* (Technical Support Manager, Computer Company).

*I would like to think of myself as a role model. I would like for the girls in particular and even the guys to walk away from the department and say that they learned from me. Not only learned from me sitting down with them going through the day-to-day stuff, but that they learned by watching my performance at meetings and from my performance with suppliers. I would like to feel that they have done that. I would like to believe that the girls would think that if I can do it, so can they* (Purchasing Manager, Manufacturing Company).

*I suppose to a certain extent I would see myself as a role model for other women in the organisation. I would like them to think if she can do it, it must be dead easy!* (Human Resources Manager, Computer Company).

In summary, it is clear from the findings in this study that there are additional difficulties for female international managers when they are part of a minority group. As shown above, forty of the interviewees have adopted the positions of role models for other female international managers, as an effective way of encouraging females to develop their managerial careers. These forty managers believed that the actual partaking in international management assignments helped them to become role models.

## 4.7 Networking

As discussed above in section 4.6, female managers in token positions, in comparison to their male colleagues, are subjected to more career disadvantages. The data presented in this section assert that female international managers who are not part of a support network experience career disadvantages. In particular, the benefits derived from being part

of a network group are more significant for those managers who have not had the experience of mentoring relationships. The research question addressed in this section, as outlined in Chapter One is:

- What role do networking groups have on the career of the senior female international manager?

Forty-three of the participants believed that there is a lack of networking for females in senior management. The managers perceived that quite an amount of business is discussed and useful contacts are made when male managers network informally, but as females they are excluded access to these informal situations:

> *There is as lack of networking for female managers and maybe it is worse in Ireland. I got quite a shock when I found out that there were all-men golf clubs, and special days for ladies. Even if you have a handicap of eight, you have to beg and plead to be allowed to play on a Saturday or a Sunday, and the only discussion point I had was 'you pay only half price', and I said 'well I am willing to pay full price', and then they even had to think about that. It would be beneficial for women if they had more informal contacts. From the conferences I have been to, I see that there are quite a few women out there in managerial positions, but we are new, and we are up-coming and we have not shown what we are made of, and what we can do in an almost all-male environment. I still think women have to work harder than men in the managerial environment* (Customer Services Manager, Computer Company).

*In Ireland I have found that there is a lot of networking for men, and it seems peculiar to me that a lot of business is done informally. I came here after working in the United States for eleven years, so I am not shy, but, there is the old boy network that women are excluded from* (Senior Research and Development Engineer, Computer Company).

*Many of the male network 'systems' are not officially through network associations, but are through rugby clubs, football clubs, golf clubs and so forth. It is like a natural ready-made contact system that exists, but that women don't have as much ready access to. So, I think women have to try harder and have to take individual responsibilities for their own careers. In general the networking opportunities for women are not as extensive as for men* (Manager, Tourism Promotion Agency).

The respondents also believed that they were further disadvantaged from networking because of their additional family and home commitments. They believed that they had far less time to network than their male colleagues:

*There is a lack of networking for women in senior management, but maybe we are not like men in looking for things like the old boy network. I wouldn't be interested in that, I wouldn't have the time for it. I just want to go home and do what I have to do. For example, last night I wasn't home until 8.00 p.m. and the home was unhappy because mammy was late coming home. I have three children, one ten, one eight and I have a small baby who is two, and when I come home the two-year-old's face just lights up. He does this for his daddy too, but obviously his world is not complete until his mammy comes home. So I wouldn't have a lot of time for networking* (Chief Accountant, Computer Company).

*To be quite honest, I think women have less time than men for networking. Networking has to take place to a great extent after work and on top of your job. If you are a woman with a family, you have less time. Men have more time for networking. Working women are very busy* (Human Resources Manager, Computer Company).

*There is a lack of networking for women in senior management. But, I work quite long hours and I have a son and a partner, so I really don't have time to network. But, I think one should really make the time to network* (Plant Manager, Pharmaceutical Company).

Despite the shortage of time available to female managers for networking, however, forty-three respondents suggested that if there was a professional networking organisation available for female managers they would ensure that their schedules permitted joining such an organisation:

*I do find it useful to talk to other women. I don't think there is a well-developed professional women's network here in Ireland as yet. I haven't found the right organisation yet, I have investigated four organisations and none of the four seems to have the type of person that would have things in common with myself. I think there is a lack of this type of organisation for senior business managers. There is an organisation called* Network *which tends to be for entrepreneurs, women who are managing their own business, but that is not what I do. I certainly do not have time for a lot of networking with three young children, but if it were part of a professional organisation with time well spent I would make time for it. I think there is an opening for a professional networking for business women* (Human Resources Manager, Computer Company).

Five of the interviewees were members of networking groups for female managers within their own companies. Four of these interviewees were members of networking groups which were already in existence in their organisations and one interviewee was responsible for setting up a female networking group in her organisation:

> *We developed a women's networking programme in the corporation I previously worked for. The corporation took a great deal of interest in that from a corporate legal point of view. They wanted to become involved, which they did. They were concerned about the purpose and the scope of the organisation, and they were very concerned as to why we were forming. Our response was 'you are invited to participate' We are a female organisation and our purpose is to share our experiences with other females to help them overcome obstacles. It has nothing to do with male bashing, it is not a coffee morning, it is not a bunch of hens. These are the types of things you hear, 'ah, it's hen time'. I am not even offended by that type of comment any more, because I know there is a level of fear and it is that negative type of male attitude which produces those type of comments. We would meet monthly and what we did during this forum was that we invited guest speakers and had an agenda and we kept very detailed minutes. Our invited guests ranged from women executives who would talk to us about their background and about what they are doing, but primarily to network. The network is not about reacting, it is about becoming proactive, it is about strength in numbers, it is about sharing so that we can overcome obstacles, because there are obstacles out there, whether they are overt or implied, they exist, and we need to share this* (European Technical Support Manager, Computer Company).

One interviewee who works in the medical profession believed that the professions of medicine and law are still very male dominated, and she is currently involved in setting up a networking group for senior female medical professionals:

> *My colleagues and I have discussed setting up a women's networking group and giving it official recognition and not let it be seen like the old boy network. I have some ideas of how it might work, but I don't want it to be seen as a busy bees' club. I would like to see it set up so that it has a role and not set up so that it looks threatening. Men find women together very, very threatening. It is also interesting that men see women working together equals trouble. I don't know why this is so, because I think that women in positions of authority have a very calming influence. With a lot of men in authority the decisions can be based on male egos, but when you bring a woman into a position of authority it often dampens down any aggression. I think the old boy network is still alive and well, and of course there are the men's loos and the male bonding* (Medical Consultant).

In contrast, four of the interviewees disagreed with networks which catered exclusively for females:

> *The difficulty in Belgium is that women are not accepted in clubs like the Rotary Club and the Lions Club. Then you have clubs where only women are present, and that is something that I do not agree with because it does not reflect the reality of society* (Bank Manager).

> *I am very wary about setting up women's groups because straight away we are isolating ourselves. We are always saying that we want to be treated equally and we want to work equally with males and females. So, I am very, very wary of women only groups* (Human Resources Manager, Computer Company).

These four managers believed that it is not necessary to restrict membership of these networks to females only, and that the female managers should actively encouraged male managers join. Five interviewees believed that female networking groups were established in their companies because of the dominant 'old boy' network, and the benefits that were seen to be derived from networking:

> *Our organisation is very good and organises a structure for women to network and it provides a lot of money for this and the network works well. You get out of it what you put into it. I have worked for the company for twelve years and I have a huge network of people, not just women, but men as well. The only way you achieve and get on is to have that network. I would not say that it should necessarily be restricted to women only. We have the old boy network, and that is most certainly here and I think it will always be here. The key is to try to nudge into networking and get a piece of the action. Networking can be exclusive, but I am beginning to have discussions with my female colleagues when making internal professional decisions. I almost feel myself being sucked into an old girl network, which I guess feels comfortable. It feels that there is a source of information in the network about the whole working environment that otherwise you would not have* (International Assignment And Repatriation Manager, Telecommunications Company).

In summary, forty-three of the managers believed that the 'old boy' network still exists in their organisations. The research findings also suggest that if female networks become stronger and begin to have more power, then perhaps more females will reach senior management positions and in turn partake in international management.

## 4.8 Male/Female/Individual Style of Management

From a review of the management literature in Chapter Two, it is clear that management, and particularly senior management, remains dominated by men. The literature on women in management has explored some of the reasons for women's position in relation to management, barriers to entry and promotion, and possible strategies for women seeking to access or to rise in management. As senior management is male dominated, the question arises whether female managers should attempt to manage like their male counterparts in order to break through the glass ceiling. The data presented in this section examines the managerial styles chosen by the fifty participants in this study, and provides answers to the question:

- What managerial style do senior female international managers adopt?

Of the fifty interviewees in this study, thirty-nine managers suggested that they have developed individualistic management styles. Seven perceived themselves as adopting a female management style. Two believed that they adopted a male management style. Another two answered that they did not know what managerial style they practised, but added that they believe that they incorporated the best traits from both genders. The two managers who deliberately adopted a male managerial style stressed that they did not want to be seen as 'masculine type women'. They believed that as they worked in predominantly male environments it was necessary to adapt to this role:

*I adopt a male style of management, but I try to modify this as it bothers me a lot* (Medical Consultant).

*You should ask some of my staff what type of management style I adopt. I would hope they would say masculine. I am very matter of fact. I have always worked primarily with men. I have no idea of how I would feel working with a lot of women. I have always been in male dominated environments. I don't think that I would be perceived as being overly feminine, but I surely hope that I would not be perceived as being masculine. I would hope not to be seen as a masculine type woman* (Managing Director, Manufacturing Company).

The thirty-nine interviewees who perceived themselves as having developed and adopted individualistic management styles believed that managerial sex typing is a major barrier to women's opportunities. One research and design engineer in the study said that she has heard her male colleagues say that their subordinates would not be interested in hearing the newest developments, but she believed that this was an excuse to maintain power in 'the male club'. She also stated that in her experience, subordinates were always interested in discussing the latest developments in the field. The interviewees suggested that partaking in international assignments helped them to change their original management style and they developed their own style of management which they felt more comfortable with. The following typifies these sentiments:

*I developed my own managerial style over time. First of all, when I started out in management, I tried to be more male. Looking back on myself in the earlier days, I had to swear as good or as loud as the next guy. I had to be as aggressive as*

*the next guy, and I got on that way. It was when I went to Singapore and I became part of a totally different environment, where to swear would be so rude and so insulting and they would be so horrified by it. I looked inwards on myself and it was actually good for me from a self-assessment point of view. I said 'Hold on a second, how did I get to this stage?' I know I'm doing a good job, but why did I have to take on all of these qualities to let myself be noticed as a person in charge. So, I actually changed my management style. First of all I dropped the cursing, unless I'm in rare circumstances now that I let one out. There is no benefit in women cursing and swearing. I became more structured. If I wanted to be definite about something I became more assertive in my style and the shouting and roaring stopped. This came from confidence within myself. My style of management has really changed from being a masculine style, to my own individual style. I feel strongly about the way I dress; if I am away on business, I don't like the briefcase image. I really don't want to be like a man in a business suit; even now my bag is a doctor's bag. I feel women can do it, and I think we can complement each other's gender* (Director, Manufacturing Company).

*I think that I adopt an individualistic style of management. I am conscious when I see women managers reacting in a very typical female way. There are situations in which it is extremely good to react in that way, but there are also situations where that is not the way to react. I am very conscious of that and I like to react in the way which I think is the best way. I don't think I am very overtly male in some situations and I don't think I am very overtly female in other situations. I try to be fair and open and I like to avoid the emotional reactions — even though sometimes I would like to pull my hair out and cry and ask why*

*is somebody behaving in that way, and why is somebody being so nasty to me, why are they ganging up on me? I try to avoid that sort of situation, but it is difficult sometimes* (Plant Manager, Pharmaceutical Company).

*There are very good managers who are male, and there are very good managers who are female. There are also poor male managers and poor female managers. There are principles of good management practice which should be adopted regardless of gender. I would seek in my own management style the best principles of management practice, which is about communication, being firm, being fair and being friendly — the three Fs — and developing my own individual style. I think good management ultimately is about fair communication and having a policy of good upward and downward communication. Communication is essentially the key to good leadership and good management. If a manager practises skilled communication, whether they are male or female, they should be able to obtain the best result. I think that females and males need to adopt best principles and try to enact those rather than adhere to what are supposedly expected male or female manager characteristics* (Manager, Tourism Promotion Agency).

*I am a strong believer in the hybrid style of management because I think it is very complementary. People have different characteristics. When you think of the typical male characteristics and the typical female characteristics, you never have a purely male or purely female personality. So, I always try to complement my management style* (Human Resources Manager, Financial Services Company).

*I believe I have always been me. I think I am softer than my male colleagues, but, I have been told that I am quite hard and firm to work for. I am very demanding. We have some really good women here and I do think that we need to be better than men to get on. I changed after I came back from working in America, I felt that I had grown while I was there and that I had another facet now to my character. America also showed me that there is more to life than work* (Manager, Retailing Company).

All of the seven interviewees who said they practised a female managerial style believed that this style came naturally to them and said it would have been more stressful for them if they were expected to behave like men. They believed that the female managerial style had advantages for them but, most importantly, they felt comfortable with this style:

*I adopt a female style of management. I don't try to be like men at all. I am the more nurturing, caring type. I feel this has advantages because people will be honest with me and they know that I do have their best interests at heart. I think if people feel that you are being genuine about something they will know it and they will trust you, and that is the kind of feedback I get* (Chief Accountant, Computer Company).

*I adopt a female management style. I think that I am more caring for my colleagues. For example, if I learn something that my employees may benefit from, I inform them of this. I share the information as soon as possible. Whereas, my male colleagues say the employees would not be interested in knowing. They make an assumption that the employees don't care, but they do care and I know that. Knowledge is power and the men like to have the power* (Senior Research and Design Engineer, Computer Company).

> *It has been quoted to me that I am unusual in that I still have a female side of things even though I am surrounded by males at the top. I have seen female managers who have adopted a male style, and they have become very aggressive. A lot of female managers change their own characters and they change their own style in order to be accepted at work. I don't know if female managers have to do this to be accepted, but I think that probably in some circumstances they do have to change to be accepted. It has been easier for me not to have to change because of my human resources function* (Vice-president, Computer Company).

In summary, the research findings reveal that managerial stereotyping prevails in organisations and society. The findings also suggested that this stereotyping is negative and unhealthy and is a major contributor to the glass ceiling. In an effort to overcome these obstacles, the majority of managers (thirty-nine out of fifty) decided to adopt individualistic managerial styles, drawing on what they perceived to be the best managerial traits from both genders. The managers, however, stated that their individualistic styles developed as they progressed along the career ladder.

## 4.9 Characteristics Of An International Manager

It is clear from a review of the international human resource management literature that only three per cent of managerial women move internationally. The data presented in this section examines the characteristics required to make an international career move, and in particular addresses the question:

- What characteristics do female managers require to make an international career move?

The findings from this study, based on a predominantly European sample in an entirely European context, revealed that many similar characteristics are required by both male and female expatriate managers. The interviewees also noted that female expatriates require additional qualities, such as the ability to prove that they are 'very, very good', bravery, self-sufficiency and resilience. The attributes which forty of the respondents recognised as essential were: flexibility, the approval of a partner and family, the ability to adapt to other cultures, open-mindedness, independence and a willingness to take risks:

> *The first thing we need is people with ability. Second, the whole personal situation should be prepared. Nobody can compensate in the end for that, and for a woman moving a family it is very difficult, because each individual member has got his/her own problems, so I think that it is a prerequisite to have the family in order. Then you look at social competence, ability and general skills, and somebody that can cope with different cultures and can offer a certain degree of judgement and adjust themselves to the new environment* (Head of International Personnel Management, Manufacturing Company).

> *You need to be incredibly flexible. You need to be able to deal with ambiguity, and to cope with the rapid pace of change. You need to be able to see things from a number of different perspectives and not make judgements only from your own standpoint. You need to have incredibly good interpersonal skills, very good relationship skills, influencing and persuasive skills. You need to be incredibly good at listening — and that is listening with your ears and your eyes, watching body language, listening to the silences, listening to what is said and being able to find ways of providing feedback in the channels that they use. It doesn't harm to be humble, but at the same time you must recognise that you do have qualifications and*

*ability that you are bringing to the job, and they are as equal as theirs, though they are different. Another difficulty is the mobility issue and this applies more to women. This is the biggest issue. I was specifically asked to go overseas before I got too old or too tied down. I think the biggest dilemma for overseas assignments that we as a company need to resolve is people having partners, whether they are working or not. When I look retrospectively at the international assignees in our company, a lot of them have been men, a lot of them have been able to move overseas because their wives do not have careers, or they were at the stages of bringing up young children and they thought that would be a good time for them to go overseas because the wife is now going to be staying at home with the children. Female colleagues who are working overseas tend to have incredibly supportive spouses, who are open-minded and share responsibilities, and there is respect from both sides. If a woman hasn't got that support and she has children, it would be very, very difficult for her* (Human Resources Manager, Telecommunications Company).

*You have to be extremely flexible and receptive to different attitudes, recognising that when you do go to a different country it is going to be hard for a man or a woman because you've got to understand a very different culture. You have got to be conscious not to impose your own culture. Some companies do not send women abroad because they have previously been seen as a trailing spouse. In our world-wide company there are 37,000 employees right now and I am the only woman at my level. There are not a lot of women who would want to make an international move. It is a big deal for a man or a woman. It disrupts one's entire life. I mean if one likes stability one might as well forget it. I have made lots of moves, but never outside the United States until now, and I would say moving to Ireland*

*has been my most difficult move. Ireland would be easier in terms of language than other countries, but culturally it is different. You don't have the support system of family either, when abroad* (Managing Director, Manufacturing Company).

*I believe one needs to be open to other people and listen to them and adapt to other people and not impose one's own way. I believe one has to adapt, and this takes from between six months to a year. One is a stranger and the beginning of an international assignment is a very difficult period, and sometimes it is frustrating because of the language. It is easier for men rather than women to be accepted because the reality is that there are so few women in this situation* (Bank Manager).

*I believe that flexibility and not judging other people are important. From my point of view it was curiosity because I believe that it is always interesting to meet new people and see what is new. I believe that if one does not feel sure of one's personal confidence as a woman, one will always be asking if one is fit for the job. Men are always thinking that they are much closer to God. It is natural for them to be asked to apply for an international position, it is not natural for women* (Director, European Commission).

The above discussion shows that the male or female international manager requires a wide range of skills. Extracting from the above quotations and from the interviews, the range of skills people need are:

- managing cultural diversity,
- communicating effectively,
- managing change,
- working with others and in teams,
- risk taking and experimenting,
- developing high mobility.

Thirty-one interviewees suggested that international mobility is more difficult for the female manager because (i) of problems associated with relocating a male partner and family, (ii) until recently female managers were confused with the traditional female trailing spouses, who were generally recognised as problematic in international assignments, and (iii) the qualities required for an international career are frequently associated with a male managerial style. The findings also suggested that, because of gender, female managers had to be more aware than their male colleagues of their personal safety, and twenty-five managers said that bravery was another required characteristic. Thirty interviewees also suggested, because of the difficulties they experienced in socialising and networking, that they had to be more independent than their male counterparts and had to possess the ability to combat loneliness and to enjoy being alone.

Twenty-one of twenty-two interviewees, who went on international assignments alone, spoke of the loneliness they experienced for the first few months of their assignments, particularly at weekends, when they knew they would not speak to anybody until they returned to their companies after the weekend. These interviewees observed that this was not the case for their male colleagues as the male managers were invited, much more, to socialise with their colleagues at weekends. Thirty of the interviewees believed that a further necessary quality was the ability to take risks, and these thirty interviewees believed they were risk takers as they were the first females to represent their companies abroad. They also realised that they were perceived as a risk for their companies because of their gender:

> *If you believe strongly in something in your career or something that might be good for the company, you need to take a risk and convince your company of this. When I came here first, I had some strange comments about being a woman, and I have been mistaken for the note-taker at meetings, which*

*doesn't bother me. In fact, I think that is funny, and I take pleasure in handing out my business cards. Getting to a senior position is a balancing act and it means being aggressive and having priorities within the company and letting the company know that you are going to take the risk. One must know what one wants, and if one is simply waiting for instructions one is not considered to be a leader and will never be successful* (Managing Director, Freight Carrier Company).

From the above discussion it is apparent that the successful international manager requires a large number of diverse characteristics. As cited above, a large number of expatriate assignments are considered to be failures. The findings in this study suggested that the two main reasons for expatriates returning prematurely to their organisations were: (i) the inability of spouses and families to settle in the new environment, and (ii) cultural difficulties:

*Women are more social and it is very hard to put one's whole self into work and forget everything else. Women like a home and they have their families. It is very hard to set up a home in a country where one has nobody and no family. When you are in a family situation you are trying to keep everybody happy. If my husband moved somewhere I think he would concentrate on his career and expect me to get everything sorted out and keep the family happy. Even though I am the one we moved for, I have to do all of that as well. I try to make my family happy. If one is by oneself it is also difficult, especially to go out socially. I worked in New Zealand and I made an effort to socialise, but it is difficult. If I am in the States and if I want to meet new friends, I can take a class, but if you go to a new country you don't know what the things to do are, and it is not*

*always done in the same way. It is easier for men. People automatically think I am the trailing spouse; they automatically think I am not the career person. I know sometimes my husband has a hard time because people say 'Oh, your wife is the career person', and they think of it negatively, but it is not* (Financial Controller, Pharmaceutical Company).

*What I have found in the companies that I have worked for is that usually the spouse doesn't settle and that has been the main cause of expatriate failures. We have sent a lot of expatriates from and back to the States and to other parts of Europe, and it is often very difficult for the spouse moving into a new environment. It is fine for the persons working, because they have fewer problems, as they are totally tied up in their work, and in most cases they are the men. Their work is challenging, but their partners are at home and do not have social support. It is hard for them to get into a community if they are not working, and then if there is a language barrier it is more difficult again. Most people adapt to their new environment, but you get the few who are culturally handicapped, and I think the main reason is the spouse not settling* (Managing Director, Computer Company).

*I think expatriate failures result from cultural mismatches, and lack of understanding how things are done, and what is rewarded behaviour in different cultures. Since your work ability does not change, it is your ability to fit into the cultural or social norms which matters most* (Chief Executive, Insurance Company).

*I believe that a reason for some expatriate failures could be attributed to unrealistic expectations. Sometimes it might be a cultural mismatch or people might just not gel in an organisation* (Marketing Director, Telecommunications Company).

*I believe that one of the main reasons for expatriate failures is that they are not part of a career plan. Too often we take people because there is a gap to be filled. I have seen that happening. But, I don't think that there are many companies who are good at planning careers. I got only four weeks' notice when I was due to move to the United States, but then it is amazing what one can do in four weeks. It was difficult for my husband to get himself sorted out. He was always questioned going through customs, they would not believe that he was not working. And they would not give him a social security number because they thought he was moonlighting, so that was a bit tough* (Manager, Retailing Company).

In summary, all fifty interviewees believed that professional ability and competence to achieve the desired objectives of the international assignment are required by all international managers. The findings, however, suggested that relying solely on these skills does not guarantee a successful international appointment. As suggested above, the technical ability of an expatriate remains the same, but, having one's personal life in order and the ability to adapt to a new culture become increasingly important.

## 4.10 Career Planning

In the preceding section, one of the interviewees highlighted the importance of building an international career move into the overall career plan of the female manager in order to lower the rate of expatriate failures. In this section the research findings relating to two of the questions posed in Chapter One are presented:

- Do female managers engage in career planning?
- Is there a model of career development which fits the experiences of female managers?

