

School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts
Department of Social Sciences and International Studies

**An investigation into the underrepresentation of women in the
Pilbara mining region of Western Australia**

Bobana Kljajevic

**This thesis is presented for the Degree of
Master of Philosophy (Humanities)
of
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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Human Ethics (For projects involving human participants/tissue, etc) The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)—updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262), Approval Number #MCCA-20-13.

Signature: 

Date: 14 August 2015

Abstract

The evidence from previous research suggests that, although women's participation has increased in the mining sector during the last 10 years, women still represent a small percentage of the total mining workforce in Western Australia. This is despite various mining companies adopting a number of strategies and policies in the attempt to address this problem. Thus, this study seeks to investigate why such limited numbers of women work in the mining industry. The study methodology involves surveying a sample of female employees currently working in the Western Australian iron ore mining industry, of whom several are selected for more in-depth interviews. Data on their personal experiences are drawn from the surveys and semi-structured interviews, while radical feminist theory is used to demonstrate the factors that have contributed to some women's lack of progression in this industry, and why this continues to occur.

This study demonstrates that while some women are not deterred from working in non-traditional roles, certain companies have not eliminated a dominant patriarchal organisational culture that continues to allow discriminatory attitudes. As evidenced by the personal experiences of the participants, this has resulted in some middle managers and supervisors privileging and favouring a certain "type" of worker (namely, men), with participants having difficulty attaining promotional opportunities and work in more senior roles. As the study respondents confirmed, middle management are more inclined to hire and support male employees due to "homosociability" (employing individuals similar to themselves), while maintaining the status quo. Through the theories of Raewyn Connell and Joan Acker on gender order and organisational theory, this study suggests that such outdated attitudes are a product of the wider gender order operating in gendered institutions such as mining companies.

This theoretical paradigm helps indicate that recruitment decisions the participants discussed are driven by power relations that deem women "unsuitable" and "undeserving" in roles traditionally held by men. The participants also confirm that while anti-discrimination policies exist, women continue to experience discrimination and have difficulty accessing equal employment opportunities (EEO).

This suggests that some companies may have evaded their responsibility in enforcing and reviewing EEO policies as effectively as required to disrupt this pervading culture at both the middle-management and company level. This questions whether companies are willing to proactively create gender equity to allow women promotion opportunities and address the disproportionate number of women in non-traditional roles.

This study posits that changing the perceptions that prevent some women from advancing is an important step towards achieving and maintaining more female employees in the mining industry. The findings of this study have important implications because they indicate that mining company initiatives to increase and retain female employees may not have been particularly effective up to the present time.

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I could succeed and that I was capable enough to take on this project. My tower of strength and my most dependable supporter, your unwavering reassurance followed me right to the finishing line. Words cannot express how grateful I am for the many sacrifices you made to better my brother's and my own life. This thesis is my thank you to you—you're the best.

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List of Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AMMA	Australian Mines and Metals Association
AusIMM	Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy
AVCC	Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
BHP	Broken Hill Proprietary Company Ltd
CEDA	Committee for Economic Development of Australia
CEO	chief executive officer
CMEWA	Chamber of Minerals and Energy Western Australia
DIDO	drive-in drive-out
EEO	equal employment opportunity
FIFO	fly-in fly-out
FMG	Fortescue Metals Group Ltd
FTB	fringe tax benefit
HR	human resources
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NSW	New South Wales
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
WGEA	Workplace Gender Equality Agency
WIMnet	Women in Mining Network

Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this research was to ascertain why women continue to be underrepresented in Western Australia's largest minerals sector. The first objective was to identify the factors that have contributed to a disproportionately small number of women working in diverse work roles across the mining industry, particularly non-traditional roles. The second objective was to assess the empirical research conducted on women's experiences, and ascertain whether barriers have endured or changed. The third objective was to explore the extent to which such barriers have prevented employers recruiting and maintaining women in the mining sector. Western Australia—particularly the Pilbara area—is the focus of this study because previous research findings indicate that this state has the lowest proportion of female workers in non-traditional roles in Australia. Several companies discussed in this thesis include multinational companies that have both an international and local presence.

The central objective for this study was to ascertain why women continue to be underrepresented in the mining sector. The research question was:

What factors continue to affect women's overall participation levels in the iron ore mining industry in the Pilbara region of Western Australia?