Only two of the fifty interviewees in this study planned for an international career:

> *I had no doubt that I would be in a successful career and in an international career. Americans do not generally speak foreign languages, and I speak fluent German, fluent Greek, decent French and I speak some Spanish and Japanese. Not too many Americans could do that. And I believe there is another difference also. Most people who get expatriate assignments, at least from American companies, do not get them because they are qualified to be an expatriate. They get them because they are qualified to be an engineer, or whatever the function is. In my case, not only am I qualified to do my particular role, but, I also have educated myself for an international assignment by studying languages and by the work that I did as an undergraduate in university. So, to that extent, I would definitely have planned my career. I wanted an international career, I wanted to live abroad* (Managing Director, Telephone Company).

The research findings revealed that if women want to be considered for international assignments, they usually need senior managerial career experience in their home countries, but as discussed earlier gaining this experience has proved problematic:

> *I think for women to make it to senior management in their home countries first, all the pitfalls are on the way to that, because there are still a lot of people who would have a mental block to promoting women. And if they are working with big organisations they earn reputations in various countries which helps for moving internationally* (Plant Manager, Pharmaceutical Company).

> *It is a very hard job to convince the males in the automotive world, because it is a very male world in which to promote a woman, firstly in the home country. One has to create a very positive picture for men, one has to combine very positive skills and competencies and convince them that you are the one they want to promote* (Head of International Personnel Management, Manufacturing Company).

> *I believe that female managers need to be flexible and assertive to convince home-country management to promote them. A woman has to be assertive, but not aggressive, to get the job she wants. Aggressiveness is accepted from males, but if a woman is aggressive she can lose everything. A man can be yelling and everybody will say that he is like that, and wait until he cools down and then go back to him again. But, they will not accept aggressiveness from a woman* (Senior Research and Design Engineer, Computer Company).

The findings revealed that, as managers progressed along the domestic managerial ladder, they planned their careers in the short term by always asking for their next career move, rather than waiting to be asked by senior management. Despite their lack of career planning, the female managers strongly emphasised their need for achievement:

> *Even though I did not plan my career, I always had the desire to succeed. I was always quite aggressive about what I wanted in my career and what I could contribute, so I never sat back quietly and waited for things to happen. I really think that you need to have the initiative to go ahead and make change without having to seek permission and control every time* (Managing Director, Freight Carrier Company).

> *I don't think I planned my career, it just seemed to fall before me. I always asked for my next career move and I think this is important. I don't think a lot of men and women do this. I have always made it known that I wanted to work in the States and I kept asking for this and I got it. If you don't ask for the next move you won't get what you want. You have got to help yourself along* (Manager, Retailing Company).

> *I did not plan my career, but, I would say that I am very determined and I also work very hard. I always set high standards for myself, but I didn't have confidence in myself. It actually took international experience to give me confidence. In the early days of my career, there is no doubt about it, but, my gender affected my career. I was a woman and I 'should' have stayed at home. There is still a lot of that type of attitude around, and I think the older businessmen are terrible.*

*Younger women and men are changing no doubt, but, there is still a lot to be done regarding changing attitudes* (Human Resources Manager, Computer Company).

The findings revealed that, because of the barriers experienced at all levels of the participants careers, career planning is undoubtedly more difficult for female managers. Two of the interviewees said that they were forced to change their career plans and move to different organisations because of severe sexual harassment. Twelve of the interviewees in the study admitted that they experienced some form of sexual harassment, ranging from mild to severe, during their careers:

*I had to leave one organisation because I would not sleep with my boss. He was double my age at least, so he would have been like a father image. When I returned to work, after I refused to sleep with him, he continually gave me a really, really hard time. It was terrible. The most awful thing was that I couldn't talk to anybody about it. It ended up by me feeling that I had done something wrong, and that was very, very traumatic. So, I left my job because of him, but I loved the people I worked with and I loved the job. I had to leave it because of that and by the time I left I was nearly devastated because he treated me so badly all the time* (Human Resources Manager, Computer Company).

*I experienced a lot of sexual harassment when I was younger. In Germany, where I had my first job, I left the country a month after starting, as I had two really terrible experiences with my colleagues. One was where one of my colleagues offered to drive me home from work as I didn't have a car at that stage. He started then making advances to me. I was young and naive and it was terrible. I was shocked. And then my boss,*

> *whom I reported to directly, made advances to me in the lift and again started touching me. It was disgusting. These were the two experiences where there was physical contact. I had lots of propositions also and that is another difficulty for women because you are viewed in this way* (Manager, Standardisation Organisation).

The findings also revealed that, besides sexual harassment, there were other reasons for female managers to change their career plans, such as family commitments, blocked promotion and difficulties they encountered because of their gender. One of the managers in this study with a young child stated that her career is very important to her, but if she was asked what her very top priority in her life is, she would have to say that it is her daughter. She believed that to admit that is not a bad thing, but also believed that this is not what it is supposed to be, and that is not what companies want to hear. Another one of the respondents with three young children believed that having children 'softened her', and brought out another side of her that might not have been brought out, which she believed was also beneficial to her career. Further analysis of the data indicated that career planning has traditionally been associated with the careers of males, and females who departed from this male model, for reasons such as child rearing, were seen, in some cases, to display a lack of commitment to the organisation:

> *Once you become a mother it becomes more difficult. For me the difference was when I had children, and suddenly I had an extra set of priorities and I was not able to drop everything to the same extent and go off to the other end of the earth. Management views one differently once one becomes a mother. I believe that management may think that I have not got the same interest in my job as I had previously* (Marketing Director, Telecommunications Company).

> *Once, when both my children had whooping cough I decided that I was not going overseas on a business trip. That was the only time ever that I actually had to decide not to go. I was booked to go on a trip to the United States, but, I thought that whooping cough is not an ordinary child sickness, it could be life-threatening. I actually had to negotiate that I would not go. I was even told at one stage that my decision was going to affect my career. But, I did not want to be 7,000 miles away when my children were seriously ill* (Human Resources Manager, Manufacturing Company).

It is clear from the above discussion that the female managers in this study are concerned with advancement, challenge, and development of their careers, and the twenty-six managers who have children are also concerned with taking time out to rear their children. These managers, however, believe that as this 'time out' is not built into the male model of career development, they are further disadvantaged. The interviewees believed that if future female managers would be given the opportunity to develop their careers, based on a female model of career development, then perhaps more females would reach senior managerial levels.

## 4.11 The International Transfer Cycle

This section is in three parts. First, the selection and preparation procedures for international assignees are examined. Second the length of international assignments is investigated. Third the re–entry stage is analysed. As discussed above, it is clear that male and female managers in *domestic* managerial positions are not treated similarly by senior management. This section deals with the *international* manager and addresses the question :

- Is the transfer cycle for international assignments for female managers similar to that of male managers?

### 4.11.1 Selection And Preparation For Managerial Expatriation

The importance of expatriate training for spouses and families was highlighted by the interviewees in this study, particularly as the difficulties for male trailing spouses are more significant. The interviewees believed that if male and female expatriate managers and their families were given opportunities to participate in expatriate training and development courses, then perhaps the number of female international managers would increase.

The interviewees believed that currently it is much more difficult for female managers to be selected for an international assignment than their male counterparts. The interviewees perceived that the main obstacle they encountered in the selection process for an international assignment was their gender. The managers participating in this study believed that, because of the additional risks involved in expatriate assignments, female managers are further disadvantaged in the selection process. The thirty-one married participants also noted that home-country senior management presumed that they would not be interested in being selected for an international assignment because of their domestic responsibilities. These participants believed that if they had not asked for

themselves to be included in the selection process, they would not have been considered by home-country senior management:

> *For women assumptions and generalisations are made, so women will have to do more about that and make their intentions known. I constantly keep saying what I want. I don't think enough women do that. Without a doubt, that is how I got to my position now. When an overseas opportunity came up in our organisation, senior management said to me 'We don't know if you would be interested because of your personal circumstances — because you are married'. I asked what that had got to do with it? I don't think that would have been said to a man, but then I made it very clear that was never an issue. I would want to consider the job first and then I would sort out my personal life* (Managing Director, Manufacturing Company).

> *I have just been assigned as Manager of European Logistics and it is a tough project, the first one to be taken on in Europe. My experience, background and knowledge were looked at in the selection process. There is a tremendous amount of travel involved and because I am a mother they asked me if this would be a problem. I don't think I would have been asked this if I were a man, because a husband knows that most of the time he has a wife at home who can take care of all the household and family things. When he is asked to take on a role all he has got to think about is managing that role. When a woman with children takes on a managerial role she still has to take into consideration the amount of time she will be with her children or not, no matter how good her husband is. There is no backup, at best it can be a fifty-fifty deal between husband and wife, but usually it is a third party that has to come in and do the back-up, because it is never fifty-fifty* (Director, Manufacturing Company).

*For four years I was in charge of financial analysis for subsidiaries based here in Brussels. Then a very interesting project came up in Asia, and I asked to move there. My son was four years old at the time. In the meantime, my husband had set up his own company, so the assumption was that I would not be interested in moving. But, I moved over there with our son, and my husband did not go, he stayed over here because of his new company. I think it was easier for me being there without my husband, because when I looked at other expatriates they had lots of problems with their spouses. We travelled a lot back and forth from Asia, so my son saw his father a lot* (Head of Corporate Communications, Pharmaceutical Company).

*I moved to Paris for four years. I wanted to move because the job was good and there was an element of career development. But, I had to fight very hard with management here in Britain to get the job* (Account Executive, Technology Company).

Of the fifty interviewees in this study, only five had received any form of training or preparation for the international assignment. The training ranged from short induction courses of a few days, to a few weeks, with the maximum amount of training being three months. The remaining forty-five respondents spoke of 'being thrown in at the deep end' in their host countries and they believed that initial difficulties could have been lessened, or in some cases avoided, if an adequate training programme had been in place:

*The company certainly did not do a blessed thing for me. The difficulties were more around the move rather than around people. Trying to find housing was very difficult. Eventually, the company did hire a relocation person to help us find a house*

*and she was helpful and she gave us a couple of books and other support. Another sample difficulty for us concerned my husband who had been driving for twenty-five years in the States, and we couldn't find an insurance company here in Ireland to insure him because he had never driven on the left-hand side of the road — and yet they would give insurance to an eighteen year old. Another instance was when I went to the bank to open an account and I had a bank draft for £10,000 and they would not let me open an account. They eventually allowed me to open an account, but they said they would hold the money for weeks, which meant that I could not write cheques. I was treated like an international drug baron. Those are just some of the start-up problems that could have been sorted out if there was a training programme for expatriates in the company* (Director, Computer Company).

In summary, the above discussion highlights the relatively little attention companies pay to the selection, preparation and training of international staff and their families prior to expatriate departure. Forty-five of the interviewees perceived that the selection of potential expatriates in their organisations was conducted on quite a haphazard basis, with far too little time given for the preparation and training for international assignments.

### 4.11.2 The Assignment Period Abroad

Thirty-three of the managers in this study had each experience of between two and four years internationally. The managers believed that one or two year assignments are too short, while thirty-one of the managers considered that a three years assignment seemed an appropriate length:

*I think three years is a nice time to be away for. Three years should be the minimum because you are really only getting into*

*the swing of things then. You really have to spend three years to make a change* (Plant Manager, Pharmaceutical Company).

Five years expatriation was considered to be too long, as the managers believed that repatriation would be extra difficult at that stage, especially if there were children involved. The interviewees believed that the adjustment period for them in their host organisations and host countries was between one and two years. One interviewee recalled an episode of standing in front of a photocopying machine in Japan and not understanding what any of the instructions meant, and questioning herself regarding her role and what value she could add to the organisation. The interviewees believed that in some cases social adjustment was more difficult than organisational adjustment, as in most countries it is not the norm for females to socialise alone, consequently females needed a longer adjusting period than their male counterparts did.

Eight of the managers spoke of the exclusion their partners experienced, for example, one of the managers who relocated to the United States and was the first female manager to represent her organisation there, recalled an incident where her partner was deliberately not invited to a social gathering organised by her organisation for the (female) partners of the other managers. She believed that, as her partner was the only male trailing spouse, the organisation did not know how to deal with this situation. The manager also noted that the organisation also experienced difficulty in coping with having a female in a very senior position for the first time.

As thirty of the managers were the first females to represent their companies internationally, they did not know if their international experience would be considered valuable by home-country senior management, therefore, they perceived their international assignment as a risk to their future careers. All the managers believed that they have succeeded in their international assignments, but believed, because of their additional autonomy and global experience, that returning to their

home organisations would be very difficult. The interviewees believed that a possible solution to this would be to partake in another international move. Some of the interviewees who wished to partake in another international assignment, outlined the difficulties this involved:

> *I am from Canada originally. I moved from Canada to Belgium and I found this an extremely big change. It was a huge change both from a work standpoint and from a personal standpoint. From a work standpoint my goal was the same, but I was dealing with a different set of players and a different set of politics and also a different support group. Coming over here, I started cold. I didn't know what the procedures were in this country. I didn't know what the challenges were, and it was really only after a year and a half that I learned enough to be able to set my goal clearly. The hours and the travel were also very difficult, because I travel about four days a week. I am coming up on three years here soon, and in my particular area it is only in the last year that I have really been making headway, because I think with the learning curve and what is expected of me I will definitely need four years. I feel good about that, but my husband is iffy about it. I want to achieve what I set out to achieve before I leave, and I can't achieve that in three years. At this stage my husband and I are negotiating. My initial assignment was for three years, so I want to extend it for another year. At this point, for me, returning to Canada is not on as there is nothing there for me. So, I would like to go on to another region where they need my talents. I think it is going to be difficult to get back into another position in the company. Once you take an expatriate assignment your future has a question mark, and it seems to have a question mark regardless of how well you do. So, it is a big risk for me to take an international career assignment* (Manager, Freight Carrier Company).

*When I talk to people who move internationally they always say that you really don't adjust to the country until you have been there two years, because you are still finding new things that were not in your former country. I have been here in Ireland just two years and I still find that I haven't adjusted to it. This was my second international move, so I was more aware of what was going on. My first move from the United States to England was much more difficult, more of a culture shock. When I moved to Ireland from England I found that they are very different countries, as the cultures and the people are very different again. Moving is very hard at the very beginning and it is also very lonely for a woman, even more so than for a man. Part of that is that men can go out and do things by themselves socially, women cannot. I have gone to companies where I have been one of the very few expatriates in the company. Because, on the whole, our company's practice is that people from the home country should run the company. Of all the permanent people here, the managing director and myself are the only two who are not Irish. I am here because management really does not like financial controllers who have not been with the company for about six years* (Financial Controller, Pharmaceutical Company).

*An international assignment should be for at least three years, because you need one year to adapt and to understand and to be made feel welcome, so three years is good. I have been moving around now seven years and when I moved to Prague and Tokyo I found it was always more difficult for a woman. I think this is the case everywhere. Because of historical background, it is an exception to have women expatriate managers. You cannot afford to make a mistake as a woman, because a mistake by a woman is more visible, so a woman has to be extra good. When I go to meetings for the first time*

*with all other men it takes extra time to get accepted, then it is all right, but the difficult thing is getting started* (Bank Manager).

In summary, the findings from this study suggest that the adjustment period for female expatriates is longer than for their male colleagues, particularly because of the cultural and social norms in most countries. The interviewees believed that an international assignment should range from two to five years. A three years period was considered to be the most appropriate. All the interviewed managers perceived their first international assignment as a success, with many of the managers partaking in subsequent international assignments. The managers believed that home-country senior management also judged their performance as successful, because in many cases they were offered another international assignment, following completion of the first one.

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### 4.11.3 Re-entry

Eighteen of the fifty managers in this study have not yet experienced the repatriation process, as they are still on their first international assignment. Four of these eighteen managers have decided to turn their international assignment into a permanent move and not to return to their home countries. These four managers (three American and one French) have chosen Ireland as a permanent location for their careers and families. All four managers are married. The three American managers have young children and the French manager has grown-up children now living in the United States. These managers believed that their careers and families would be too disrupted if they had to make another international move. Thirty-two interviewees had experienced re-entry to their home organisations, but, only one interviewee perceived that she had no problem with the re-entry process. The remaining thirty-one managers believed that re-entry to their home organisations and reintegration socially were more difficult than the original move. The main difficulties which the interviewees, in this study, experienced in the re-entry process were:

- failure to get credit from home-country management for their achievements internationally,
- not having a suitable position to return to,
- outgrowing their home organisations,
- problems of social readjustment for themselves and their families,
- missed promotional opportunities due to home-country senior management overlooking them while abroad.

*When one comes back one starts to outgrow the organisation and the local issues. It is not that one feels above it, but one starts to find the home organisation restrictive from a more global perspective. When I came back from the States I moved to another organisation, and now I feel that if I take another international assignment I would not be able to come back into this organisation. It is the re–entry stage that I would worry about. At the end of this year if I decide that I want to go overseas again I really don't know if I would come back in here when my assignment was over. I don't know if I would come back doing what I was doing before I left. I would probably have to come back to a whole new, different challenge. One tends to outgrow one's former situation. Unless one is changing companies or maybe coming back into a start-up environment or coming back into major new challenges it would be difficult* (Purchasing Manager, Manufacturing Company).

*Coming back is as bad if not worse. Going abroad is difficult in that one doesn't know what they are going to, whereas when one is coming back they have a fair idea of what they are coming back to. But, then there is the readjustment period when one returns. When I came back from New York it took me about six months to settle down again. I could not believe,*

*for example, how long it took the local delicatessen to make a sandwich, it flabbergasted me. In New York things were just so fast, no sooner had one the words out of one's mouth than the sandwich was wrapped. It used to drive me bananas. I actually started to bring my own sandwiches in on occasions because I just couldn't bear it. After about six months one settles down again. One's personal life with one's family and friends is also disrupted. It is very difficult to maintain long-term friendships and one has to be very lucky to slot back into friendships when one comes back again* (Counsellor, Government Department).

*If you sever your ties with your home organisation too long you have nothing to come back to. When I came back it was hard to get credit for the work that I had done. I will be perfectly honest, people thought because I worked in Paris that I had a great holiday. I was given a job very easily and very quickly, because I had the skills that the company wanted. What I have to question is that, if I had not gone away and stayed in the British organisation, would I have moved up the organisation in those four years. I might have moved up a little, but I don't think that I got credit for what I did while I was abroad, therefore I don't think it was beneficial for my career here in Britain. Was it beneficial to me in terms of what I learned and in terms of what I can contribute with my experience? Yes, it was a terrific experience* (Account Executive, Technology Company).

*When I came back from my assignment in France after two years, some of my social network of friends had gone away. But, work was my main problem. There wasn't really a place for me when I first came back. Nobody really knew what to do with me, so I would come into work and they would try to find*

*things for me to do. But, I used to think to myself that nobody would notice if I wasn't here. And then the whole cultural behaviour at work was different from France. Nobody says good morning when they come into work here, whereas the French go around to everybody and shake hands with everybody. I began to notice that people here seemed very unfriendly, people were just sitting there and they would not even look up from their computers when one came in. But, there was one guy here who had remembered going through the same thing a few years previously, as he had spent some time with his family in Thailand, and he was actually very supportive and friendly. So, it took me a while to feel that I fitted in again. I felt awkward, and one would think that it would be easy coming back to one's own country* (Senior Engineer, Manufacturing Company).

*The problem is when one comes back from an international assignment it may happen that there is no position for the person to return to. Sometimes it is necessary to be a supplementary person in a department and one has to wait for a job. That is not very nice to come back to* (Bank Manager).

Of the thirty-two managers who have experienced re–entry, only one participant did not encounter any difficulties readjusting to her home organisation and home country. The remaining interviewees suggested that the readjustment period usually takes six months and in some cases it could take up to nine months, particularly if families or spouses are involved. Only two organisations in this study prepared expatriates for re–entry:

*Regular contact with employees is needed while they are overseas. When people come for their home trips once a year it is mandatory that they call in here and have reviews of their work abroad. The*

*main idea is to let the expatriates know that people are not forgetting about them, that we still care about them. Then when it comes closer to the point of their return we can start planning for the return* (Head of International Personnel Management, Manufacturing Company).

*Our home-company career manager is responsible for facilitating the expatriate's integration back into the work place. Six months before expatriates come back, they start the process of establishing their next role and the actual job they are coming back to. So, there is a six months preparatory period. It is a difficult period for people coming back, because if a person has gone and played a bigger role than that before they left, their expectation would be to return to a higher level. In the meantime, while they were away, other people have progressed as well, so that is difficult for them. They would sometimes expect a job waiting for them, but that is often difficult because we don't keep jobs open for them. So, six months should be a minimum period which they would have for sorting this out before the person comes back* (Human Resources Manager, Computer Company).

In conclusion, the thirty-two repatriated managers reported that the re–entry phase is usually haphazard and ill-planned. Thirty-one of the managers had experienced difficulties in readjusting, both in terms of their careers and socially. They had to readjust to the culture of the home organisation, having lost status and responsibilities which the international assignment had afforded them. They noted that they went through stages similar to those of culture shock — the first being an excited mood which lasted only a short time, then descending to a low mood, and finally returning to their normal mood. They believed that the difficulties with re–entry are underestimated at present, and that the re–entry process should receive more attention in the future.

## 4.12 Do Female Managers Want International Careers?

From the findings discussed above, it is clear that female international managers experience greater barriers than their male counterparts. Given the additional strains that coping with these difficulties involve, especially for married female managers, the thirty-one married interviewees believed that the perceptions of home-country senior management were that they would not be interested in pursuing an international career. The data in this section, however, challenge this perception and provide an answer to the question:

- Do female managers want international careers?

The thirty-one married interviewees in this study believed that the majority of female managers typically choose between a career and family. They noted that societal and organisational perceptions of mothers expected them to devote themselves primarily to their family responsibilities. The following quotation typifies some of the existing societal perceptions:

> *If my husband had the high-powered job I would be expected by society to take second place. Here in Ireland people cannot get over the concept that my husband is a trailing spouse. People in Ireland find this harder to accept than people in the United States do, for example, our friend's cleaning lady was appalled that I didn't come home and do my husband's ironing. I would have just flown in from Brussels and be catching up on mail before heading to Moscow the next morning, and even though my husband was at home, she was appalled* (Director, Computer Company).

> *Here in Belgium the people have a very old-fashioned attitude. They believe that women should still be at home with the children. Society is still very male dominated in Belgium. And in the organisation here, they have very different opinions of*

*men and women. I believe that because I am a woman I am seen as a threat to men* (Partner, Management Consultancy Company).

Twenty-eight of the thirty-one married managers in this study considered themselves rather unusual in pursuing an international career. They believed, as many females choose marriage and child rearing in their early adult years, that these traditional roles are considered more important for women's identity than for the identity of their male counterparts. Five of the ten unmarried interviewees believed that their pursuit of an international career caused their personal relationships to suffer. They also believed that they have to make difficult choices regarding personal relationships, even more than for their international careers, choices that their male counterparts rarely have to make. The unmarried managers suggested that it is not yet the norm for females to be internationally mobile:

*Women are less likely to apply for an expatriate move. I applied for it because I was single at the time, and I am still single, and it didn't really make any difference because there wasn't anybody to bring along and there weren't any children. I don't notice a lot of married women applying for international moves. I found that when I went to Texas it put a real strain on my relationship because my boyfriend wasn't going to move out, and I didn't see him for four months. The strain is more so than if he had to move abroad. There is always this 'problem' that I am always the one that is going away, because I also do a lot of travel for my job* (Senior Engineer, Software Company).

*I went overseas alone, because I am single. I was based in Sydney, but my role covered north east Asia, south east Asia, Japan, the Middle East, Africa and India. There were one or two individuals that I met who wondered what skills I as a female brought, as it is not the norm for single women to go overseas alone. But, I think by listening and showing sensitivity*

*to their culture and positioning quite clearly what I was trying to do, they recognised me for my capabilities rather than my gender* (Human Resources Manager, Telecommunications Company).

The married managers believed, because of family commitments, that female managers, generally, may have to reduce career involvement by cutting back on job-related travel and also that women managers may be unwilling to relocate internationally. The interviewees suggested that women's careers almost inevitably suffer when they curtail work schedules. The managers suggested that the attitudes and behaviour of their spouses can have substantial positive or negative effects on the ways in which they balance their careers and family activities. The participants believed that many female managers reduce their own career involvement in order to facilitate the career needs of their husbands. All the married managers in this study believed that having supportive husbands was essential for their international careers:

*Some women managers may not choose an international assignment, not because of their children, but because of their husbands. I consider my situation to be quite unique as my husband decided to retire. He is fifty-eight and I am forty-two and we have an agreement that he is now the home focused person and it is my turn to have a career. And that is why the STUDS group is so important for him* (Partner, Management Consultancy Company).

*In my industry, which is alumina mining, there are not many women. It is heavy industry. I am the first woman expatriate, but I think over a period of time women will be as equally regarded as men and more will be offered international assignments. The only question is whether their personal circumstances will allow them. That is a problem that may*

*arise. In order for an international career move to work, the biggest problem may be the spouse. I have two little children, one fifteen months and the other is three and a half, and the main obstacle is not child care* (Managing Director, Manufacturing Company).

*When a woman chooses an international career it puts a lot of pressure on her. It is more difficult for a woman if she has a partner with her because she is trying to find work for him also. I am very fortunate in that regard because my partner works for a humanitarian organisation, so professionally he is a lot more flexible than I am. He tends to do a lot more of the housework and he takes the kids to school. We try to balance things. But, balancing two careers is very difficult. My partner is very, very good regarding my career having priority. I think I am unusual in that my career takes priority, and I am also unusual because my partner has been very supportive. He has probably pushed me on to do more than I would have done which is good also. I think we are very, very unusual. In my own social circle and here at work there is nobody I know in that situation* (Vice-president, Computer Company).

All the interviewees believed, where senior management assumes that married women do not want international careers, that it is unlikely that these organisations will invest in the development of their women managers and provide assignments that provide power and opportunity. Thirty-nine of the participants, as female international managers, believed that they have had to base their life-style decisions on factors that men generally do not have to consider:

*Sometimes companies automatically assume that women won't go on an international assignment. With this assumption they don't give them the opportunity. I know of a woman in an office*

*here, who has a husband and kids, and it was just assumed that she wouldn't go, so she wasn't offered the job. But, she went and said "I want to be thought of". They said "Oh, you would be great". But it was a matter of she's got a husband and kids before that and they also know that her husband had a good job, so they thought she wouldn't move. But, they don't do that with men. They might know that the wife has a good job, but they assume that she will go. They don't consider that maybe the man might do the same thing* (Financial Controller, Pharmaceutical Company).

*In our organisation here, it is clear that we would not be thinking about women with children for an international assignment. I was surprised last week when a woman who is a senior manager on my team told me that she is available for an international transfer. I asked her if it was with or without her children and spouse, and she said without. I was surprised with this. I think it is more difficult for a woman with children to make this decision rather than men. I think people have to decide for themselves what they want and if they really want to live together there are some compromises to be made. At the time I left for Thailand by myself, it was a good time for my husband and I to make that kind of decision. We would not have been ready for that type of transfer a few years before, so the timing of the transfer is very important* (Head of Corporate Communications, Pharmaceutical Company).

*I believe that an international career is particularly difficult when there are children involved. My children are aged eleven and thirteen, and they are studying for exams, so I thought it would have been quite disruptive for them to move to France. I am sure women would hesitate about taking on an international*

*assignment on that basis. But, my situation is a little unusual in that the children live with their father, so I left them at home. In my experience though, when I was at home and still married most of the responsibility of child rearing was mine, and that is the case with most of the other women I know. So, the fact that I haven't got these ties now has helped me in that I just pursued the direction that I wanted in my career. It definitely was the case with my international career move* (Senior Engineer, Manufacturing Company).

The managers in their thirties who did not have children spoke of their biological clock ticking loudly for them. For those who have children, the exhaustion of balancing multiple roles meant cutting back on either career or parenting, which inevitably increased stress and role conflict. The managers in their thirties who have achieved professional success wondered what they might have sacrificed:

*I often wonder if I had kids would I be able to take an international career move. I suppose I would find it very difficult now to be in a situation where I could commit to a family, because I think it is hard to manage both. I would be concerned a little bit as to how it would affect my career, as up to now I haven't had any restrictions or anybody imposing that on me. I am thirty-four now and if I were going to have kids I would want to be starting to have them in a couple of years. The company might then say 'Well, she has one, and she will probably have another one in twelve months'. Would that then hamper my progress? I can't say that it wouldn't, because one is not supposed to discriminate, but men being men, I think that is the way they would think. When you work in this environment it is hard to manage both. If you had children then it would be more difficult and especially when you are travelling. But, that does not mean that is not something that I will never do. We were actually talking about it in the U.S. the*

*last time I was over and we were laughing about it. I said to one of my friends "Could you imagine me coming into the lobby here with a baby and a little chair and putting it into the day-care centre for two weeks, and then I would come back and pick it up", and that is the reality of it. And then I wonder is it totally selfish to go and have kids if I couldn't guarantee to be there all the time. I love my job and I love what I do and I enjoy the whole travel element of it and being out and about and meeting people. All of these decisions are more difficult for women, without a doubt, and being a mother is very definitely much more difficult. In the back of my mind I am always wondering if I had kids would I have a successful career* (Purchasing Manager, Manufacturing Company).

*In most cases why women don't go on international assignments is because of family. They tend to choose between career and family. It also has to do with the individual development of the woman, where they come from and what kind of picture has been painted for them. For example, is it dutiful for a woman to follow a career? A lot of women learn that it is good to have a good education and career, but next they find themselves with a husband and children. How many women are really encouraged to go for international assignments? When I talk to some of the younger women who are still independent, they feel they might want to take an international assignment, but, then they wait and when the time comes they will have a husband and a lot of things change, because the husband's career will have priority. It is a big decision for women to make, but we lose a lot of women because their careers do not have priority. This is a pity because I think women can offer a lot of special skills* (Head of International Personnel Management, Manufacturing Company).

The married participants with young children in this study believed that sometimes it was necessary for them to adopt a 'superwoman' strategy in order to convince their organisations that they are still serious regarding their commitments to their careers. These participants added that adopting a 'superwoman' strategy is extra difficult while partaking in an international assignment. Disadvantages which the managers highlighted included: role conflict between moving and settling family members into a new environment; not having enough time for their new career; feelings of guilt about not being a good wife or mother; lack of emotional and domestic support from their spouses; and work overload. The managers perceived that female managers may prefer not to choose an international career because of the difficulties involved in successfully balancing an international career with home and family:

> *Women more than men have to choose between career and family. I have found myself at different cross-roads in my life in the last twelve years and whenever I felt that the children were upset I asked myself 'Should I keep going or not?' — and I don't think men would necessarily ask themselves that. I wonder at least once a year if I should continue. It is a balancing act managing everything, and some times are better than others* (Chief Accountant, Computer Company).

> *There are not many women that I know who are in the same situation as I am in, where they had made a career decision and also decided to have a family. A lot of women that I know got married when I got married and their careers tended to stop or slow down after marriage and being pregnant. Having children slows down your career, but we can't get away from the biological fact that men can't have children. While it might slow down your career advancement, on the other hand I think it enriches you in ways that you would not be enriched through work. It brings out another aspect of you that might not have been brought out. It is very difficult for women to balance a demanding career and a family, and I have done a lot of*

*thinking about this. I have three children, and you have to be very organised. I am not saying that I am very good at it, because we have our tensions like everybody else. When it comes to finding and replacing baby-sitters, organising school runs, and looking after illness that always falls to me. I am not blaming my husband for that. I see myself doing that because that is what my mother did and it is very hard to get out of that. Anyway, I wouldn't trust my husband for looking after all of those things! My husband works as a financial lawyer, but I am paid more than he is and that does cause tensions. I don't think he likes me earning more than him, but we have managed to work it out. The decision that I made regarding my choice of career had nothing to do with more or less responsibility because of child rearing. It was based on my chosen career path. I wanted to do this. I wanted to have this senior position* (Medical Consultant*).*

In summary, the fifty interviewees in this study believed that senior female managers want international careers, but many females also want marriage and children. The participants believed that career success is still based on men's traditional work experiences and assumptions about the importance of work to identity. The findings also suggested that female career perspectives, choices and priorities do not imply that women's career achievements are any less important than those of men, but, that some women do not fit the male model of work and careers. The interviewees believed, because female managers do not always fit the dominant male career model, that they are often forced to choose between an international career and family. In choosing an acceptable life-style, the interviewees believed that women face a number of dilemmas, and their choices are more difficult than for their male counterparts because of the linkages that exist between their career and family roles.

## 4.13 The Impact of Gender on Female Managers' International Careers

It is clear from the above discussions that the female managers in this study have experienced many more obstacles to their career advancement than their male counterparts have. Despite these overt and covert obstacles, the participants believed that female managers are available, suitable and motivated to partake in international management. The discussions revealed that decisions are being made by senior management about female's participation in international management which are not being made in the case of their male colleagues. A further analysis of the findings also reveals that the participants perceive that home-country senior management makes value generalisations based on gender, for example, that all women are alike and they are all very different from men. The final section in this chapter addresses the question:

- Does gender have an impact on the international career of female managers?

The views of the fifty participants in this study on gender differences would be best described by the complementary contributions approach, which recognises the equal contributions made by male and female managers. The participants, however, noted that the contributions made by female managers are not always valued by senior male management. Many of the interviewees recalled instances of making a suggestion at a meeting and the suggestion being dismissed, as in one case where one interviewee's idea was rejected, only to be immediately accepted when a male colleague made a very similar suggestion at a later stage. One of the interviewees summarised this by stating "there is sometimes in the stereotypical image that if you are young and female that you have no brain":

*Because of my gender I had to fight hard for certain assignments. I had to fight hard for my first business development project where I actually led the team as opposed to supporting the team. I am never given the high priority deals to do, but when I am, somebody else gets the credit. Recently I did a very important deal, the most important deal for the company here in Europe. We were very successful and I am extremely proud of the job I did, and yet the credit is not pointed in my direction. And this is definitely gender related. Men are given promotions and opportunities much more easily. There is no question about it. It is much harder for a woman. I am at the level now where the next promotion requires consensus from the top management team of the company, because it is all about whether you fit in the plug or not. There are very few women at my level, not to mention the next level. But, I will make sure that I will get the next promotion. I will get there, it will just take a lot longer* (Managing Director, Telephone Company).

Thirty-one of the participants expressed that gender was a definite obstacle to their career progression, while another sixteen participants believed that their gender had created difficulties for them, in some instances. Only three participants believed that gender was not a barrier, and one of these three participants believed that gender was an advantage for her career progression:

*Overall, my gender has been an advantage to me in my career. I have been very fortunate. I felt there was a real period of opportunity for me during the 1980s. The company was looking for female managers to promote. I was the third female senior manager ever in the company. So, it was probably easier for me at the beginning, because I was different, I stood out more. We now have 130,000 employees, but at my level*

*there are only about twenty females. I think I am also very lucky that my husband has been so supportive. I find it interesting when I stop to think about these things because I don't think about being a woman, I just get on with it* (Manager, Retailing Company).

Twenty-eight of the interviewees believed that gender was certainly an obstacle, particularly in the early years of their managerial careers:

*The hardest time of all for a woman to be taken seriously is in her twenties. If a woman is reasonably attractive, and most women in their twenties can make themselves presentable, she is seen as a woman first, and a professional second. When she is giving a presentation, for the first twenty minutes she is looked at because she is female, and is seen out of context. That is a terrific barrier. There are always slow-downs for women because of gender, for example, when women take time out to have a child, and unless they come back and prove themselves quickly they are never taken seriously, and they are considered part-time workers* (Accountant Executive, Technology Company).

*At the beginning of my career I came up against obstacles because of my gender. When I asked for a salary increase it was difficult because I was a woman. When I was in my twenties, people did not like being told things by a woman. I always tried to look very professional and dressed accordingly, so that people would think of me as a lawyer rather than as a female. When I began working as a company lawyer I was trying to look twenty years older, even wearing my hair in a bun. Certainly, there are invisible barriers today, because if you look at senior management you will find very*

*few women, and there is no real reason why women should not be there. When I moved from France to England there were the social barriers because of my gender. When I came to England I had a neighbour who was an American and she thought that I was a threat to her husband, and she told me so. It took me six months to overcome that, and I wanted to invite them to my house, but I never did, because after that I never knew how to behave. I do not think that would happen if I had been a man* (Legal Director, Manufacturing Company).

*I have come up against barriers in my career, but that is just part of being a woman in management. I had an experience when I was in middle management where a chief executive propositioned me two or three times. I made it very clear to him it would have to stop and at the time I was only about twenty-nine, so he began to let me out of meetings. But, there was no way that he was going to change, so I left the organisation. You are always a woman and they are always men, it is not balanced. The dialogue is not balanced, the power is not balanced. When I was interviewed for the position that I am now in, the chairman was a lovely man, very proper, from a Protestant public school, and he said "we have never had a woman as an executive here at all. It is not that we don't want women, but it is just that women don't want these jobs, they want to be able to get home on time". And then he said "we have a lot of problems here in this company, and you are going to have a lot of responsibility and you are going to be working late into the night with male colleagues and you are the only woman, are you going to be able for that?" If I said what I thought at the time I would never have got the job* (Director, Health Insurance Company).

The findings also suggest that female managers perceive power as being central to much of the discussions regarding gender in organisations. The participants believed that male managers reinforce their power in organisations by promoting people most similar to themselves. The interviewees believed that senior male managers frequently felt threatened by them, as all fifty managers had successfully reached senior managerial positions, many at a very young age, and while balancing home and family demands:

> *I am the only woman in senior management and the first woman at this level, and being the first woman is probably the most remarkable part of this. So when I arrived I joined what was a very small and under-developed management team of guys who were directors. The whole environment had traditionally been male. It was not only difficult to break into this male domain, it was murder! I was not prepared for it here, because I had fought so many battles mostly at home in Britain, but I thought that internationally we had achieved a lot of progress and acceptance whereby once a woman would be recruited she would be given the support that one would expect. I have found the situation totally otherwise. When I came here first, there was abusive language used about me and in front of me, and for the first year two of the directors developed a strategy of interrupting my work and undermining anything I said, or whatever proposals I put forward they turned it down. I came here with a superb track record, but they expected a man to be appointed to this position. They were additionally threatened by a woman because they had never had a woman before, so I realised that a lot of their behaviour was based on fear* (Manager, Standardisation Organisation).

*I worked in Portugal for a year where I had a lot of trouble working with men. For women it is very difficult to work in Portugal. It is very difficult for Portuguese men having a woman telling them what to do. I was educated a Catholic and so were those men in Portugal whose Catholic education supported the tradition of women having to submit to men. It was very difficult, therefore, for men who were educated in this way to accept a woman boss. The reason I first went was that I was divorced at that time, so I had no husband or children to worry about. I was chosen because of that. Working with Portuguese men at the head of the bank was not easy. They just could not accept that women had their own ideas and that I was able to defend my ideas. They asked to have a woman in the position because they thought that a woman would say yes to everything. I think that men are driven more by power for themselves and I think that women in general look at the broader picture while men look more at their own interests* (Bank Manager).

*At the moment, I am a production manager in the pharmaceutical industry and this is a very unusual job for a woman. I am unaware of any other female production manager in any of the countries we operate in. It is tough going for women in industry and there are not many women working in the production area of industry. I have worked in Germany, I have worked in the States, I have worked in Switzerland and I have worked in start-up jobs in Puerto Rico, Mexico, Brazil and of course here in Ireland, and I can honestly say the most prejudice that I found was in the States. But, it is couched there, they have their regulatory quota of what personnel mix they have to have. They have to have women and blacks and minority groups in various managerial positions, but I would have been a lot more aware of prejudice there than in any of*

*the other countries. I was a bad statistic for them, I was a woman. In the field that I have chosen they found it particularly difficult to accept a woman. They certainly did not expect women to reach senior positions. I was more conscious of being a woman there than in any other country I worked in. People said thing like, "What? A woman in production?" My biggest triumph was when I was promoted in the States, because there was very much that anti-women culture there, in fact it was very, very much there. I was promoted on my ability and I would say that the feeling was that they knew I was ambitious and they knew that I wouldn't stay if I had not been promoted, and they knew that I knew I was capable of doing the job* (Production Manager, Pharmaceutical Company).

*I have twenty years' experience of working in the United States and it is clear that different generations exhibit different behaviours to women in management. While gender discrimination is not overt, it is implied that one always has resistance. On a logical level you are not sure what the reasons are, but there are underlying cultural feelings that the resistance is because I am a woman. What has repeatedly happened in my case is that when I am sitting around a table with all males, and my European boss is there, and he does not like women being in senior positions, he will not say my name or even look at me, or ask me to produce anything. He will ask a male colleague of mine who is less capable to draw information from me to produce something, and repeatedly my work is plagiarised. So, really, my gender is my problem. I believe this man feels threatened by me because I know I am competent and capable of executing my work, and there is very little that shakes me in that sense* (European Technical Support Manager, Computer Company).

The interviewees perceived that they are still judged on the male model of career development regarding the appropriateness of their 'fit' in organisations. They are assessed overtly or covertly on the male model with respect to selection, promotion and career development. They suggested that despite European Union legislation on sex discrimination and equal opportunities in recent years, there is little evidence that much has improved. The interviewees believed that they do not lack personal skills, experience or educational qualifications, but they are not yet given equal opportunities in their organisations:

> *In our organisation we have about 7,000 employees and I am the only female at my level. The biggest problem is that there are double standards still in place for evaluating and promoting. In most cases the person at the top, usually the man, needs to establish the culture and the standards that are acceptable. There is no question that there is a dual standard in place. Men are much more easily forgiven for mistakes, and women are expected to achieve far more than their male counterparts. I am a Stanford MBA, and I graduated fifteen years ago. Ten years ago we had a reunion, where a woman in my class reported that she established her own market research business. She put together a survey which asked all kinds of funny questions, like 'How grey is your hair since graduation?' and so on. It also asked 'What was your annual earnings, including bonuses? and 'What is your title'. The average earnings of the women were 40 per cent less than the men; this is Stanford MBAs! The average earnings for women was $100,000 and it was $140,000 for the men. It was that kind of a staggering gap. Achievements were almost directly correlated to title: women were managers and a few of us were directors, whereas the men were directors and a few were vice-presidents and CEOs. A couple of years later they did the same survey and got the same results. It is staggering* (Managing Director, Telephone Company).

The interviewees suggested, in their experiences during the past twenty years, that the promotion of females to senior international managerial positions has proceeded at a very slow rate. Many of the interviewees considered themselves to be quite unique in reaching senior management positions and particularly in pursuing international careers. They perceived that the barriers to women in management appear to be strong, internationally. They suggested that embedded in all cultures are traditions, practices and views that impede women's economic equality and reinforce patriarchal systems and male operating procedures. Sixteen of the interviewees considered that gender is still a disadvantage to them, even in countries which are perceived to be more enlightened:

> *Sweden is one of the countries where equality of men and women is supposed to be highly developed, but of course there is not equality at all there. I worked in a big international company and I was the only woman belonging to the board of directors and when I left there was a man appointed again. In Sweden, generally in the big international companies, there is not equality at all. There are very, very few women and I found this difficult at board meetings because I don't accept the behaviour and structure that men have created* (Director, European Commission).

Many of the interviewees believed that, because of the gender disadvantages they experienced, they often worked much harder and gained personal satisfaction in overcoming these obstacles during their international assignments:

*When I got to Japan there was only one woman in management in the whole company, and she was an international assignee from Scotland. It was a very, very difficult environment to work in. You had to adopt a completely different approach to management. That is not to say that you can't achieve. You can achieve, but you have got to go about achieving in a completely different way to the way that you would here in England. And you have an isolation factor, as firstly you have a language barrier, secondly the culture, and then, thirdly, being a woman. If you were male you would go in with a totally different air of respect. You gain respect simply because of gender in Japan, so it means that you have to work twice as hard. I saw it as a personal challenge and the reward for me was great, but, you go through pain, but the reward at the end was great* (International Assignment And Repatriation Manager, Telecommunications Company).

*The attitude of men in the business world was a big obstacle for me because it made me lack confidence in myself. Because of my gender it is much more difficult to establish working relationships with people whom you can share things with. As a woman I am not part of the game or part of the gang. I always had to work harder and this is difficult because it requires more energy* (Human Resources Manager, Financial Services Company).

In conclusion, the findings from this study suggest that senior female managers perceived gender to be an obstacle to their career progression. While female managers have the educational, technical and personal skills to achieve success in their domestic organisations and internationally, they were promoted to senior managerial positions in much smaller numbers than their male colleagues. Despite the difficulties discussed above, pertaining to their gender, it is clear from all fifty managers participating in this study that their determination and commitment ensured that they successfully overcame many of these barriers and succeeded in their international assignments.

## 4.14 Summary

This chapter presented the main findings from the interviews which were conducted with fifty senior female managers all of whom had made at least one international career move. This is the first time that a European qualitative study has been conducted with an entirely *senior* female managerial sample. The questions for this study were developed from an interview guide drawn up from issues arising from a review of the (i) international human resource management, (ii) women in management, and (iii) career-theory research literatures. The questions which were asked at each interview are included in the Appendix. A number of significant themes emerged from the analysis of the data and these thematic findings are useful in explaining why the glass ceiling and glass border still remain impenetrable in many organisations and keep most women from reaching senior managerial levels in their organisations. These themes also help develop a model of the senior female international career move in a European context and also provide a summary of the issues pursued in the study. This model is presented in Chapter Six.

# *Chapter Five*

# DISCUSSION

## 5.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter One, the discussion in this chapter is based on the main thematic areas presented in Chapter Four. For the purpose of clarity, the findings are discussed within these main twelve themes which emerged from the interview data. The discussion shows how this research study confirms, challenges, or adds to previous literature in the fields of international human resource management, women in management, and career theory literature. Due to the dearth of empirical research with senior female international managers, the findings from this study are frequently compared and contrasted with extant data from prior research conducted with junior female international managers and male international managers.

## 5.2 Breaking The Glass Ceiling

Studies of men and women's vertical progress along organisational career ladders show that blockages for women appear at much earlier stages than for men (Broderick and Milkovich, 1991; Davidson and Cooper, 1987). The findings in this study confirm these earlier works, with the respondents observing that as they moved up the managerial hierarchy, the glass ceiling also appeared to move up. The interviewees spoke of the ceiling being harder than glass, comparing it to concrete, and suggested that it was 'firmly, firmly in place'. These sentiments resonate with Schwartz (1989) who suggested that the metaphor of the glass ceiling is misleading, as "counterproductive layers of influence on women", such as tradition, socialisation and negative stereotypes, hinder their progression to senior managerial positions. The interviewees also suggested that, in particular, the initial stage of their managerial careers was

the most difficult period for them to be taken seriously, as they believed that, unlike their male counterparts, they were generally judged on their appearances. The respondents reported from their experiences that they believe the glass ceiling still exists throughout Europe, the United States, South America, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, China, Singapore and Japan.

Twelve of the respondents in this study believed that they could make it to the top of their profession, and break through the glass ceiling, but that this would mean sacrificing their personal lives. This finding is similar to a view expressed by Fuchs (1989), who commented that women's progress in the labour market has been offset by the loss of leisure time and the decline of marriage, with employed women more likely to divorce than non-employed women (Fuchs, 1989: 13-14). Morrison et al. (1987) and Marshall (1984) also suggested that women, in comparison with their male counterparts, need to choose among different life-style options. Such life-style choices include decisions about the importance of a career relative to other areas of life; whether and when to marry; whether and when to have children; arrangements for managing housework and child care; managing relationships with spouses, relatives, and friends; and managing competing demands from various life roles. The findings from this research confirm the work of Morrrison et al. (1987) and Marshall (1984) which was conducted with female managers in their home organisations. This research study, however, has identified that for female international managers life-style choices are even more difficult than for domestic female managers. For example, managing relationships with spouses while partaking in international assignments was identified by twenty-two of the respondents as the most difficult obstacle to be overcome. In this regard, the respondents spoke of the additional strains placed on personal relationships when the male partner became a trailing spouse, or alternatively if the couple decided to have a commuter marriage the respondents believed that their quality of life suffered. The interviewees with children added that while on foreign assignments the arrangements for child care was a major concern for them, with one interviewee stressing that unless

she was completely satisfied with the child-care arrangements she would not take an international management position. The managers believed when their male counterparts move internationally they do not have to take the responsibilities for housework and child-care arrangements. The interviewees with children also believed that they missed out on family support for child care which would have been available to them in their home countries.

Parasuraman and Greenhaus noted that women managers are less likely to be married and more likely to be childless than their male counterparts, suggesting that women who are strongly committed to their managerial careers have chosen not to marry or, in the event of marriage, not to have children (1993: 198). The ten unmarried interviewees in this research concur with the findings of Parasuraman and Greenhaus, and have decided to commit themselves to their careers, choosing not to marry. These interviewees believed that it was more beneficial to their careers to remain unmarried, especially when partaking in international management, as they had only themselves to think about when moving abroad.

Hochschild's (1989) study established that "careers were originally designed to suit traditional men whose wives raised their children" (1989: preface). Similarly, Fierman (1990) suggested that "the 1980s effectively destroyed the notion that women could have it all, that is, a successful managerial career, a fulfilling marriage, *and* children" (1990: 40). Fierman concluded that the career ladder in the United States is predicated on the life cycle of a man. The findings from this research study support Fierman's observations regarding the difficulties for managerial women in 'having it all'. The married interviewees with children spoke of the difficulties they experienced when they took time out to have children, for example, the assumptions made by some male managers that they would now be more interested in their families than their careers. One of the interviewees believed that, even though she was as experienced and as well qualified as her male counterparts, she did not get a particular position because she was a woman and was pregnant. The managers also

spoke of the additional stress they experienced in attempting to balance a senior career and family life, often with very little support from their partners. One of the eight divorced interviewees stated that her career was a major threat to her former partner and that he could not cope with her success.

The respondents believed that, because of the extra strains and guilt feelings which women experience in balancing an international career with child rearing responsibilities, the majority of female managers typically choose between a career and family. The study revealed, however, that female international managers may have to make this decision because (i) of what they perceived to be the relative inflexibility of organisations, (ii) of the assumptions by home-country senior management and societal assumptions that a woman's primary role is that of a mother and not an international manager, and (iii) career success is still based on a male career model, which ignores the influence of marriage, pregnancy and children, and household duties. The sentiments of the participants also concur with Astin's findings (1985), which noted that childhood socialisation and early childhood experiences are important influencing factors in shaping occupational interests. Astin believed that basic work motivation is the same for men and women, but they make different occupational choices, due to early socialisation and because opportunities are different for men and women (1985: 117-26).

The results of research in the United States, by Kleiman (1992), indicated that women in lower management are likely to encounter the glass ceiling without even advancing into middle management. Kleiman concluded that "the height of the glass ceiling has been found to be much lower than first thought" (1992: 6). The findings from this study confirm Kleiman's research, as the participants suggested that one of the main barriers for women in international management is getting to senior management positions first in their home organisations. As one participant suggested, the ceiling moved up as she moved up. Sugawara (1991) reported that of 4,491 executive-level managers (defined as assistant vice-president and higher) surveyed in the United States,

only 6.6 per cent were women. Sugawara observed that most of these women were working in areas of human resources, research, or administration, as opposed to 'fast-track' positions with executive status (1991: 9). O'Leary and Johnson (1991) found that women managers in the United States who reached senior management positions in previously male-dominated areas do so at the cost of isolation and loneliness (1991: 10-16). The findings from this research confirm that the participants employed in traditional male-dominated areas in Europe, such as medicine, accounting, law, and engineering, also experienced loneliness and isolation similar to their American counterparts. From a review of the literature and from the comments of the respondents in this study, it is clear that the glass ceiling is still in place for women managers in Europe. The strains of coping with loneliness and isolation, because of lack of networks, high visibility and tokenism, as outlined by the interviewees, contribute to the extra burdens women have to overcome to reach senior managerial positions.

In summary, the above discussion highlights that many female managers encounter more barriers in their career progression than do their male counterparts. An analysis of the interview data confirms that both glass ceilings and glass borders are still perceived to exist for female managers. The findings also suggest that these barriers are not confined to European countries, but exist in all countries in which the participants have worked. As suggested in the interview data, these barriers are both covert and overt and are experienced by female managers in their home countries and host countries. It is evident that additional barriers exist for women in international management, as studies have shown that the number of female managers pursuing international careers still remains much lower than the number of their male counterparts, and also lower than females in domestic management. The interviewees believed that because of these additional barriers many female managers may choose not to partake in international assignments. In this regard the fifty interviewees considered themselves to be "unusual" in pursuing senior international managerial careers.

## 5.3 The Trailing Spouse

Studies of domestic managerial transfers have, generally, found that companies need to take a proactive approach to dual-career couples if they are to attract and retain the best employees (Burke and McKeen, 1988; Taylor and Lounsbury, 1988). The findings from this research suggest that a proactive approach to dual-career couples is more important in the case of international transfers, as additional difficulties with visas and work permits have to be overcome. According to Handler and Lane (1997), there is a dearth of literature informing the human resources practitioner of what multinational companies are doing to confront dual-career issues (1997: 69). Pierce and Delahaye (1996) suggest that career prospects for the trailing spouse, in the geographical vicinity of their partner's assignment base, become an important consideration (1996: 920). Twenty-eight dual-career couples in this study relocated to facilitate the careers of the female partners, but none of these couples received any assistance from their home organisations. The findings indicate that every couple had to devise their own particular solutions to cope with additional difficulties associated with the male trailing spouse.

The study confirms research by Brett et al. (1992) and Davidson and Cooper (1983) who highlighted that female managers in dual-career relationships are more likely than their male counterparts to have partners with professional careers. All thirty-one married interviewees are married to professional partners. This created further personal difficulties as the findings established that throughout Europe it is not the norm for international relocation to take place to facilitate the career of a partner.

Two of the trailing spouses decided to retire early from their own careers to facilitate the careers of their partners. The two interviewees in this situation emphasised that having supportive partners, who took care of the cooking, shopping, and housework, undoubtedly contributed to the success of their careers. These two trailing spouses are members of the Brussels-based

STUDS (Spouses Trailing Under Duress Successfully) group, and, along with approximately fifty-eight other male trailing spouses in the group, provide support for their executive partners' careers, as well as holding golf outings, fund-raising events and social evenings. The STUDS group provides a social network for the trailing spouses, which in turn helps them to settle in their new location.

Potter suggested that "companies with successful family-related policies will be able to increasingly attract the cream of the crop in future workers" (1989: 29). This research study confirms Potter's findings, as the interviewees perceived potential problems for organisations which ignore the formulation of policies on dual-career issues, a practice which they believed might lead to difficulties in attracting the most suitable expatriates. The respondents did not expect organisations to spend substantial amounts of money to help them, but believed that much could be done at relatively little expense, such as financing educational courses for their partners. The interviewees perceived that family-related policies are not yet well developed in those European organisations in the sample. In this regard, the interviewees spoke of the lack of recognition by their organisations when their partners put their careers on hold.

In their reviews of corporate policies and family needs, Carmody (1989) and Shellenbarger (1992) noted that, despite profound changes in work-force composition, organisational policies and practices are still largely predicated on the outmoded assumption that employees are predominantly males from traditional families — the traditional family being one in which the husband is the sole bread-winner and the wife the home maker and child rearer. The findings from this research study confirm the findings of Carmody and Shellenbarger, with the German interviewees stating, in their experiences, that it is still unusual for a woman to have the primary career. These interviewees believed that German societal and organisational norms remain very traditional, and that in their organisations, because of their gender, they would be considered to be quite unusual in occupying senior managerial positions.

The results of research by Pierce and Delahaye (1996), confirming the earlier work of Smith, suggest that organisations may no longer be able to assume that the male partner's career will always take precedence, and that the female partner will always subordinate her career aspirations to those of her partner. The findings from this research study confirm the earlier work of these authors, as only two of the interviewees regarded their own careers to be relatively less senior to the careers of their partners. Incidentally, these two interviewees pointed out, because of their partners being relocated, that they choose to adopt the relatively secondary career role. These interviewees added that because they have young children, it suited them to temporarily adopt this role and to cut back on professional commitments, but in future they may review their respective roles.

The interviewees also identified the necessity for both partners to work for financial reasons, the implications of one partner having to give up work because of an international transfer would be quite significant. The interviewees also stated that career women were very likely to be married to career-oriented men and vice versa. As the difficulties associated with male trailing spouses are quite significant, three of the married interviewees decided on commuter marriages, and they concur with the findings of Taylor and Lounsbury (1988), which suggested that commuter marriages are likely to increase proportionately among working couples as the labour force participation of women continues to rise.

The personal satisfaction of the trailing spouse is particularly important, since the literature on expatriate management suggests that spousal failure to adjust is the most common reason for expatriate failure (De Cieri et al., 1991; Stone, 1991). The limited research which has been conducted on international managers who are in dual-career marriages suggests that spouse-related problems are more serious when men have to adjust to the role of secondary breadwinner. Spouses accustomed to working and having a career may be particularly frustrated if they cannot work, or if they encounter difficulties in

finding work. Within this research trajectory, Punnett et al. (1992) suggested that additional emotional stress is experienced when the male is the spouse in this position, which means that some dual-career couples may prefer to avoid international transfers, thereby sacrificing the female partners' career advancement (1992: 586). Five of the interviewees in this study spoke of the additional stress they experienced when their husbands had difficulty in finding work in their new locations. Herbert and Daitchman (1986) noted, where an employee refuses relocation because of the potential impact on their partner's career, that this may amount to 'career suicide' (1986: 54-60). The respondents in this study confirmed the findings of Herbert and Daitchman regarding the difficulties they experienced when considering relocation because of their partners' careers.

The findings show, from the perceptions of the thirty-one married respondents in this study, that an international career move is much more difficult when the male partner is the trailing spouse, a result which confirms previous research by Harris (1995), which suggested that socio-cultural norms relating to career models make it easier for women, than for men, to make these transitions. It is clear from the research findings that it is not yet the norm for the male partner to be the trailing spouse. Twenty-eight respondents who had experience of the male partner being the trailing spouse noted, in all cases, that the presumption in social settings was that the female was the trailing spouse. Whenever it was pointed out that the international move had taken place because of the female's career, in most situations people did not know how to deal with this, and the couple were considered an 'oddity'. The twenty married managers with children also mentioned that it was more difficult for them to adjust to a new neighbourhood, particularly when the other women in the neighbourhood did not work, and their neighbours considered it strange that a man should stay at home and be the trailing spouse. They also remarked that their neighbours perceived them as "always working", and "too busy" to be invited to any neighbourhood gathering.

Analysis of the data also indicates the importance of trailing spouse issues to expatriates, and suggests that their effective handling should be a matter of growing concern to home-country management. Ninety-eight per cent of respondents are currently employed in organisations without any policies to assist dual-career couples. Further analysis showed that ninety-two per cent of interviewees believed that the success or failure of expatriate assignments is directly related to the happiness of their spouses. This figure is consistent with the literature indicating that spousal and family problems are the chief cause of difficulties relating to expatriate assignments (Handler and Lane, 1997; Tung, 1982).

In the absence of home-country organisational policies regarding dual-career couples, the thirty-one married participants in this study have coped with this particular difficulty in a variety of ways, such as: commuter marriages, putting the male career 'on hold', giving priority to the female career for a number of years, or the male partner retiring from employment. As discussed above, these options are still not accepted socially as normal. Seventy-four per cent of the interviewees believed that many female managers did not partake in international assignments because of these additional difficulties. These seventy-four per cent asserted that the male trailing spouse is a major contributory factor in explaining the scarcity of female international managers. They also believed that many male partners would not be prepared to put their own careers 'on hold', and sixteen of the senior female managers in this study believed that they would not have made it to the top of their careers if their partners had not sacrificed their own careers. All of the interviewees concur with DeCieri, Dowling and Taylor (1991) and with Adler (1986), who suggested that, by failing to assist trailing the partners of dual-career couples, a firm increases the risk of a trailing spouse's unhappiness contributing to the expatriate's poor job performance and/or premature return. Despite the additional difficulties involved when the male partner is the trailing spouse, this study has indicated that the low participation rate of females in international management, who are in dual-career marriages, cannot be attributed solely to

problems arising from dual-career marriages. The thirty-one married participants in this study suggested that dual-career problems are not insurmountable, but that it is essential to have the details of one's personal life in order before embarking on an international career move.

## 5.4 International Career Versus Relationship and Child-bearing Conflicts

It is clear from the above discussion that female international managers experience extra difficulties when the male partner is the trailing spouse. A closely related area examined in this study concerned the conflicting demands of work and home when there are children involved in the international move. The findings from this study confirm results from previous research studies, conducted with female managers in *domestic* organisations by Hochschild (1989), Lewis and Cooper, (1987) and Pleck (1985), all of which have established that women take responsibility for household tasks and child rearing, regardless of how many hours they work outside the home. The findings in this study indicate that in the majority of cases, despite the demands of a new job internationally, the female expatriate manager took responsibility for running a home and raising the children. Seven of the respondents in this study suggested that the difficulties associated with male trailing spouses, in international assignments, however, are more difficult to overcome than the difficulties associated with child rearing and child minding.

The perceptions of the married females in this study are that female managers experience the conflicting demands of work and home to a greater extent than their husbands do. These demands are perceived to be more stressful for female managers when international assignments are undertaken, both from the point of view of the trailing spouse as discussed above, and from the general conflicting demands made by work and home. An examination of the senior female international career move, from the study findings, indicates that work–family conflict is a major source of pressure for female managers. The

interviewees believed that male international managers experience less stress from balancing work and family situations as females still tend to take the major responsibilities for organising home and family members.

Research findings on accountants, by Barker and Monks (1995; 1994), found that while women could make it to the top of their profession, it was frequently at substantial cost to their personal lives. Similarly, the eleven married interviewees in this research who did not have children spoke of choosing a career in preference to children, and of devoting themselves one hundred per cent to their careers. These interviewees believed that if they had decided to have children, senior management would perceive them to be more interested in their families than their careers. Seven of the ten unmarried interviewees maintained that remaining single had proved a distinct advantage for their careers, as this enabled them to make more international career moves than their married counterparts. The single managers in this study also moved internationally more frequently than their married counterparts. Of the thirty-one married managers in this survey, eighteen had made one international career move, nine managers had made two international moves, and four managers had made three international moves, although not always with their partners. The greater frequency of international moves by single managers was reflected by one of the unmarried respondents in the study, for example, who had moved to Germany, the United States, Switzerland, Spain, Mexico and Brazil. Another single manager had moved to Switzerland, Germany, Britain (on a few occasions), the United States and the Cayman Islands.

The thirty-one married respondents in this study confirmed that it is much more difficult to move internationally with a family. This finding supports previous research with female managers in *domestic* management positions by Davidson and Cooper (1992), which found that “more and more executive women who marry are having difficulty in their dual managerial roles as corporate manager and family manager” (1992: 140). There is a lack of empirical research on the senior female *international* career move, particularly

outside the United States, which makes comparisons and contrasts with previous research findings difficult. Family management difficulties were also highlighted by the respondents in the current study, as well as by the domestic managers in Davidson and Cooper's study, concerning role conflict between career and running a home or raising children; time conflict in running a home and career; not being geographically mobile; feelings of guilt about not being a good wife or mother; lack of emotional and domestic support from husbands; and, having to take work home with them.

Prior research, including findings by Lewis and Cooper (1988), also suggested that the dual-career life-style becomes more difficult to manage, and parents experience more role conflict and stress than those without children. Hall (1990) noted that fathers have a choice about whether to make their new family status and needs visible, and if they do choose to modify their work schedules they frequently do so in a covert way. For women, on the other hand, Lewis (1994) noted that there is no question about the visibility of motherhood. Insofar as they have a choice, it is between making their family needs invisible by conforming to traditional patterns of work, or to modify work schedules, often at considerable cost to career advancement (Lewis, 1994: 235). The interviewees in this study believed that by the time a woman reaches her thirties she is often beginning to establish herself in her career, and at the same time is reaching the older years in terms of child-bearing. In organisations where long hours at the work place are considered important for career advancement, new mothers are often faced with identity dilemmas and difficult career decisions. Knight's (1994) interviews with senior domestic managers, who had become mothers perceived that their organisations did not seem inclined to believe their continued commitment to work. The women also experienced difficulties in their efforts to be taken seriously on return to work (Knight, 1994: 153). Previous findings by Forrest (1989) also suggested that the stress of integrating family and work life is more acute for working mothers since, typically, women still take more responsibility for the home. The sentiments of the interviewees with children in this study resonate the

findings of Knight's interviewees, with all of these interviewees stressing that they had to convince their home-country senior management of their availability to partake in international management. These interviewees also believed that organisations tend to be inflexible in their demands, and at least some of the women managers who abandon the work-force for family reasons are doing so only because their work environments are not sufficiently flexible to allow them to balance work and family demands. Two of the interviewees in this study had left employment temporarily for child-bearing and child rearing reasons, but found this to be more stressful than balancing a career and family. They have since returned to senior positions in organisations.

The eight separated or divorced interviewees suggested that their personal relationships suffered because of the demands of balancing career and home life, particularly when spending long intervals away from home on international travel. Organisational norms of mobility and long hours spent at the work place created conflicts and dilemmas for these couples. These eight managers also spoke of the inability of their former spouses to accept that female careers could be equal or more successful than their own male careers. These findings are similar to those reported by Davidson and Cooper (1992) and Lewis and Cooper (1987), which revealed that gender boundaries in the family are most challenged when the female partner is more successful in career terms, or earns more than her partner.

Three of the divorced interviewees concurred with Cooper and Lewis (1993) who suggested that some women respond, consciously or unconsciously, by holding back in their careers, in an attempt to prioritise their marriages. These interviewees suggested their career successes caused problems for their partners, therefore, in an attempt to save their marriages they held back in their careers. Davidson and Cooper (1992), however, also found that some professional women are giving priority to their own careers in preference to relationships with male partners who fail to support them in relation to their careers. Lewis (1994) noted that there is considerable evidence to suggest

that stressful work experiences, such as overload and conflict, can affect employee well-being and general mood, which can, in turn, negatively affect the quality of marital relationships. Lewis further argued that the potential for tension is greater when there are two stressful jobs. Only four of the interviewees (the two sole careerists and the two secondary careerists) believed that it is not possible for both partners to have equally senior careers simultaneously.

Forty-seven of the interviewees suggested that it is more difficult for female managers than for their male counterparts to 'have it all', that is, a successful career, a good personal relationship and children. Thirty-seven of the managers believed that females are forced to choose between an international career and marriage because of the extra responsibilities of balancing home and work life. These interviewees believed that their male counterparts in international management do not have to make the same sacrifices, as it is still generally accepted by organisations and society that the family will move to facilitate the career of the male breadwinner. The fifty managers suggested that organisations can no longer assume that this pattern is going to continue. It is, however, not yet the norm for a family to relocate internationally to facilitate the female's career.

The twenty-eight managers, in this study, whose families relocated to facilitate their careers, noted that their organising and settling in of their families to new surroundings often proved more difficult than dealing with their new professional lives. The participants perceived that much of the guilt and conflict experienced by them as female managers were derived from the way parental roles are socially defined. They also believed that the role tensions and constraints, such as those they contend with, are potentially damaging to women's careers. The interviewees also perceived that the historical devaluing of women's work means that women tend to be employed in traditional women's occupations which have lower pay, power and prestige — all of which may affect women's career progress. The interviewees further

believed that gender role identity, particularly in relation to child-bearing and child rearing does impact on male or female behaviours in relation to occupational expectations. The managers believed that personal relationships, child-bearing and child rearing conflicts are strong indicators and predictors of the disproportionately low number of females who pursue, or are interested in pursuing, careers in international management.

It is clear from the sentiments expressed by the managers that have children, that work–family conflicts are a major threat to females partaking in international management. All twenty-eight managers who relocated for their careers believed that they, as females, still took responsibility for organising home and family. These interviewees believed that in the case of international relocation for the male career, the female would take responsibility for home and family life. It is apparent from the data, therefore, that more females than male managers have to choose between an international career or family commitments.

## 5.5 Mentors

From the results of the current study and the results of other research studies, evidence is accumulating that female managers have to overcome more barriers in their progression to senior management positions both inside and outside the work environment. As a result of these additional barriers, studies have established that women need more psychosocial support than men (Davidson and Cooper, 1992; McDonald and Korabik, 1991). The current findings confirm the work of these authors. Organisational sources of support for managers include mentors, role models and networks. Previous studies have identified the lack of mentoring and networking relationships as the most significant barrier facing women managers in their transition from middle to senior management in *domestic* organisations (Dreher and Ash, 1990; Noe, 1988; Levinson et al., 1978).

The findings of this study indicate that, there are not enough women in senior international managerial positions yet to act as mentors for other women. As a result, female managers are more likely to be mentored by males. The findings establish that the mentor's gender does not influence the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship. None of the thirty-four interviewees that had been mentored by males had experienced any difficulties with cross-gender mentoring. All believed that their mentors did not view them as females, but saw their mentoring roles as aiding the career advancement of their managerial protégées. This finding is consistent with research conducted on the effects of gender and mentoring by Monks (1998) and Noe (1988). This challenges prior research findings by Arnold and Davidson (1990) and Fitt and Newton (1981) who suggested that sexual tension was an issue in cross-gender mentoring.

The findings also revealed that, in an international management context, a mentoring relationship is even more important than in domestic management. The participants believed that while partaking in international assignments, in

addition to improving their self-confidence, increasing their visibility in organisations and increasing their promotional prospects, mentors provide the contact and support from the home organisation which in turn facilitates re-entry. The participants also believed that the opportunities for them to partake in international assignments would have been partly attributed to having mentoring relationships. The interviewees suggested that, in the absence of family and friends, their mentors also provided many support benefits, and also helped in keeping them in touch with their home organisations, which in turn reduced the 'out of sight, out of mind' syndrome.

Clutterbuck (1993) asserted that everyone needs a mentor. Clutterbuck and Devine (1987) pointed out that the benefits of a mentoring relationship are not limited to the protégé. The mentor is said to achieve increased job satisfaction, increased peer recognition, and potential career advancement. The forty interviewees who had the experience of mentoring relationships acknowledged that the benefits provided by their mentors began in their home organisations, for example, in providing career direction and psychological support. These interviewees suggested that their advancement to international management may be partially based on the successful development of mentoring relationships. This finding supports the conclusions of previous studies on mentoring in domestic organisations, which reported that more women than men who advance to senior management positions have mentors (Burke and McKeen, 1994; White et al., 1992; Ragins, 1989; Clutterbuck and Devine, 1987).

Seven of the interviewees spoke of their bosses, all male, who facilitated informal mentoring support. These interviewees believed that a 'good boss' acted as a supporter and adviser for them, helped to develop their reputations, helped to get their names known to senior management, set high standards for them, and stimulated their personal motivation. The twenty-eight interviewees who had been mentored by males talked about the absence of female mentors, which reflected the relative scarcity of women in senior

management positions who might provide this role. Davidson and Cooper (1992) also found that successful female managers often report that at least one of their superiors (usually male) has been instrumental in helping their careers (1992: 101). Six of the interviewees had the experience of being mentored by both males and females. These six interviewees believed that they had 'the best from both worlds', and suggested that it is the capability of the mentor that matters most, and not their gender. Cooper and Hingley (1983) suggested that women need female mentors who can act as role models. They believed that women may miss opportunities for career advancement because they lack female role models. This lack probably gives rise to responses which mirror the behaviour of successful male executives, which may further isolate women as their life-styles do not easily adapt to the male managerial model (Cooper and Hingley, 1983). Other research has also shown that where a female mentor is available to act as a role model, it is likely that the aspiration levels of managerial women will be raised, even for work traditionally done by males (Barclay, 1982; Hackett and Betz, 1981).

Forty-nine of the interviewees asserted that many benefits can result from a mentoring relationship. These forty-nine managers believed that a mentor who guides one's career through the early stages is almost essential to success. The forty interviewees who had mentors believed, from their experiences, that the benefits provided by mentors, regardless of their respective gender, has undoubtedly facilitated their career advancement. These managers also suggested that mentoring in organisations outside the United States is a relatively recent development and, therefore, denied to many female managers who worked in an exclusively European context. A critical question is whether organisations can create conditions that encourage females to take on the role of mentors, as it is clear from the research findings that there is a lack of senior female mentors.

## 5.6 Tokenism and Lack of Female Role Models

Being a 'token' senior female manager in an organisation can create extra burdens and stresses for that manager. Davidson and Cooper's research (1992) revealed that increased visibility can lead to loss of privacy, and further add to the stresses and strains experienced by senior female managers. The female managers who were interviewed by Davidson and Cooper and who worked in male-dominated organisations, complained of the disadvantages associated with their high visibility. These disadvantages included the highlighting of their mistakes and associating these with gender, as well as receiving personal attention for their sex characteristics, rather than for skills, which meant that they had to put extra effort into getting themselves taken seriously (Davidson and Cooper, 1992: 84). The sentiments of the participants in this study concur with Davidson and Cooper's findings, with forty-six interviewees believing that, because of being in a foreign country, the feelings of isolation and tokenism which they experienced were far more pronounced than in domestic management settings. The additional feelings of isolation were compounded by language, culture and gender barriers. The interviewees remarked that home-country senior management should recognise that without the social support of other female colleagues the token woman's progress is likely to be hampered.

Ten of the interviewees who relocated to Belgium believed that, because of gender, they were further isolated and treated as test cases for future women. These interviewees perceived, from their collective experience, that Belgian organisations are still dominated by a male hierarchical system, which highlighted their token positions. These interviewees also believed that female managers are expected to work harder than their male counterparts, and are always aware of being in 'a man's world'. One of these interviewees stated that Belgian society is very male-dominated, and also expressed that an old-fashioned attitude prevails which implies that women should stay at home with the children. She also stated that because she was a woman and was coming

in to take over the number one position in a male-dominated organisation in Belgium, she was seen as a threat to her male colleagues. The three interviewees employed in Germany reported similar feelings of tokenism and isolation. Two of these three interviewees held senior positions in banking institutions and had no other female colleagues at their level. These interviewees also perceived German organisations to be very inflexible, and believed that German societal norms still value women as mothers rather than as managers. The American interviewees who relocated to Ireland believed that it was easier for them to be accepted as senior managers in Ireland than in the United States. One of these interviewees believed that the United States were regressing in their attitudes towards female managers, and believed that there was more tolerance of female managers during the 1980s than 1990s. Similarly, two Irish interviewees who had worked in the United States experienced more discrimination and bias against them in the United States than in any of the European countries they had worked in.

As suggested above, another difficulty facing female managers, in particular international women managers, is not having female role models to follow. The research confirms previous research by Freeman (1990) and Davidson (1987) which suggested that female role models in higher managerial positions positively influence the careers of other women. Research studies have established that being a token woman manager not only typically means having no female peer support, but is likely also to mean working in an environment without female role models in senior management positions. As discussed in Chapter Two above, the situation for senior female *international* managers is even more difficult. In Adler's North American research (1994), the majority of female expatriates revealed that they did not have expatriate role models to follow. Similarly, in this study, thirty of the interviewees were the first female managers to partake in international assignments for their organisations and they believed that they were test cases for future female international managers. These sentiments concur with the findings of Davidson and Cooper's (1992) research on female managers in their home

countries, who found that performance pressure is intensified when women are appointed to particular positions in order to act as test cases for the future employment of other women at similar levels (1992: 86). The interview findings indicate that it is more difficult for a younger female manager to be taken seriously when she is the first female to represent her organisation internationally. One interviewee who worked in Japan stated that, because she was young (late twenties), she had to be very careful not to disclose anything that might reveal how young she was. She believed that being relatively young was a bigger barrier than gender. Similarly, another interviewee who worked in Belgium believed that, even though she was in her thirties, she looked much younger, and found male managers patronising to her.

According to Kirkham (1985), one of the key differences between being a member of a majority group and being a member of a minority group is that majority group members do not think about what it means to be a member of that majority group, whereas minority group members give much more thought to the meaning and effect of being in that minority and to the dynamics of the majority group. According to Tanton (1994), being members of a minority group can lead to loneliness at work and can also give rise to a number of other uncomfortable roles or issues for female managers, such as being the outsider, having to strive to avoid letting women colleagues down, little recognition for achievements, and being taken for granted (Tanton, 1994: 19). The research findings from this study confirm Tanton's work, with interviewees reporting loneliness, exclusion, and isolation, particularly at the early stages of their careers in their home organisations. One of the interviewees spoke about two types of uncomfortable situations which she experienced in her home organisation. The first situation was when her male counterparts 'chatted her up, and propositioned her', and the second situation was when older traditionalist men patronised her. She believed that these situations act as barriers to women's career advancement.

As discussed above, there is a lack of role models for female international managers. Of the fifty managers in this study, forty considered themselves as role models in their organisations, seven did not consider themselves as role models, and three said that they did not know or had not thought about it previously. Five of the seven interviewees who did not consider themselves as role models stated that they were quite proud of what they were doing, but do not think of themselves as females, but as managers. The other two interviewees who did not consider themselves as role models believed that they grew up in households 'where there was nothing less expected of girls', so they believed that if males and females were equally encouraged from a young age, they should be able to achieve without being aware of being female.

The forty respondents, who considered themselves as role models, hoped that when younger female managers saw that other females had previously partaken in international management, particularly those with children, that it was possible for themselves to aim for and achieve international assignments. These interviewees also believed, as they progressed through the managerial hierarchy, that they would have benefited from female role models. These interviewees also believed that by being role models they could help change the attitudes of both males and females in organisations. They believed that they could inspire and encourage younger females to partake in international assignments, and that they could help male managers to take a more positive attitude towards women in international management. The interviewees further suggested that as more senior female managers were prepared to act as role models, then, perhaps, the number of women partaking in international management assignments should increase in the future.

## 5.7 Networking

As discussed above, networking is another form of organisational support available to managers. Smith and Hutchinson (1995) noted that there is not much empirical research literature available on interpersonal networks. Previous research studies of networking in domestic organisations, however, have indicated that, in many organisations the concept of networks is understood to mean a male club or an 'old boy' network model (Davidson and Cooper, 1992; Ibarra, 1992). The findings from this study indicate that, throughout Europe, the 'old boy' network is still strong in most organisations, and particularly in established industries, such as medicine, accountancy and law. The participants believed that, given the absence of family and friends while abroad, the benefits provided by formal and informal networking in international management are of greater value than the benefits provided in domestic management. Despite these benefits, however, the participants believed that women are further disadvantaged from networking, as they have less time than their male colleagues due to home and family commitments, and gaining access to male networks is still the most significant barrier. As gaining access to this 'male club' has proved difficult for the participants, some of the interviewees have established their own informal female or mixed gender networks. The interviewees agreed with the findings of previous research by Davidson and Cooper (1992) which indicated that, although it is beneficial for female managers to network in these newer groups, there are still more benefits to be gained from networking in the established male-dominated groups, as power in organisations is still predominantly held by men.

This research study also confirms the work of Burke and McKeen (1994) who suggested that managerial women are still less integrated with important organisational networks. The findings from this study indicate that negative attitudes towards female managers were found to vary by industry, with a more hostile corporate climate prevailing in established industries. The

participants believed that because they were in a minority group, they felt isolated by male colleagues. The participants also suggested that the exclusion of females from male managerial groups perpetuated the more exclusively male customs, traditions and negative attitudes towards female managers. The detrimental effects of these covert barriers included blocked promotion and blocked career development, discrimination, occupational stress, and lower salaries.

Research by Adler (1987) and Harris (1995; 1993) suggested that female managers can miss out on international appointments because they lack mentors, role models or sponsorship, or access to appropriate networks — all of which are commonly available to their male counterparts. The experiences of the interviewees in this research confirm the work of Adler and Harris. The findings from this study indicate that the exclusion of female managers from business and social networks compounds their isolation, which in turn may prevent female managers from building up useful networking relationships which might be advantageous to their international careers. The interviewees noted that peer relationships and interpersonal networks provide an additional source of organisational support for managers. Kram and Isabella (1985) examined the role of peer relationships and similarly found that they provided a range of developmental supports for personal and professional growth at all career stages. Burke and McKeen (1994) suggested that peer relationships provided several career and psychological functions. Peer relationships, "unlike mentoring relationships, were characterised by mutuality, with both individuals experienced at being the giver as well as the receiver of various functions" (Burke and McKeen, 1994: 74).

According to Davidson and Cooper (1992), the task for female managers of breaking into this male-dominated 'club' of managers can prove difficult, and this difficulty thereby denies them social support, contacts, opportunities and policy information. Similar findings resulted from this study, with all of the interviewees being aware of 'old boy networks', and the difficulties associated

with breaking into these. The interviewees spoke of the 'male bonding' which took place after work hours, during sporting events, and in clubs and bars which they felt excluded from. Monks and Barker (1995) also found that Irish male chartered accountants spend more time on social networking after work hours than their female colleagues (1995: 4-6). Similarly, the respondents in this study also noted that male managers in their organisations spent more time networking after work hours than female managers. The respondents believed that this was possible for their male colleagues as they did not have the additional responsibilities of home and family to cater for.

The managers believed that networking provided many benefits including social and psychological support and an opportunity to test ideas with females in similar circumstances. The twenty-five interviewees who are currently based in Ireland were aware of *Network,* an organisation for women in business, but the interviewees expressed that this organisation is not specifically targeted at female *managers*.

The interviewees suggested that men, being the dominant group, may want to maintain their dominance by excluding women from informal interactions. They also suggested that exclusively male networks may be responsible for developing and nurturing negative attitudes and prejudices towards female managers. Since males still hold the power in the majority of organisations, the participants believed that if they could gain access to these men's groups that many benefits should result, in particular visibility and access to informal discussions with senior management. Forty-six of the managers perceived that there are more benefits to be gained for career progression if they can penetrate male networking groups. Given the difficulties outlined in gaining access to 'the men's club', these participants perceived that benefits, such as psychological support, camaraderie and general sociability, could result from networking with females or in a mixed gender group. These interviewees

In an attempt to fill this need in Ireland, the author is currently involved in establishing an Irish chapter of the European Women's Management Development Network.

believed that if females had more access to networking groups they could be socialised in both the formal and informal norms of the organisation and gain advantages from these. As discussed, the findings suggest that two significant obstacles for female managers regarding networking are (i) access to male networks, and (ii) having less time available for networking due to family commitments.

## 5.8 Male/Female/Individual Style of Management

The findings from this research study confirm that, in all of the countries that the interviewees have worked in, the stereotype of the white male manager still persists. One of the interviewees, who worked in Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, Spain, Mexico, Brazil and the United States, said that in her experience male managerial stereotyping is more prevalent in the United States than in other countries. Similarly, another interviewee noted that, from her twenty years' experience in the United States, different generations of male managers exhibit different behaviours towards female managers. She noted that, first, there is an older generation of male managers who are very definitely opposed to females as managers. Second, there is the next generation which she classified as more neutral. Third, the younger generation, which she believed is now going back to the old way and is being mentored by males of the second generation before them. Three of the interviewees also reported of being repeatedly mistaken for secretaries at meetings during their international assignments in the United States.

Studies by Schein et al. (1994) established that male sex typing of the managerial job is strong, consistent, and pervasive and appears to be a global phenomenon among males. According to Marshall (1984), sex role stereotypes relating to management seem to have evolved in a way that males are typed as being more task-oriented, objective, independent, aggressive, and generally more capable than females in handling managerial

responsibilities. The managers in this research study believed that these attributes are still used to categorise the successful male manager. Two of the interviewees, however, suggested that when, occasionally, their managerial styles appeared to be assertive, their behaviour was perceived as aggression and was not accepted as assertiveness by their male colleagues. Female managers are generally stereotyped as being more passive, gentle, consideration-oriented, more sensitive and less suited than males for positions of senior responsibility in organisations (Marshall, 1984). The interviewees in this research study who did not adopt a 'female' managerial style stated that they did not want to be associated with the 'mother' role in their organisations. Research by Schein et al. (1994), on male management students in five different countries and on male corporate managers in the United States, established that international managerial stereotyping illustrates the unfavourable way in which female managers are stereotyped. The participants in Schein's research viewed female managers as much less likely to have leadership or analytical ability, and less likely to be competitive, ambitious, skilled in business matters, or to desire responsibility (Schein, 1994: 50). The findings from this research study also indicate that the managers believed that they are unfavourably stereotyped, while all managers believed that they were generally more qualified than their male counterparts, and were equally as ambitious and competitive.

Thirty-nine respondents in this study stated that they adopted an individualistic style of management, as they did not want to be stereotyped as overtly male or female. Thirty-seven of these thirty-nine respondents worked in male dominated organisations. They believed that they were socialised in the male managerial style, and consequently their original management style would have been male. The thirty-nine respondents believed that they developed 'individualistic' management styles, because a stereotyped male or female style denies, to both men and women, the ability to exercise broader characteristics. These interviewees noted that their individual styles of management evolved as their careers progressed and as their confidence in

themselves increased to allow them to behave as individuals. They believed that they could be as ‘macho’ as any of their male colleagues when some situations arose, but they also believed that when necessary they could be as feminine as any of their female colleagues. The interviewees believed that, in their career progression to senior management positions, whatever managerial style they adopted caused difficulties for them. If they decided to adopt a male style of management, the females in their organisations often isolated them and viewed them suspiciously, while their male colleagues viewed them as unconforming and unpredictable.

Alternatively, if they adopted a female style of management, they were often perceived by both their male and female colleagues of providing a ‘mother’ role in their organisations. The findings from this study differ from Davidson and Cooper’s (1992) research, which suggested that the ‘mother’ role was by far the most common role reported by female managers. The interviewees were very conscious of not adopting ‘the mother-earth role’, indicating that the majority of interviewees (thirty-nine out of fifty) adopted an individual managerial style, as discussed above.

Forty-two of the interviewees suggested, because of the scarcity of senior female international managers, that their managerial style was very visible, and colleagues often questioned their behaviour and reactions far more than that of their male colleagues. As discussed, the findings suggest that female managers are in a ‘no win’ situation, whether they adopt a male or female managerial style, because of the difficulties associated with each style. The participants further suggested that male home-country senior management may perceive whatever managerial style female managers choose to adopt in the home country, that it may be inappropriate in certain international assignments.

The thirty-nine managers who have adopted individual styles of management suggested that having individual managerial styles helped them break through

the glass ceiling, and they now encourage and recommend junior female managers in their organisations to develop their own styles of management. The sentiments of the participants largely reflected Schein's (1989) findings that 'to think manager was to think male'. Interestingly, only one of the interviewees suggested that the problems associated with managerial styles stem from the power of men, and the associations that persist between the power of men and the power of management. The interviews also confirmed that in male-dominated organisations, where promotions have been reserved largely for men, women are encouraged to enact gender roles that suit men's preferences, thereby reinforcing men's power and dominance.

## 5.9 Characteristics Of An International Manager

Research suggests that international transfer of staff has a strong bearing on a company's success and is of crucial concern for the person who is transferred internationally (Borg and Harzing, 1995: 179). Research by Adler and Ghadar (1990) and Edström and Galbraith (1977) established three general company motives, explaining why companies make international transfers. The first was to fill positions where qualified host-country nationals were unavailable or difficult to train. The second motive was management development, whereby a transfer gives managers international experience and trains them for future important tasks in subsidiaries abroad or with the parent company. The third motive was organisational development, through managers being socialised in a variety of cultures and creating international communication networks allowing for more decentralisation.

The findings in this research study indicate that international transfers generally occurred when host-country nationals were unavailable. The interviewees very often had to convince home-country male managers of their willingness to work internationally. All interviewees in this study believed that it was necessary for them to have senior managerial experience in their home

organisations before they would be assigned to senior positions abroad. This finding can be compared with the more junior managers in the research studies by Adler and Ghadar (1990) and Edström and Galbraith (1977), cited above, who held more junior positions internationally, and used their international experience to progress to senior management.

According to Borg and Harzing (1995), companies have different transfer policies; some have formal systems, while others have no policy on this subject (1995: 183). The findings in this study indicate that the respective assignee selections for international transfers generally occurred on quite an arbitrary basis, with only two organisations having managers officially assigned for dealing with international transfers. According to Adler (1991), companies can no longer afford to send any but their best people abroad, and these individuals cannot afford to fail. None of the fifty interviewees in this research study has been recalled from her international posting. The interviewees believed that a contributory factor to their success is that they all actively wanted an international management position, and they ensured that they were fully qualified before going abroad, and also had their personal circumstances in order. The interviewees, however, believed that in the case of their male counterparts, the males were very often not as senior nor as well qualified, and did not always take the circumstances of their spouses into account.

The findings from this research found some similarities to those attributes which Tung found necessary, such as ability to cope with environmental variables and having one's family situation in order. The interviewees, however, cautioned that an over-reliance on technical competencies does not necessarily ensure a successful international assignment. The interviewees believed that it is essential that all international managers are technically capable both in their home and host organisations, but added that flexibility, ability to change, and to take risks are also important. The interviewees also suggested that having the ability to live and work with people whose beliefs

and customs are different from one's own is even more difficult for female managers, than for their male counterparts; the participants who worked in organisations, for example, in Japan and Switzerland were treated as unusual, as it is still extraordinary for a woman to occupy a senior position in these countries. The twenty-eight managers from dual-career couples that relocated to give priority to the career of the female partners believed that the approval of their partners is essential to ensure the success of their assignments.

Research studies, however, have established that only technical competence and knowledge of company systems have been used as the main selection criteria for appointing international managers (Barham and Devine, 1990; Brewster, 1991; Mendenhall et al., 1987). According to Borg and Harzing (1995), the selection procedures adopted by companies for appointing international managers lack attention to factors such as relational skills, cultural empathy and partner/family support. Brewster (1991) noted that widespread reliance on personal recommendations for expatriate postings results in selection interviews in which negotiating the terms of the offer takes precedence over determining the suitability of the candidate. The interviewees suggested, however, that the reliance on personal recommendations for appointing international managers creates further difficulties for female managers, as senior managers tend to promote those who most likely resemble themselves, i.e., males. Thirty interviewees in this study, believed because of stereotypical attitudes and the relatively recent entry of females to international management, that female managers experience additional difficulties in convincing home-country senior management that they possess the desired characteristics for making successful international career moves. These interviewees further suggested that, given the high failure rate of male expatriate assignments, females are likely to be considered as an extra risk for their organisations, which is a further obstacle for them to overcome.

## 5.10 Career Planning

The findings from this research concur with the findings of Henning and Jardim (1977), and White et al. (1992) with forty of the interviewees attributing their career planning to their mentors. The interviewees spoke of planning their careers in the short-term and gaining experience in various departments which gave them the opportunity to apply for senior managerial positions in their home and host organisations. White et al. similarly found that some of the women in their study believed that lack of planning had allowed them to do jobs which, although not directly relevant to their current occupations, had given them the opportunity to develop a diverse range of skills which enhanced their current performance (1992: 105).

Thirty-nine of the fifty respondents in this study felt that many working women are blocked in their attempts to gain access to higher occupational positions in their home countries, because of organisational and personal factors. This research finding supports previous evidence by White et al. (1992), which suggests that women have not made a significant impact on top jobs in either the private or the public sector. White et al. indicated that evidence concerning the number of women at the top is sparse, but that in any given occupation, the higher the rank the lower the proportion of women (1992: 3).

Forty of the interviewees suggested that, perhaps, females engage less in career planning than their male counterparts because they are often discriminated against by organisational career policies. These interviewees perceived that male managers still select, recruit and promote people that mostly resemble themselves. The thirty-one married interviewees also suggested that it was also more difficult for them to plan their careers than for their husbands, as it is still not the norm for the female's career to take precedence. Additionally, they spoke of putting their careers 'on hold' because of the responsibilities of child rearing and child-minding which still rest with them. The twenty-six interviewees who have children spoke of taking extended maternity leave and career breaks to relieve the stress of balancing

home and work when their children were very young. These interviewees believed that if they included such time in a career plan it would not be looked upon favourably by senior management. The interviewees also believed that it is undoubtedly more difficult for them to plan their careers based on a traditional linear male model, which does not allow time-out for child bearing and child rearing or part-time working.

The findings also indicate that female managers are becoming discouraged by the barriers found in corporate cultures and environments that continue to block their advancement. The interviewees suggested that if senior management continues to ignore that career paths of female managers differ from those of their male counterparts then organisations will experience unacceptable rates of female turnover. These findings concur with the findings of Gutek and Larwood (1989), which noted that a career-development process for female managers has not yet emerged. In order for change to occur, it is apparent that senior male managers will need to implement initiatives to eliminate organisational, cultural and attitudinal biases in order to develop a career path to retain and promote female managers. The findings from the current study also indicate that organisations of the future will have to review the emphasis on full-time work as the norm. The participants also suggested that when a model of career development for females emerges, it is likely that more female managers will engage in career planning.

## 5.11 The International Transfer Cycle

### 5.11.1 Selection and Preparation for Managerial Expatriation

According to Brewster (1993), managerial expatriation is still an atypical experience, and only a minority of employees ever experience it (1993: 54). The findings from this research study confirm the earlier findings of Brewster who noted that expatriation involves a major upheaval for the expatriate

managers and their families; and while it often proves to be a very positive experience in the long term for all concerned, the immediate transfer is frequently problematic. For some managers the possibility of an international assignment can come as a shock, presenting all the problems of considering future career prospects if the opportunity were to be turned down, and presenting the potential for domestic problems if the opportunity were to be accepted.

The findings from this study confirm Torrington's (1994) findings, which suggested that there is no profile of the ideal expatriate but that culture, economic development, geographical location and the job are important issues that should be considered in the selection of expatriates. The findings from this study also indicate that for female international managers cultural differences are often more significant than for male managers. One of the respondents, for example, spoke of the difficulties she has in assigning women to Alaska. The organisation she works for has fish caves in Alaska that are run by men who live in bunkers for a few months, and it is not yet socially or culturally acceptable for women to be employed in such work in Alaska. Many of the interviewees spoke about personal security and petty crime. One interviewee who worked in France spoke of being attacked outside her apartment as she returned from work one night, despite having leased an apartment in the centre of a major city.

As suggested by Torrington, the size of the expatriate community is an important consideration. The interviewees in this study believed that the expatriate community is even more important when the male partner is the trailing spouse. The success of the expatriate Brussels-based STUDS group has been highlighted earlier. The managers with children also stated that the availability of international schools would be an important consideration for them. These managers also stated that as children got older mobility would be more difficult, as they did not want to disrupt their education. These interviewees also believed that additional training should be provided for

female expatriate managers to help them cope with the additional stressors associated with balancing work and home life in their new surroundings.
The findings from this research indicate that only five interviewees received any training. The interviewees believed that as they generally had no female role models to follow, pre-departure training would have been very beneficial to them. One interviewee said that after she applied for an international transfer, she was given two weeks' notice to move from England to the United States. She found this extremely difficult as her partner was also accompanying her and they had to arrange visas and make arrangements for renting their house within this time.

Despite the recognition of various problems encountered with international assignments, a review of the expatriate literature reveals that, on average, only twenty-five per cent of aspirant expatriates receive preparatory training prior to departure. For those expatriates who receive training, most training is, however, of very short duration, generally lasting only a few days. Interestingly, with the additional difficulties which have been highlighted for female international managers, only ten per cent of managers in this study received any form of training. Baumgarten (1995) noted that in eighty per cent of the cases where training is provided, the partners are not included in the training programme (1995: 207). Of the five interviewees in this study who received any form of training, no partner was included.

The sentiments of the forty-five interviewees in this study who did not receive any form of training concur with the prior research findings regarding the lack of training, suggested above. The findings from this research study also indicate that the short time span between selection and departure was the main reason for managers not receiving training. The managers stressed that training is not only important for the expatriate manager, but, since the stress associated with an international assignment falls on all family members, the issue of training programmes for spouses and families' needs to be addressed. This finding confirms previous work by Harris and Moran (1987)

and Harvey (1985) who also highlighted the importance of including all family members in training programmes.

The interviewees also believed that their gender is the main barrier to selection and preparation for international managerial assignments, because the stereotypical image of the expatriate manager as male still exists in organisations and society. This finding concurs with North American research conducted by Adler (1993), who suggested that institutional discrimination exists in which assumptions about the suitability of managerial candidates are based on societal assumptions about men and women.

### 5.11.2 The Assignment Period Abroad

Research studies have established that an international managerial assignment for male managers normally extends for a period of three or four years (Borg and Harzing 1995; Izraeli et al., 1980). The findings in this study also indicate that the majority of interviewees (thirty-three out of fifty) spent similar lengths of time on international assignments. The findings from the current study differ from Lane and DiStefano's (1992) three phase findings of elation, distress and adjustment. The interviewees noted that because they were given very short notice from their home country organisations before moving internationally, the first phase (i.e., before moving abroad) was one of apprehension, and not elation as suggested by Lane and DiStefano, especially for those interviewees who were the first females to represent their organisations abroad. These interviewees noted that because of lack of training and often having the responsibility for organising a spouse and family it was a very stressful phase. The interviewees categorised the second phase of their move (arriving in their new location) as generally being more stressful personally than professionally. The respondents stated that balancing work and home life was particularly difficult for them during this phase, especially when young children had to be settled into new schools, and arrangements for child care had to be organised. One of the interviewees who moved to Japan

found the early stages of adjusting to working in her new environment particularly difficult. Lane and DiStefano also suggested that the average adjusting period for international managers was three to nine months; however, the interviewees in this research believed that it took one to two years for them to adjust to their new situations. Interestingly, the ability of female managers to cope with other demands, such as their 'second career' at home, is not listed as an influence on adjustment in previous literature. The respondents believed that lack of networking facilities and lack of female role models were contributory factors to their longer adjusting period.

Borg and Harzing (1995) noted that the first six months abroad are perceived by most expatriates in a similar way. At the beginning of the assignment everything is new and exciting, but after about three months difficulties begin to emerge as the expatriate experiences 'culture shock'. Lane and DiStefano (1992) defined culture shock experienced by expatriates as a behavioural pattern associated with powerlessness. These authors identified symptoms of culture shock as fatigue, tension, anxiety, excessive concern about hygiene, hostility, an obsession about being cheated, withdrawal into work, family, or the expatriate community, or in extreme cases, excessive use of drugs and alcohol (Lane and DiStefano, 1992: 47-8). After about five or six months the expatriate starts to adapt to the foreign culture and gradually moves to a more neutral state (Borg and Harzing, 1995: 191). In this research, the twenty-eight managers from dual career couples that relocated to facilitate the careers of the female partner expressed that their male trailing spouses experienced greater culture shock than themselves.

The findings from this research on *senior* female international managers make comparisons with other research rather difficult, as the available data regarding the international transfer cycle is generally based on the experiences of the male expatriate manager, since approximately 97 per cent of expatriate managers are male. Adler's North American research (1988) identified that the three per cent of female managers in her study were fairly

*junior* within their organisations and careers. On average, the female expatriate assignments lasted two and a half years, while the individual assignments ranged from six months to six years. Adler's female interviewees believed that their international assignments were of shorter duration and were in more junior positions than those of their male counterparts. The female managers believed that this was because home-country management perceived female expatriates as more of a risk and were unsure of their abilities to succeed internationally. Overall, the findings from this research indicate that the adjustment period for female international managers takes longer than for their male counterparts because of additional family and home responsibilities. The managers, however, believed that when their families and themselves have adjusted to their new locations, female international managers can be as successful or even more successful than their male counterparts.

### 5.11.3 Re-entry

The repatriation process can often be problematic for returning expatriates, their families and their companies (Handler and Lane, 1997: 68). The research findings from this study confirm Handler and Lane's work, as thirty-one of the thirty-two interviewees who re-entered their home countries experienced difficulties after returning. The sentiments of these interviewees concur with Torrington (1994) who noted that, despite the problems associated with repatriation, coming back from an international assignment seldom receives the organisational attention it requires. Torrington suggested that the main reason for this is because repatriation is not expected to be problematic, as all the problems are expected to be connected with going out and getting settled (1994: 24).

The managers in this research experienced similar difficulties to the managers in Scullion's (1992) research, for example, finding suitable posts and feeling undervalued, with two of the interviewees stating that they are considering

another international assignment, but that they would not return to their home organisations after that period. These interviewees believed that at that stage, they would need a new challenge. The findings from this study confirm Johnston's (1991) study, which suggested that little appears to be done by companies to facilitate returning managers, as only one German company and one American company in this study prepared employees for repatriation. The two interviewees in these companies asserted that preparation for re-entry facilitated the process and eliminated many of the problems which are normally associated with repatriation. These interviewees outlined that the re-entry process began six months before the employee was due to return to their home organisation. The findings also revealed that in some cases the re-adjustment to the home-country organisation often took between six and twelve months.

The participants believed that not enough attention from home-country senior management is given to the problems experienced by the returning expatriates. The interviewees suggested that the re-entry stage should be built in as part of an overall career plan before the expatriates initially leave their home organisations. This plan should be developed to identify the probable length of stay, projected responsibilities while abroad, and subsequent job position upon repatriation. The interviewees believed that if they had the support of mentors or networks during their international assignment the re-entry process might have been easier, as they would have been informed of developments in their home organisations while abroad.

## 5.12 Do Female Managers Want International Careers?

Career theories have been largely built on male models of success and work. Those models are supported by psychoanalytic conceptions of the centrality of work to identity, and by developmental beliefs that maturity and personal empowerment require separation from others (Levinson et al., 1978; Erikson, 1968). The interviewees in this research believed that in many organisations

commitment to work is measured by the number of hours managers spend at their organisations in the evening time and at weekends and also on social networking.

McClelland (1975) noted that women perceive power issues very differently because of their concern for relationships, but this does not mean that women are developmentally incapable of wanting or using power. McClelland believed that men approached power as action: competing, dominating, pushing ahead and taking an aggressive stance toward work and others. Women have traditionally shown more interest in *being* powerful than in acting aggressively, choosing to strengthen themselves in order to protect and care for others. McClelland concluded that power for women combines having and sharing. The findings in this research similarly confirm McClelland's findings, with the interviewees stating that, in their experiences they believe that female managers share information much more with their colleagues than their male counterparts do. The interviewees also added that they believed that many male managers view information as power and for that reason are reluctant to share information with their colleagues.

Research by Gallos (1989) similarly established that professional women are capable of aggressively competing and succeeding in the male corporate world, but are prepared to sacrifice their own careers and personal needs in order to support their spouses and assume an accommodative stance in order to avoid confrontations (1989: 117). The sentiments expressed by the eight divorced or separated interviewees resonate with the research findings of Gallos. Seven of these interviewees, however, believed that they sacrificed their own careers for the sake of their marriages, but realised that they were then unhappy both in their careers and their marriages. Five of these interviewees stated that they would have liked an international career at earlier stages in their careers, but that their former husbands would not agree to them moving abroad, therefore they were unable to apply for an international transfer until they were divorced. These interviewees stated that their divorces

now gave them the opportunity to concentrate on their careers. All fifty interviewees in this study stated that they wanted an international career, but that they often had to persuade home-country senior management to 'take the risk' and give them the opportunity to work abroad. Thirteen of the thirty-one married interviewees considered themselves to be "lucky" to be married to spouses who agreed to them pursuing an international career. These interviewees believed that due to societal and cultural norms, it is not yet widely acceptable for female managers to have the main career. Each of these interviewees stressed that in their social networks, they did not know of any other females who had spouses that facilitated their international career moves. The interviewees spoke of being 'eternally grateful' to their spouses for their career opportunities. These interviewees also acknowledged that they have never heard their male colleagues considering themselves "lucky" when their partners facilitated their careers.

The sentiments of the interviewees also confirm the findings of Hewlett (1986) and Giele (1982) who maintained that there are obvious and logical reasons to expect that women would have their own values for interpreting the world. These include their capacities for childbirth, early-life socialisation differences and social or political pressures for maintaining the traditional feminine role. As a result, women have traditionally been employed in service and care-giving positions, for example, teachers, social workers, nurses and secretaries. The interviewees talked about their early socialisation experiences, where generally their mothers were at home, and their fathers went out to work. The interviewees believed that they are the first generation to have to fight many "battles" and break through the glass ceiling. They added that some of the younger female employees do not realise how difficult it had been for them, especially at the early stages of their careers.

Hewlett (1986) and Catalyst (1982) observed that, because women hold primary responsibility for home and family life, they often feel forced to make major career sacrifices for the welfare of their children. Parasuraman and

Greenhaus (1993) also suggested that women are often forced to make difficult and complex decisions regarding what life-style to adopt (1993: 186). The interviewees in this research believed that for women in international management, life-style choices are even more difficult, especially when there are children involved. Ten of the interviewees with children believed that they adopted a 'superwoman' strategy. This strategy has been defined by Parasuraman and Greenhaus (1993) as "extensive career involvement with a frenzy of activity at home, including extraordinary efforts to spend more time with children" (1993: 196). Cross-cultural research findings have established that these 'superwomen' who have young children spend more time with their children than male managers do, find themselves less able to relax at the end of the day, and are more susceptible to feelings of guilt, role conflict and work overload (Parasuraman and Greenhaus, 1993; Lewis and Cooper, 1989). The ten interviewees in this research who had adopted a 'superwoman' strategy also spoke of feelings of guilt when away from their children for long periods of time, which they believed their male counterparts do not experience. The interviewees also observed that their husbands did not spend as much time with their children as they did, and also they did not experience feelings of guilt when away on work trips. These interviewees also spoke of work overload which they believed created additional strain for them, with one of the interviewees admitting that she would like to 'bail out' of corporate life, but, then questions if she would be able to 'live with herself'.

Three of the interviewees spoke of the difficulty of finding time 'for themselves', for example, going to the hairdressers, shopping for clothes for work, or having their nails manicured, all of which they believed were necessary for senior female managers. These managers also pointed out that when male managers move internationally, they generally need 'only two suits, and a few shirts', as the interviewees believed that their male colleagues are not judged by their appearances as much as female managers. The interviewees believed that as they are in a minority group, they feel more visible and responsible for representing all females, therefore it was necessary

for them to establish a suitable dress code. The respondents also stated that they did not want to dress 'in an overly feminine' manner, as this could attract unwanted attention to themselves as females. These interviewees also stated that in the early stages of their careers they attempted to wear hairstyles and clothes which 'made them look older', in order to reduce the amount of attention being paid to them as females rather than as managers.

The participants in this study believed that the thirties age-group was particularly difficult for female international managers, as they believed at this stage many female managers want an international career, but, they also want marriage and children. The managers also suggested that as it is not yet possible for women to 'have it all', they believed that female managers are generally forced to choose between an international career and family. Three of the interviewees who perceived that they 'had it all' — a successful marriage, career, and children — considered themselves to be 'very, very, unusual and very lucky'. The interviewees believed that they were unusual because until recently international careers were largely reserved for male married managers. These interviewees also remarked that they have never heard any of their male colleagues considering themselves to be lucky when 'having it all'. These three interviewees also believed that as they 'had it all', younger female managers could possibly be encouraged by this, and in future aim to have successful marriages, careers and children.

The participants suggested that organisations could do more to help female managers to cope with the additional difficulties of balancing a 'high-powered career' with family responsibilities. The managers also predicted that the number of female international managers will increase in the future, and organisations that will pay attention to them will benefit. From the career theory studies discussed above and from the findings of this study, it is evident that more research needs to be undertaken in order to understand women's careers more fully and in particular the interdependencies of their families with their careers.

## 5.13 The Impact of Gender on Female Managers' International Careers

Forty-six of the interviewees in this research stated that they were very conscious of their gender as they believed they were occupying positions 'in a man's world'. The interviewees believed that two overt examples of being discriminated against because of gender were salary scales and educational qualifications. The participants noted that they generally were on lower salaries than their male counterparts even though they were as experienced and as skilled as their male counterparts. This finding confirms the earlier studies which have established that male and female managers have been perceived as different, and organisations treat men and women differently in terms of managerial and pay opportunities (Powell, 1990; Rosener, 1990; Heilman et al., 1989).

Forty-six of the interviewees had third level qualifications, with the MBA being the most widely held qualification. The interviewees considered the MBA to be an important part of their management development programmes. The interviewees, however, believed that male managers who qualified with MBA degrees were more likely to be promoted to senior positions and higher salaries than female managers. This finding concurs with Simpson's (1995) and Sinclair's (1995) research.

The findings also indicate that the respondents believed that they had to work harder at the beginning of their careers in order "to prove that as a woman one is not sliding in on some quota". Another interviewee noted that when a woman is promoted to top management she has to be "very, very, good", and that because of gender she has to be better than men to get to the top. The findings also indicate that most gender barriers are covert as it is illegal to have overt barriers, as one interviewee expressed it: "most barriers are under the guise of something else". Grant (1988) suggested that differences which female managers bring to organisations have, for the most part, been ignored, discounted, or suppressed and have not been valued. The findings from this

research study also indicate that the interviewees believed that on many occasions their contributions have been ignored.

As discussed in Chapter Four, the managers in this study can be described as practising the complementary contributions approach to gender, as described by Adler and Izraeli (1988). This view suggests that while men and women as managers are different, each has an equally valuable contribution to make to the organisation. According to Adler and Izraeli, this theory acknowledges that differences are gender based, but it does not suggest that women or men are inherently better managers, but better at certain managerial tasks. The thirty-nine managers who stated that they have developed their own individual styles of management believed that they have adopted a blend of styles, or as expressed by one manager, the "best managerial skills from both worlds". One of the interviewees observed that "female managers tend to create a better team atmosphere, and that they care more for the feelings of the team and do not make assumptions on whether people are male or female".

The findings also indicate that the interviewees believed that changing many male managers' negative attitudes towards female managers will take a long time. Forty-six of the interviewees stated that they experienced negative male attitudes towards them, but suggested that there will always be attitudinal barriers when people are in a minority. A commonly shared sentiment of the fifty interviewees could be summarised by a finding of McGee-Calvert and Ramsey (1992) which they expressed as "until we admit to the fact that most organisations, as they currently exist, are seriously flawed, the glass ceiling will remain firmly in place, while being polished assiduously by those above it" (1992: 82).

## 5.14 Summary

This chapter discussed the main findings which emerged from the interview data in the context of previous research literature. It is clear from the discussion that gender stereotyping is still a major obstacle for female managers to overcome, particularly in their home organisations at the early stages of their careers. Forty-seven of the fifty interviewees believed that, because of gender, one of the most significant obstacles for them to overcome was the progression to senior management positions in their home organisations. The participants believed that senior managerial experience in the home organisation is desirable because of the additional risks perceived by home-country management for females representing their companies internationally. The interviewees believed that their progression is hampered by covert and overt barriers which, they assert, still exist for women in management. The discussion also highlighted that female managers are hindered in their careers if they deviate from the traditional male linear model of career progression. As a career norm for female managers has not yet evolved to take child bearing and child rearing into account, female managers are often regarded by male managers as lacking commitment to their organisations if they decide to take time out for family reasons.

This study has also confirmed previous research literature findings regarding the role conflict female managers experience in attempting to balance an international career with marriage and children. The discussion also highlighted and confirmed the results of earlier literature which suggested that the problems associated with the male trailing spouse are perhaps the most serious personal obstacles to be overcome. The research findings in this study concur with previous studies which claimed that tokenism, lack of female role models, and exclusion from support networks are all contributory factors to the career progression of female international managers. The findings, in agreement with previous research in Australia and North America, confirm that Europe-based female managers want an international career, and suggest that many of these managers also want marriage and children.

*Chapter Six*

# CONCEPTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESEARCH

## 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter a theoretical model of the senior female international career move, which was developed from the interview data in Chapter Four, is presented. This model provides a contribution to the international human resource management literature by adding to the understanding of the career moves made by senior female international managers in Europe. The model details the expatriation process and highlights the influencing factors, many of which are barriers, at each of the three phases of the senior female international career move. The model of the senior female international career move presented in this chapter has three constituent elements. These are:

- Phase One, circumstances antecedent to the assignment,
- Phase Two, circumstances during the assignment,
- Phase Three, post-assignment circumstances.

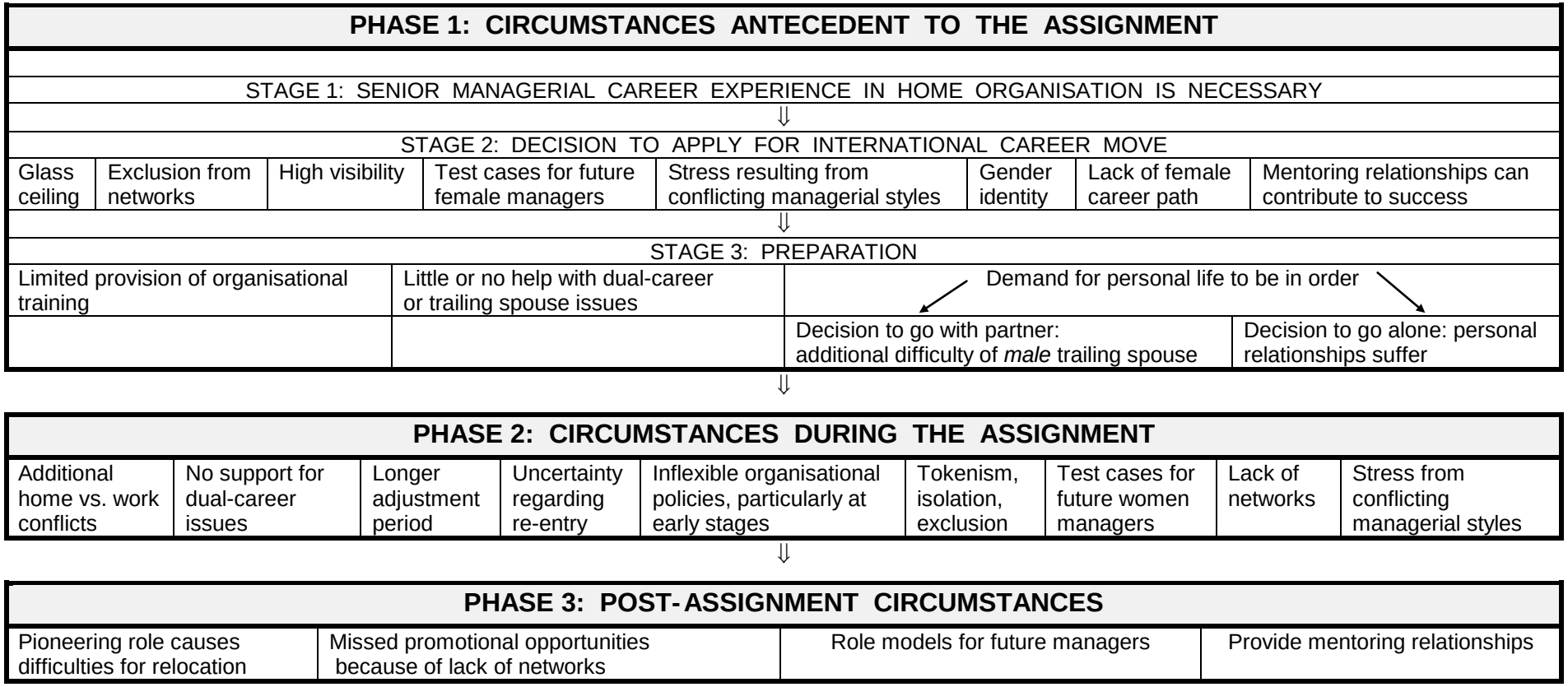
The grounded theory approach adopted in this study offered a way of attending in detail to the large amounts of qualitative data which had been collected in order to systematically develop theories about the phenomena which had been observed (Turner, 1983: 333). It allowed the discovery of theory from data, from which a number of propositions concerning the relationships between a number of key determinants and the senior female international career move emerged. These propositions which may be tested in future research are also presented in this chapter.

## 6.2 A Model of the Senior Female International Career Move

As discussed in the literature in Chapter Two, and is evident from the findings in Chapter Four and the discussion in Chapter Five, the female international manager has to overcome far more obstacles than her male counterpart. The interview data indicates that these three stages differ for male and female international managers. The findings confirm that, in all three stages, the stereotypical characteristics of the successful international manager which still persist are those characteristics which are typically associated with male management. An analysis of the perceptions gathered from participating managers suggests that these obstacles can be subdivided into three distinct stages, thus contributing to the development of a model of the senior female international managerial career move. This model consists of: (i) circumstances antecedent to the assignment, (ii) circumstances during the assignment, and (iii) post-assignment circumstances. A diagrammatic outline of the model is on the next page.

## Figure 6.1

## Three Phase Model of the Senior Female International Managerial Career Move, from interview data




Source: Developed by Author (1998)

The data from the interviews can be structured in outline using the three phases of the senior female international managerial career move model as follows:

**PHASE 1: ANTECEDENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The model in Figure 6.1 helps to illustrate how the circumstances that surround each of the three phases of the international assignment affect the senior female international manager. Based on the perceptions of the interviewees, a number of propositions are advanced which relate to circumstances surrounding each of the three phases of the senior female international managerial career move. The first phase of the model of the senior female international career move can be further divided into three stages, based on the perceptions of the participants. These stages are: (i) the requirement to have senior managerial career experience in one's home organisation; (ii) the decision to apply for an international career move; and (iii) the preparation for the international career move.

**Phase 1, Stage 1: Senior managerial experience in home-country organisation**

First, the findings suggest that female managers tend to require senior managerial career experience in their home countries before being considered for an international assignment, as female managers may be perceived to be a greater risk than their male counterparts for their companies while abroad. The interviewees believed that home-country senior managers may be prepared to risk sending junior male managers abroad, but, from the experiences of the interviewees, female managers need to "first prove themselves in their home organisations". The interviewees perceived that gaining the necessary senior managerial experience in their home organisations was the most difficult of all stages, since many overt and covert barriers still prevent female managers from breaking through the glass ceiling in their home organisations.

*Proposition 1: Female managers require senior managerial career experience in their home organisations before being considered for international assignments.*

## Phase 1, Stage 2: The decision to apply for an international assignment

### *The glass ceiling*

The second stage of phase one of the model, based on the interview data, suggests that the next element is a decision to apply for an international career move. The model indicates that, after gaining the necessary managerial experience in their home organisations, the fifty interviewees in this study decided to apply for international career moves. The interviewees believed that female managers are offered international assignments "only in rare circumstances". The interviewees perceived that this finding contrasts with the career experiences of their male counterparts for whom offers of international assignments are made. All of the thirty-one married interviewees reported difficulties in persuading home-country senior managers that they would be available for international assignments. After deciding to apply for their international assignments, the interviewees perceived that the covert barriers of tokenism, exclusion, and isolation, which contribute to the glass ceiling, are still very prevalent at this stage of their careers.

*Proposition 2: Female managers who have gained senior managerial experience in their home organisations are likely to experience the effects of the glass ceiling again when applying for international career moves.*

***Networking***

The interviewees believed that the exclusion of female managers from formal and informal networks compounds professional isolation, restricting the availability of peer support, which benefits their male colleagues on an on-going basis. The respondents believed that networks are useful at all three stages of the international career move. The respondents also believed that networking relationships in international management are even more important in the absence of family and friends. The interviewees perceived that their careers would have benefited from the support they would have received from peers — particularly in the absence of mentors — if they had been better integrated in organisational networks.

> *Proposition 3: Female managers who are members of influential networks are likely to be more successful in gaining international assignments.*

***High visibility and test cases for future female managers***

The respondents suggested that another source of stress for them is their high visibility in a largely male environment which focuses inordinate attention, including critical attention, on female managers. This is a burden which can provide additional strain for female managers. The interviewees believed that male managers do not experience such stress, as males generally belong to the majority group in organisations.

The interviewees also perceived that being considered test cases for future international managerial women adds a burden to the development of the personal potential of female managers. The managers reported “feeling responsible for representing all female managers”, a strain which they believed their male counterparts did not experience.

*Proposition 4: For pioneering female managers, being highly visible and being considered 'test cases' increases performance pressure.*

***Managerial styles***

The interviewees perceived that a further source of stress which female managers experience results from alternating between feminine managerial styles and efforts to adopt the more readily accepted male styles of management. The interviewees also suggested that the managerial style which they had adopted in their home organisations may not be acceptable in their host organisations, which was another source of apprehension for them. The thirty-nine interviewees who had adopted individual styles of management perceived that this was a contributory factor in helping them to break through the glass ceiling. These managers suggested that they combined the best of both male and female managerial traits to develop a style with which they felt most comfortable.

*Proposition 5: Female managers who adopt individualistic styles of management are more likely to have successful managerial careers.*

***The impact of gender***

Forty-six of the interviewees believed that gender was their main obstacle in obtaining international managerial assignments. These interviewees spoke of having to convince many male home-country senior managers of their willingness and desire to participate in international assignments. The interviewees believed that, in most countries, as Schein (1989) suggested, to think manager is to think male. The interviewees also perceived that female managers have to strive harder than their male colleagues to prove their worth and have an on-going burden of managing

their gender identity in the male-dominated environment of organisational management.

> *Proposition 6: Gender will negatively affect the opportunities of female managers in obtaining international assignments.*

***Female career planning***

A further obstacle which the twenty-six interviewees with children highlighted was that careers are still planned on a traditional male linear model, which does not cater for the option of child-bearing and child rearing. These interviewees found difficulties in convincing home-country senior managers that they are capable of balancing their managerial careers with motherhood. The interviewees suggested that they have often been referred to as 'part-time workers' by male senior managers. These interviewees also perceived that in the organisations in which they are employed managerial commitment is still measured by "being in the office first in the morning, and last to leave in the evening". The interviewees suggested that as females generally assume greater responsibility for home and family commitments, organisational norms still favour the male lifestyle.

> *Proposition 7: Use of the traditional male linear career model by organisations will be negatively related to the career experiences of female managers.*

***Mentors***

From the model it can be seen that, from the perceptions of the interviewees, mentoring relationships developed in home-country organisations can contribute to the success of the female international career. Given the glass ceiling and the current male-dominated composition of most organisations, the forty respondents who had experience of mentors believed that their career successes could be attributed in part to their mentors. Mentors were recognised by the respondents as being particularly beneficial at the early stages of career development, for providing challenging assignments, personal support, and friendship. The interviewees also believed that having a mentor in their home organisations, while on an international assignment, can be beneficial in terms of receiving social support and providing information on repatriate assignments.

> *Proposition 8: Female managers with mentors in their home organisations are more likely to have successful international careers than those without mentors.*

**Phase 1, Stage 3: Preparation for the international assignment**

***Organisational training***

The pre-departure stage, the preparation stage of the international assignment, was considered by respondents to be often 'haphazard and ill-planned' and overlooked by many organisations. The interviewees perceived that organisational training was generally very limited, superficial, or non-existent. The respondents perceived that each country presents the international manager, and the international manager's family, with a unique set of adjustment problems, even when transferring to countries which are perceived to be similar to their home countries. The more divergent an international assignment and location from the home country, the greater was the potential of experiencing culture shock. The respondents believed that pre-departure training is even more

important for female international managers because of their largely pioneering roles.

> *Proposition 9: Organisations that prepare in a planned and rigorous manner for the assignments of their international female managers will improve the likelihood of success of these assignments.*

***Trailing spouses and dual-careers***

The managers also believed that female managers are further disadvantaged because of the additional problems associated with male trailing spouses. Twenty-eight couples moved internationally to facilitate the careers of the female partner. These interviewees perceived that their male partners experienced many more difficulties in adjusting to the move than they anticipated. The interviewees also suggested that their spouses were looked upon as 'oddities' in their new neighbourhoods, and they believed that it is not yet socially acceptable for males to be 'househusbands'. The interviewees noted that their spouses were often excluded from organisational functions which had been arranged for (female) trailing spouses. The interviewees perceived that there was little or no organisational help available with dual-career or trailing spouse concerns. The interviewees believed that the expatriate community and informal groups, such as the STUDS group in Brussels, were important for providing social networks and support for male trailing spouses.

The thirty-one married interviewees are all married to professional partners, therefore, a number of possible solutions such as commuter marriages, the male partner putting his career on hold, or retiring had to be reached in order to facilitate the international career move. These interviewees noted that a major obstacle for them was convincing many home-country male managers of their availability for international assignments. All of these interviewees, however, perceived that it was

very important for the success of the move to have the dual-career issues 'sorted out' before applying for an international assignment. These interviewees also suggested that many home-country male managers need to realise that female managers who are part of a dual-career couple want to be considered for international management positions.

> *Proposition 10: Spousal satisfaction with female international managers' career assignments will significantly affect the success of assignments.*

***Demand for personal life to be in order***

The model highlights that for both male and female managers it is essential to have their personal lives in order before going abroad. The interviewees perceived that home-country managers contend that being married is a stabilising factor for male expatriates. The interviewees also perceived that, for female international managers, home-country managers contend that being married increases the risk of the assignment failing due to the additional difficulties associated with the male trailing spouse. The interviewees predicted that because of an increasing number of females pursuing managerial careers, and the difficulties associated with male trailing spouses, the number of commuter marriages will increase.

The interviewees believed that personal relationships of unmarried female managers tend to suffer, in particular because of the difficulties involved in maintaining long-distance relationships, as many of their partners perceive that it is not the norm for female managers to move internationally.

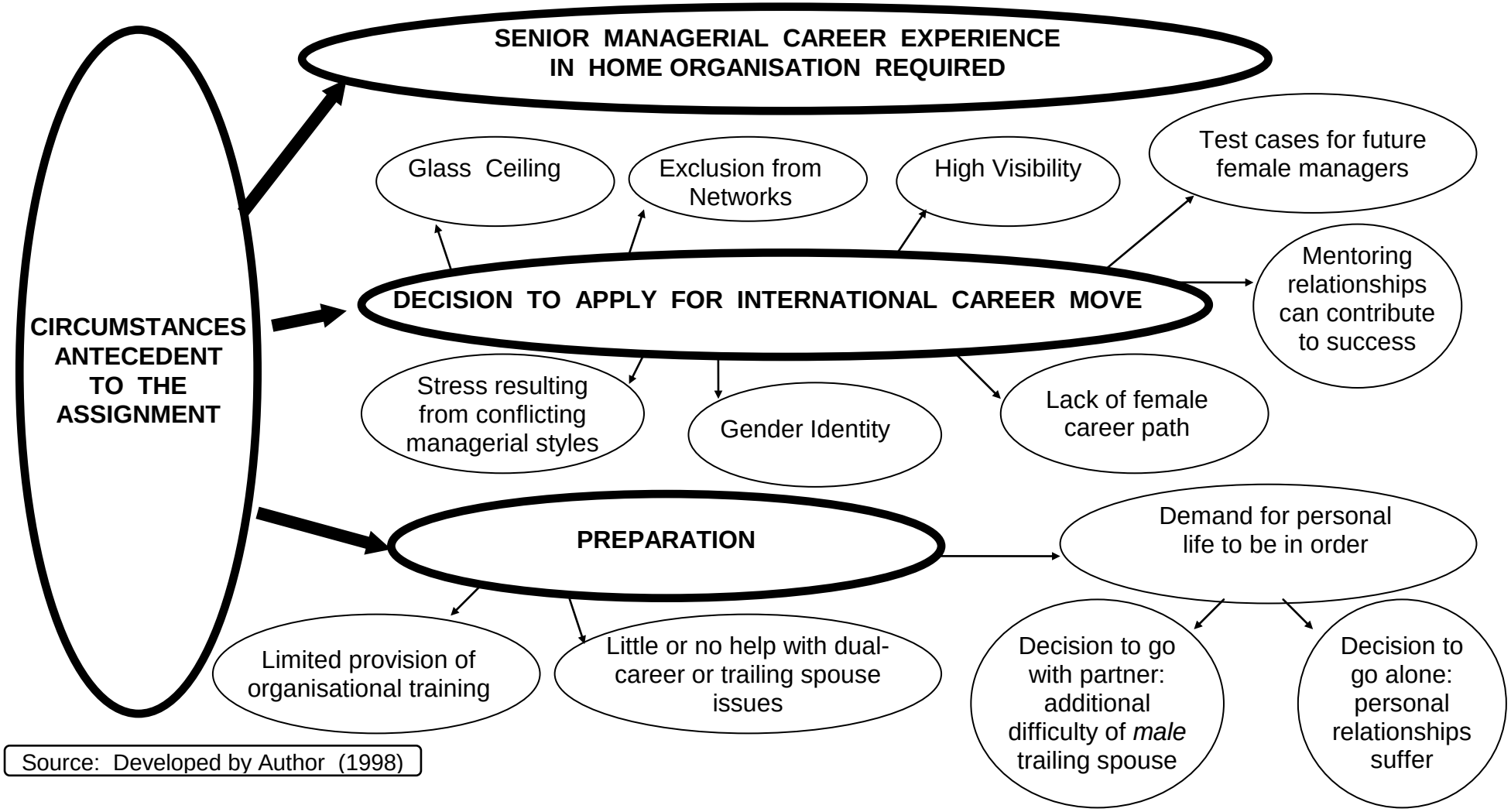
*Proposition 11: Married female managers who move internationally with their partners are likely to experience additional stress because of the difficulties associated with having a male trailing spouse.*

*Proposition 12: Unmarried female managers who move internationally without their partners are likely to experience difficulties in maintaining personal relationships while abroad.*

A diagrammatic outline of the above data findings is on the following page.

**Figure 6.2**

**Phase One of Model of the Senior Female International Managerial Career Move, from Interview data**




Source: Developed by Author (1998)

## PHASE 2: CIRCUMSTANCES DURING THE ASSIGNMENT

### *Home versus work conflicts*

It can be seen from the model in Figure 6.1 that the actual assignment is the second stage of the international career move. The interviewees believed that the family situation may be the most important contributor to the success of the international assignment. The interviewees perceived that female international managers who hold more senior professional posts than those of their spouses usually retain a disproportionate amount of domestic and family responsibilities, since male trailing spouses do not, typically, take up the greater share of these responsibilities. The interviewees believed that additional role conflict between career and home, particularly if there are children involved in the relocation, affects international female managers more than their male counterparts — and more than domestic male or female managers. The interviewees felt responsible for the conflict and stress experienced by their children regarding education, language differences, and cultural values. The interviewees with teenage children who had developed long-term school friends experienced guilt for disrupting those relationships.

> *Proposition 13: Role conflict between career and home will be greater for female international managers with children than for childless women.*

### *Dual-career issues*

As noted in the preparation stage, home-country organisations do not provide support or assistance to help managers cope with dual-career issues. Similarly, host-country organisations do not provide any support for dual-career concerns. Eighteen of the interviewees were the main careerists, a situation which they believed was still “very unusual” in all countries where they had worked. These interviewees also suggested that it is more difficult for the male partner to adjust to the secondary careerist role, as this role is still more socially acceptable for females.

*Proposition 14: Female managers in dual-career relationships are likely to receive little organisational support for dual-career issues.*

***Adjustment period***

The findings from the interview data show that the adjustment period for female international managers is longer than that of their male counterparts, due to the circumstances mentioned above, such as the lack of networking and lack of female role models. The twenty-six interviewees with children also believed that female managers tend to take the responsibilities of ensuring that family members adjust to their new surroundings, as well as taking on the responsibilities of their own 'new high-powered assignment'.

*Proposition 15: The lack of networks and lack of female role models are likely to increase the adjustment periods for female international managers.*

***Uncertainty of re-entry***

As many female international managers are in a pioneering role, the interviewees perceived that this increases their uncertainty regarding re-entry. The interviewees spoke of their concerns about their ability to get a desirable assignment on their return. Many of the repatriated interviewees returned to positions where they did not utilise the skills and experiences they acquired overseas. Thirty-one of the thirty-two repatriated interviewees believed that they experienced a loss of status, loss of autonomy and faced major changes in their personal and professional lives when they returned to their home countries. These interviewees believed that planning for repatriation is a very important element in the international career move. The interviewees also believed

that not enough attention is paid to long range career planning when arranging international assignments.

> *Proposition 16: Female international managers who know what their repatriation employment will be are more likely to be successful while abroad.*

***Inflexible organisational policies***

The model, from the interview data, also suggests that organisations are too inflexible regarding the additional demands of balancing home and work, for example, while settling children into new schools, or on occasions when children are ill, or when child-minders are ill. The interviewees believed that they experienced the additional strains associated with inflexible organisational policies particularly during the early stages of relocation, and they also expressed that this affects females more than males. The twenty-six interviewees with children experienced high levels of career–family conflict because of the opposing pressures arising from these two concerns. These interviewees believed that female managers have to base their life-style decisions regarding career and children on factors that male managers have generally not had to consider, and consequently their career achievements have been limited by factors that generally have not impaired men's achievements.

> *Proposition 17: Female international managers will experience additional stress associated with home and work conflict, particularly at the early stages of their assignments, if their organisational policies are inflexible.*

The remaining circumstances outlined in the model for this stage of the international assignment, while experienced by female managers in their home-country organisations, still prevail in managers' host-country organisations. Propositions relating to these specific issues have been

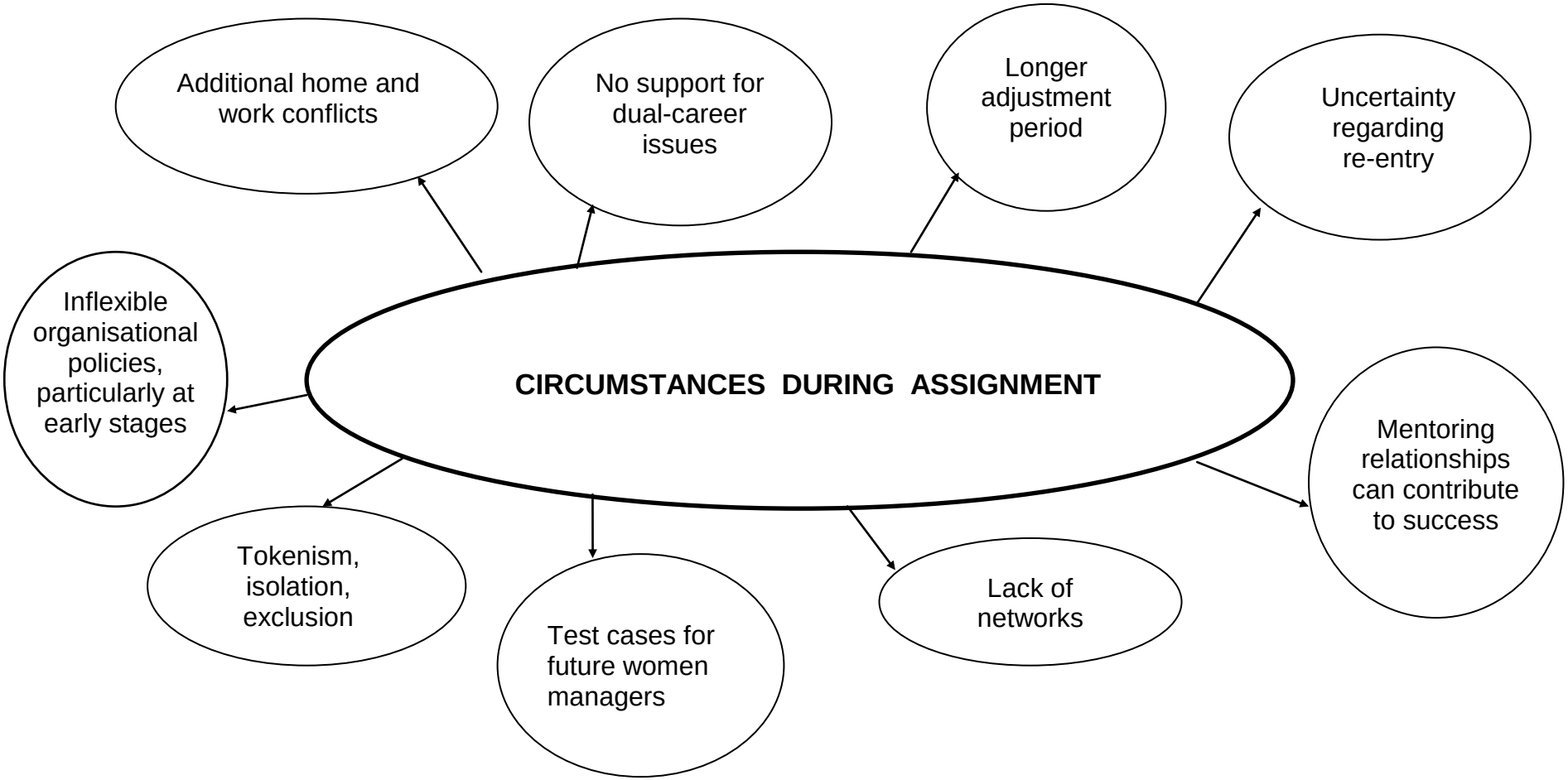
dealt with earlier. The interviewees perceived that tokenism, isolation and exclusion are often more pronounced for female international managers than for female *domestic* managers, due to even more male-dominated cultural and societal norms in many host countries.

As specified in the first phase of the international career move, most female international managers are treated as test cases by home-country managers, as they play a pioneering role in what was until recently a male tradition. Being test cases for future international managers continues at this stage of the assignment both from home-country and host-country managers, but females are also seen as representatives for other female managers more than males are for future male managers. Networks, which are more available to male managers, often substitute for the lack of family and friends while abroad. Exclusion from networks compounds the isolation experienced by managers within the minority gender, which is usually female. The burden of developing a managerial style to fit in with local cultural and societal norms is greater for women. The participants noted that it was often necessary for them to change their managerial behaviour when they moved abroad, as the male managerial style which they would have adopted in their home organisations would have been unacceptable in their host countries. Interestingly, the thirty-nine managers who have adopted 'individualistic' styles of management noted that this change in style could be attributed to the confidence they gained while working internationally.

A diagrammatic outline of the above data findings is on the following page.

**Figure 6.3**

**Phase Two of Model of the Senior Female International Managerial Career Move, from interview data**




Source: Developed by Author (1998)

## PHASE 3: POST- ASSIGNMENT CIRCUMSTANCES

The final stage of the international career move, as depicted in the model, is the post-assignment stage. Overall, the interviewees believed that three years was an appropriate length of time for an international assignment. The interviewees believed that the difficulties experienced at this stage are frequently overlooked by home-country senior managers, as problems are not anticipated when returning to home-country organisations. The experiences of the respondents, however, suggest that repatriation can often be more stressful than expatriation.

The respondents also suggested that two important factors at this stage were the clarity of the repatriation process and the repatriation training received prior to returning to their home countries. The interviewees expressed that clearer repatriation policies would have a positive impact on work adjustment. The interviewees also perceived that training for international managers and their families for the re-entry process, and for any likely problems related to repatriation, should reduce the uncertainty normally associated with re-entry.

### *Difficulties with re-entry*

The return of pioneering female managers with international experience can cause difficulties for home managers when allocating the returning female managers to suitable positions. Outgrowing home organisations is a risk shared by female and male managers after their international experiences. Missed promotional opportunities because of being overlooked is, however, a greater risk for female international managers, due to difficulties in networking for females. The interviewees believed that many repatriates who return report feeling impatient with colleagues and friends while they wait to be redeployed.

*Proposition 18: Well-structured repatriation policies and pre-return training for female international managers and their families will increase the likelihood of successful repatriation.*

***Role Models***

On a positive note, forty of the interviewees now see themselves as role models, which they believe will positively influence the careers of future female international managers in their organisations. These interviewees believed that as role models they are providing support and encouragement, and are helping to reduce isolation for junior female managers. These interviewees believed that if they can show junior female managers that it is possible to combine a successful international career with family life, more female managers may be encouraged to apply for international assignments.

*Proposition 19: Female managers who have female international role models to follow are more likely to be successful in their international assignments.*

***Mentoring benefits***

Managers with international experience bring advantages to other managers by establishing mentoring relationships which provide support for junior managers. The majority of respondents (forty out of fifty) attribute their success in part to mentoring relationships, which they established in their home organisations and which they maintained throughout their international careers. Ten of the interviewees reported that in their senior managerial positions they now attempted to help junior managers deal with barriers to advancement, and to provide psychosocial support and role modelling functions. The interviewees believed that they

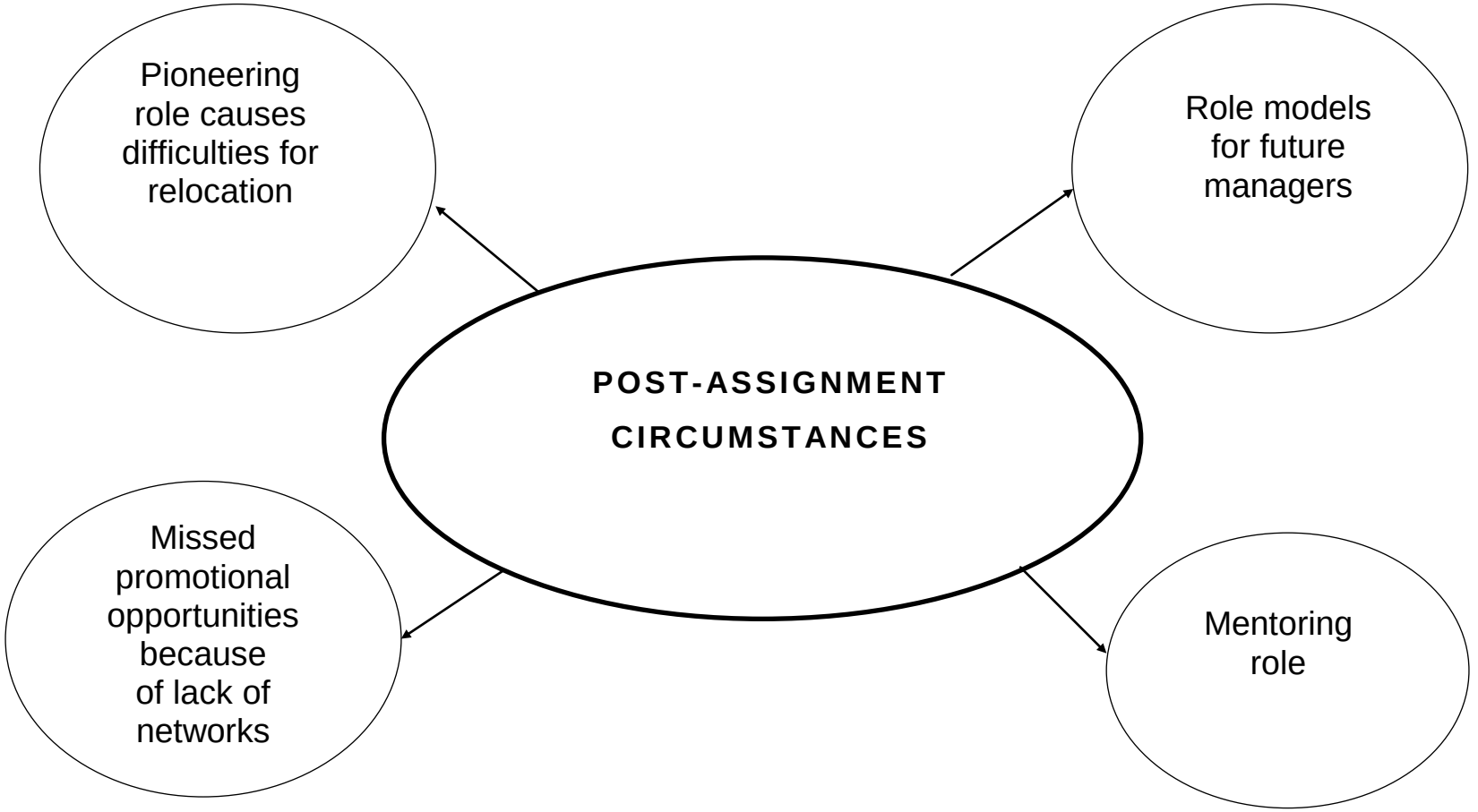
received a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment from fostering the development of junior managers.

> *Proposition 20: Repatriated senior female managers who provide mentoring relationships for junior managers are likely to increase the junior managers' career successes.*

A diagrammatic outline of the above data findings is on the following page.

**Figure 6.4**

**Phase Three of Model of the Senior Female International Managerial Career Move, developed from Interview data**




Source: Developed by Author (1998)

# *Chapter 7*

# CONCLUSIONS

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter has three sections. First, the conclusions to the study are presented in the first section. Arising from the interview data, some recommendations to companies who want to select effective international managers are presented in the second section. Finally, in the third section, an agenda for further research is presented.

The overall purpose of this study was to increase understanding of the international career move made by *senior* female managers in a European context. More specifically, there were four objectives: (i) to assess the accuracy of the reasons given for explaining the relative paucity of senior female international managers; (ii) to gather women's perceptions of the costs and benefits, difficulties and satisfactions involved in their own experiences or choices with respect to an international career and family; (iii) to contribute to the existing literature on women in international management; and (iv) to generate a future research agenda in the field of women in international management.

The primary research domain to which this study attempts to contribute is the international human resource management literature. The figures given for women in international management positions show that participation remains negligible — with three per cent of all expatriates being the most commonly stated figure (Harris, 1995; Adler, 1984). International human resource management literature has given very little attention to women as expatriates (Dallafar and Movahedi, 1996; Smith, 1996; Harris, 1995). An explanation for the lack of research in this field perhaps could be attributed to the difficulties discussed in Chapter Two, whereby international human resource management has been considered

to lack both appropriate theoretical structures as a field of study and a universal model of human resource management. Arising from a review of the international human resource management literature, various explanations have been put forward to explain the relative scarcity of female international managers, and this study has assessed the accuracy of these explanations.

## 7.2 Conclusions

This study has addressed issues pertinent to an under-researched topic, that is the senior female international managerial career move in a European context. The three phase model can also be effectively used to provide a structure for the conclusions to this study. First, the model suggests that female international managers face more obstacles than their male counterparts during the three phases of their international career moves. The study suggests that during phase one, that is prior to the international career move, female managers face far more difficulties than their male counterparts. The interviewees perceived that there were more difficulties for them during this phase than the other two phases. The first phase can be subdivided further into three stages, these are (i) the requirement of senior managerial career experience in their home organisations, (ii) the decision to apply for an international career move, and (iii) preparation for the move.

The findings reveal that female managers require *senior* managerial experience in their home organisations before taking part in international assignments. The interviewees believed that *senior* managerial experience is not always necessary for their male colleagues, as many home-country senior managers still equate the successful manager with characteristics associated with the male manager, and are often prepared to give junior male managers an opportunity to partake in international assignments. The findings, however, establish that interviewees had

further difficulties as they had to first convince home-country senior management of their abilities to reach senior managerial positions in their home organisations, as many home-country senior managers perceived female managers to be additional risks when representing their organisations abroad. The study establishes that many covert and overt barriers still prevent female managers from progressing to senior management. The interviewees believed that, from their experiences, these barriers are gender related, as male managers who were less educated and less qualified than themselves were promoted to senior management positions in their organisations. The findings also established that, despite these additional obstacles, female managers are capable of reaching senior managerial positions, but, that in comparison with their male colleagues they often have to make decisions about the importance of their careers relative to their personal lives. The interview participants believed that these gender obstacles contribute to the glass ceiling which still exists in Europe, and that it is extremely difficult, though possible, to break through the glass ceiling, but unlike their male counterparts, it is not yet the norm for female managers to 'have it all', that is a successful career, marriage and children.

The findings therefore suggest that one of the biggest difficulties facing female managers is breaking through the glass ceiling in their home organisations, in order to be considered for international management positions. Further difficulties existed when the managers decided to apply for an international career move. The managers experienced that home-country senior managers were reluctant to appoint females to senior positions internationally. The participants believed that this reluctance was compounded by a number of factors, such as the lack of networking groups, which they were effectively denied access to, but which were readily available to their male colleagues. The study suggests that in addition to providing the much needed support for the international move, networking provides many advantages such as psychological support

during all stages of the female career. The interviewees believed that exclusive male networks can nurture negative male attitudes towards female managers and may continue to promote male managers as the dominant power holders in organisations.

A further difficulty experienced by the managers before they left for their international assignments was the burden of being considered test cases for future female international managers. As only three per cent of female managers move internationally, the participants believed that their token positions increases their isolation and that their high visibility intensifies their performance pressures. The participants believed these difficulties could be reduced if they had previous female role models to follow. The interviewees perceived that the difficulties could also be reduced at this stage if there was a female career path that they could follow. The participants suggested that the managerial career is still based on a male linear model of progression, which they now considered to be outdated. The findings reveal that the average length of international assignments for the participants was three years, and, if a female career plan existed, female managers would be able to include their international assignment at a time which would also suit their personal plans regarding child bearing and child rearing.

The findings also suggested that an additional source of stress for female managers at this stage is deciding and developing a managerial style. The participants suggested that because many of them worked in male dominated environments, they were influenced by the male managerial style, but this style may not be suitable in their new locations. The findings establish that the managers perceived that an individualistic style of management helped to contribute to their career successes. The interviewees noted that this style evolved over time and as they became more confident.

The findings also reveal the importance of mentoring relationships in the careers of female managers. The study showed that formal mentoring relationships, are now spreading from United States based organisations to organisations in Europe, and the managers who experienced mentoring relationships, attribute their success in part to this relationship. None of the managers in this study experienced any difficulties with cross-gender mentoring.

The final stage before going on an international assignment, i.e., the preparation stage, was considered by the participants to be the most important stage, and a stage which the participants believed was likely to ensure the success or failure of the assignment. The study revealed that a key issue at this stage of the international assignment process is to have one's personal life in order before going abroad. The participants believed that female managers give more attention the preparation of their personal circumstances than their male colleagues do, and that this in turn could help explain the success of the female international managerial assignment. Ensuring that one's personal life is in order, however, created additional difficulties for the married managers, as they are all married to professional spouses, and there was little or no organisational help with dual-career issues. The unmarried managers also experienced difficulties maintaining long-distance personal relationships, as their partners did not consider it the norm for the female manager to move. The participants also noted that there was very limited organisational training provided and very little time given to prepare for the move. Despite all the difficulties listed here during phase one of the senior female international career move, the participants believed that overall, the most significant barrier to women in management is their gender.

The second phase of the senior female international career move, as identified by the model, is the actual international assignment, and the circumstances which surround this stage. Some of the barriers identified

in stage one above still persist such as lack of networking, which the study established is even more important than in domestic management, as in the absence of family and friends networks can provide the needed support. The participants also experienced tokenism, isolation and exclusion, particularly at the early stages of their international assignments, which they believed that their male counterparts did not encounter. The study also establishes that the adjustment time for female international managers is longer than for male managers. The participants believed that this is due to the additional home versus work conflict which female managers have to contend with. The participants suggested that this goes back to socialisation where females are expected to balance a number of roles simultaneously. The participants also suggested that they experienced additional stress, at the early stage of this phase, due to inflexible organisational policies. The fairly recent phenomenon of the male trailing spouse also caused additional difficulties, as it is not yet the norm for the male partner to give priority to the female career. This difficulty was again compounded by the lack of support for dual-career issues from home-country organisations. As in the first phase of the international career move, the participants stressed the importance of mentoring relationships during their international assignments, and attributed their success in part to their mentors. Despite the additional difficulties experienced by female managers at this stage, the findings establish that female managers *do* want international careers, and in some cases marriage and children.

The third stage of the senior female international career move refers to the post-assignment circumstances. The study establishes that the participants found many difficulties, both professional and personal on returning to their home countries. Lack of networking was again highlighted as an obstacle by the participants at this stage, as the participants believed that networks provide means of ‘keeping in touch’ with the home organisation and help with promotional opportunities.

As mentioned above, female managers are still in a pioneering role, and as they do not have female role models or female career paths to follow, this further increases the uncertainties regarding re-entry to their home organisations. The study establishes that, arising from their international assignments, the participants who have re-entered their organisations are now considered role models for future female international managers. These managers are also providing mentoring relationships to encourage younger female managers to take part in international assignments. All of the participants perceived themselves to be successful international managers, and they predict that the participation rate of female international managers will increase in future years.

Finally, the study establishes that female managers are capable of succeeding internationally, and that many of the desired qualities for international management positions are similar for males and females. The participants in this study believed, however, that in order for them to be considered for international management positions, they had to have better educational and technical qualifications than their male colleagues in order to counteract bias against them. As women, they also had to be more capable of balancing work and home responsibilities, as women in management are still disadvantaged because of their gender. This study has extended research in relation to the *senior* female international manager in a *European* context — an under-researched group about whom little is known. Despite the difficulties highlighted throughout the study, the findings suggest that, overall, international managerial experience is a positive experience for female managers.

## 7.3 The Senior Female International Career Move: Some Recommendations for Practice

The interviewees in this study suggested that because of their qualifications and ambitions, home-country senior management can no longer assume that the male career will have priority, and they predict that the likely trend is for more female managers to take part in international management. It is apparent, therefore, that organisations now need to develop policies to provide more flexibility for managers to relieve the additional strains of balancing home and work conflicts in a new location.

It is clear from this study that, in addition to organisations developing flexible working policies, the inclusion in these policies of issues relating to dual-career couples, and specifically addressing the case of the male as partner in these transfers, would benefit both dual-career couples and organisations. Home-country senior management could perhaps develop policies to assist dual-career couples based on the three phases of the international career move outlined in the model presented in Chapter Six. First, organisations could allow longer preparation time for the move in order to assist the trailing spouse with visas and work permits. A pre-move trip could be arranged to allow the trailing spouse to make employment contacts. The plan could specify the duration of the assignment, and outline any assistance for the male partner to be provided by the organisation.

Second, during the international assignment phase, the trailing spouse needs to engage in activity which is meaningful to them. Organisations could provide funds for further education of the partner, particularly where it is not permissible for him to work. The plan should also ensure that the female manager keeps in regular contact with the home organisation. This could be facilitated through mentoring and networks in order to make repatriation less stressful. Preparation for return to the home organisation should begin well in advance of the return date.

Third, the repatriation process, as highlighted by the findings in this study, can often be problematic. It seems clear that the manner in which home-country management chooses to deal with international managers after their return can define the success or failure of the assignment, which emphasises that long range career planning is needed when making international arrangements for dual career couples.

A further perception by home-country senior management, highlighted by Berthoin-Antal and Izraeli (1993) and Adler (1988) revealed that female international managers are considered to be additional risks for their organisations. In an attempt to reduce both the personal safety and organisational risks involved, home-country senior managers, as the results of previous studies have shown, have limited the female manager's contacts to internal corporate contact rather than external contact, defined her assignment as temporary, and did not offer her a number one position in the region or in the country. The findings from the current research question these measures for reducing risk, particularly in countries which treat women reasonably similarly, e.g., North America and Europe, and suggest that these strategies may instead increase the organisational risks involved, as the managers may be restricted by such constraints. All fifty managers in this study successfully occupied *senior* managerial positions in their host countries, seven of the participants held their respective company's number one position in the country, with the length of international postings being equivalent to those of their male counterparts. It is clear, therefore, from this research that organisations in Europe no longer need to employ these risk reducing strategies for female managers and that senior international positions can now be offered to male and female managers.

It is clear from this research that even in the most male dominated cultures, female international managers are not treated similarly to local women, but are given a higher status. The study, therefore, suggests that

home-country senior management should no longer assume that host-country nationals are prejudiced against female international managers. The participants added that these home-country perceptions are often based on fear of female managers being more successful than male managers. The participants also suggested that many home-country senior male managers frequently feel threatened by female managers, and in order to reduce this threat they often promote people most similar to themselves (i.e., other males) to international management positions. This study suggests that organisations can no longer afford to ignore their female managers, especially in the area of international management where shortages of managers have been reported, because of these misguided perceptions.

Given the many benefits provided by mentors, outlined by the forty interviewees who had experience of mentoring relationships, perhaps organisations could now consider formalising mentoring relationships in order to help more female managers break through the glass ceiling and glass border. Ten of the interviewees are now acting as mentors in their organisations particularly for younger female managers. They believed that as more women reach senior management positions, despite having less time than their male colleagues due to family commitments, they will be able to provide the necessary support for other females, which in turn could increase the number of female managers partaking in international management. The findings in this study have indicated that mentors, role models and networks can be powerful contributors to women in international management. The participants believed that as more female managers reach senior management positions, they will be prepared to act as mentors and role models and be in stronger positions to break into the ‘old boy’ networks, all of which could encourage more females to partake in international management.

The findings also reveal that the stages of career development for female managers do not have the predictable phases that male life patterns tend to have. The participants believed that evaluating life choices, for example, whether or not to have children, is more difficult and complex for female international managers. The participants believed that their careers would have benefited from a model of career development which acknowledged different life paths and which placed positive values on a variety of experiences, both inside and outside their organisations. The findings also indicated that career plans for male and female international managers could be developed by organisations to include: (i) substantial training and preparation time before the move; (ii) a projection of the likely length of the international assignment and responsibilities; (iii) regular contact and support from mentors and networks while abroad, and (iv) preparation for repatriation and for subsequent job position on return. The participants believed that the re-entry stage is often overlooked by home-country senior management, and in some cases repatriation proves even more difficult than expatriation.

The findings also revealed that negative male attitudes, sexual harassment and stereotypical attitudes which associate successful management with males were also perceived to be detrimental to career advancement by the participants. The participants, across all sectors and organisations, believed that discrimination and prejudices against them as a group affected their promotional prospects. Efforts should be made by organisations to ensure that these outdated attitudes and practices be eliminated to enable female managers to achieve their full potential.

## 7.4 Agenda for Further Research

A review of the literature and the research findings presented in this study provide opportunities for further research with senior female international managers. As international management is a relatively new experience for female managers, very little empirical research outside of North America has been conducted with this management sector. This study has investigated the assumptions put forward in the international human resource management literature, and empirically assessed these assumptions in a European context to add to the corpus of knowledge on the senior female international career move. The model presented in the study is largely based around a number of propositions which could be tested in future research, and the findings used to contribute to the international human resource management literature field. The model brings new attention to the senior female international career move and invites new research on the topic. The model and propositions developed in this study provide research guidelines that should offer researchers a better understanding of the determinants of the senior female international career move. Arising from the interviews, a number of specific themes emerged, each of which could be further developed in future research. These suggestions are discussed in more detail below.

The findings in this study highlight the additional difficulties that dual-career couples have to overcome when geographical relocation is necessary for the career advancement of one partner. Previous research by Smith and Hutchinson (1995), Caudron (1991), Reynolds and Bennett (1991) also identified the increasing importance of issues associated with international management and dual-career couples. In addition to the propositions outlined in Chapter Six, in relation to dual-career couples and trailing spouses, future research could also investigate the decision-making practices used by both dual-career couples and home-country senior management in relation to international transfers. The findings from this research indicate that home-country senior management should

no longer assume that the male partner's career will maintain priority, despite the additional obstacles that have to be overcome when the male partner adopts the role of trailing spouse. The failure of organisations to respond to dual-career issues results in costs, not only to the couple, but also to their employing organisations. The willingness of organisations to address dual-career issues may be important for achieving competitive advantage in the future. Future research, therefore, might examine if organisations have formulated any policies designed to accommodate trailing spouses and whether these policies influence the decision-making process used by dual-career couples. As indicated above, only one organisation in this study provided assistance for the trailing spouse. Given the difficulties associated with dual-career couples, the question of whether relocation is really necessary for the career development of individuals, and if so, to what extent, needs to be addressed.

Alternatively, if dual-career couples are unable to reach a decision to relocate in the same geographical location, then further research might explore the advantages and disadvantages of commuter marriages from both the viewpoint of the couple and that of the organisation. The participants predicted that the proportion of commuter marriages is likely to increase in size among dual-career couples, as prior research and the findings of this study, establish that females do want to participate in international management. Further research is needed to examine arrangements for children if they are part of commuter marriages, the geographical distances between the couples, the time span between couples meeting, and the overall anticipated duration of the commuting arrangement of the marriage.

A further direction which future research might usefully take would be attention to the trailing spouse phenomenon. Studies might investigate the implications of one partner putting his or her career 'on hold', as previous studies have generally concentrated on other difficulties

experienced by the trailing spouse while abroad. Traditionally, the trailing spouse tended to be non-working and female. Now as more women move into management positions, it is increasingly likely that many male partners may have to put their careers on hold. Research might examine the implications for both males and females who put their careers on hold. Questions arise regarding the financial, personal and emotional costs experienced by the trailing spouse in an international move. Such research might also assess the overall advantages and disadvantages of putting a career on hold from the individual's perspective and from the perspective of the organisation. These findings might then provide a contribution to career theory literature, because, as highlighted by a review of the literature and discussed in this study, careers have traditionally been based on the male model of largely linear progression.

Arising from discussions with the fifty participants, and from previous research, other specific barriers which prevent female managers from partaking in international careers include lack of mentors, lack of networking opportunities, and lack of female role models. These three areas merit further investigation. With regard to mentoring, for example, the extent of the use of mentoring in organisations outside the United States, and the advantages and disadvantages of same gender and cross gender mentoring might be assessed. As highlighted in the review of the literature on mentoring, conclusions regarding the gender mix of mentoring relationships are mixed and further empirical investigation with female managers who had the experience of mentoring relationships should help to clarify this area. Finally, in relation to mentoring, as proposition 8 suggests, further research could also investigate the impact mentors in home organisations have on the career successes of female international managers.

The participants also highlighted the benefits of formal and informal support networks for their career advancement, particularly during their international assignment. As discussed above, very little empirical research has been conducted on networks. Future research might investigate the similarities and differences of male networks, female networks and mixed gender networks. The research might also examine the entry barriers to these networks, and report on the personal and career benefits these groups provide. As suggested in proposition 3, future research might also usefully investigate the likelihood of more successful international careers for female managers who are members of influential networks.

The research findings also highlight the lack of available role models for female international managers. The participants believed that, because of the relative scarcity of female international managers, they were more visible and isolated than their male colleagues. The majority of interviewees in this study were the first female senior managers to represent their organisations internationally. The participants believed that if there had been previous female managers, they would have learned and benefited from their experiences. They also believed that it was necessary for them to adopt individualistic management styles, as in some instances the traditional male style of management would not be appropriate for them. A question which arises therefore is, if more women reach senior management positions would this lessen the male managerial style of management? As suggested in proposition 5, future research might examine the career successes of international female managers who adopt individualistic styles of management. Additionally, as suggested in proposition 19, further research might also investigate the benefits that role models are deemed to provide in the career development of female managers, and this in tandem with empirical evidence from managers who already consider themselves as role models for junior staff members should add new evidence in this important area.

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# APPENDIX

## THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Can you briefly tell me about your organisation?
- How many employees are in the organisation?
- How many women are employed in senior management positions?
- What are the barriers which prevent female managers from progressing to senior management positions?
- Do you think that you hit the glass ceiling in your career?
- How do you get to your senior managerial position?
- Are female managers offered international assignments?
- Is the transfer cycle for international assignments for female managers similar to that of male managers?
- How are managers selected for international management positions?
- Can you tell me about your international career move?
- What length do you think international assignments should be?
- Did you receive any training or assistance prior to your international career move?
- Did you receive any training or assistance before returning from abroad?
- Did you experience any difficulties with repatriation?
- Did you move abroad alone or with a partner?
- Do you think that it is more difficult to move abroad alone or as part of a dual-career couple?
- Do you consider that female managers experience additional difficulties when the male partner is the trailing spouse?
- Do you think that female managers want international careers?
- Do you consider that there are additional barriers for female managers in international management?
- Do you think that female managers choose between a career and marriage and children?

- What are the implications of career breaks and time out for child-bearing and child rearing for female managers?
- Did you plan your career?
- What qualities do you think are necessary when making an international career move?
- Do you consider that female managers require additional qualities when making an international career move?
- Do you think that educational qualifications are important?
- Did you ever have a mentor in your career?
- Do you think it is important whether a mentor is male or female?
- Do you adopt a male/female/individual style of management?
- Do you consider that there is a lack of female role models for women in international management?
- Do you consider yourself a role model in the organisation?
- Have you ever experienced sexual harassment in your career?
- Have you experienced any negative male attitude towards you?
- Do you ever feel a sense of isolation in your position as a senior female manager?
- Do you think that networking is important for female international managers?
- What do you consider are the main reasons for expatriate failures?
- Do you think that it may be women's own wishes and desires not to choose an international assignment?
- Do you think that you experienced any additional difficulties because of gender?
- Do you find it difficult balancing a personal life with your career?
- What do you attribute your success to?

These questions were the lead questions for each of the areas explored in the interviews. Supplementary questions were asked where appropriate in order to explore more fully the experiences of the interviewees.