To help answer this question, this study addresses the following questions, which reflect issues that mining companies have identified in various reports, newspaper articles and academic studies as persistent barriers to women remaining in the mining industry:

- Which factors affect women securing equal employment opportunities (EEOs) in non-traditional sectors?
- How do companies support the career progression of female employees?
- Do workplace cultures and limited gender diversity negatively affect companies' ability to attract and retain female workers?

- In which ways do companies' policies assist or hinder employees in managing their family responsibilities?
- To what extent are employees aware of (and able to access) company policies, such as EEO and gender diversity?

Rationale

This study focused on the iron ore industry in Western Australia. This commodity was selected to frame my study for the following reasons. First, recurring reports in the literature argue that there are not enough women working on mine sites in the Western Australian iron ore industry. Second, iron ore is the primary export commodity for Australia, and in comparison to other states, the Western Australian iron ore industry has the fewest number of women in non-traditional employment roles. Third, the travel arrangements, which include 'fly-in fly-out' (FIFO) and 'drive-in drive-out' (DIDO) as the most frequent forms of travel to Western Australia, provided access to a wider scope of participants from different parts of Australia working for the Western Australian mining industry. Fourth, compared to other mining states in Australia, the iron ore sector in Western Australia has the lowest participation rate of women, and women in this sector have very little access to progression opportunities in their work roles. The rationale for my selection of the Pilbara region to frame my argument and provide context for the issues to be explored in this study is detailed in the following section, outlining the prevalent problems that occur in the mining sector.

Background to the Study

In the mining sector of Western Australia, the participation of women is viewed as an issue of equity and access to diverse work opportunities. Moreover, women's underrepresentation in Western Australia's most prosperous resource sector is a cause for concern. While there has been great improvement in the number of women joining the mining industry, statistics have highlighted a disturbing trend—during the last two years, the number of women in the Western Australian iron ore industry has

significantly reduced. In 2013, they “represent[ed] only 22 per cent of the total mining workforce in Western Australia”.¹ While strategies have been implemented to improve this by hiring more women to fill these shortages, in 2014, women comprised only 19 per cent of mining sector employees, compared with 45 per cent of the total Australian workforce.² Most of this skills shortage has existed in non-traditional areas of work in the mining industry. Non-traditional roles can be defined as roles that have not been historically associated with women. Such roles are dominant in mining and include labouring, trade and technician roles, senior management, chief executive officers (CEOs) and supervisory roles.³

Apparently, many impediments have deterred women from entering the mining industry to pursue a career. The lack of gender diversity is seen to have exacerbated the current skills shortage in the sector.⁴ In addition, it is argued that women who do possess relevant skills and experience are deterred from pursuing a mining career because the industry is seen as hostile and unfriendly towards women. Recent strategies have been developed to propel companies to take proactive measures to make the mining sector more appealing in order to attract higher numbers of women. For example, a report of initiatives in *Mind the Gap: Solving the Skills Shortage* (2012) identified skills shortages in the “traditional areas of work and has developed strategies in producing a more female-friendly work environment”.⁵ However, despite such efforts to widen diversity and rectify the skills shortage, women still remain a minority and under-used source of skill and talent. While the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (Western Australian legislation) legally requires companies to rectify discrimination in the workplace, the shortage of women in mining questions whether policies and strategies that have been established to comply with the Act are intended to be effective, or merely cosmetic, in a workforce that lacks gender diversity. Other Commonwealth Acts the thesis refers to include the *Sex*

¹ Prospect, “More Women Joining WA Resources,” *Battle of the Pilbara Ports: A Tale of Two Resources*, June–August 2012, accessed April 12, 2013, http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/documents/Prospect_June_2012.pdf.

² CMEWA, “Recognising the Power of Diversity in Resources,” 19, September 24, 2014, accessed May 12, 2015, <https://www.cmewa.com/news-and-events/latest-news/16-2014/30-recognising-the-power-of-diversity-in-resources>.

³ Elizabeth Broderick, “Time to Consider Women for Non-Traditional Roles,” Australian Human Rights Commission, May 21, 2013, accessed June 14, 2015, <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/opinions/time-consider-women-non-traditional-roles>.

⁴ PwC, “Mind the Gap: Solving the Skills Shortages in Resources,” June 6, 2012, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://pwc.com.au/energy-utilities-mining/news/mind-the-gap.htm>.

⁵ Ibid, 6.

Discrimination Act 1984, the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (replaced by the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999*) are important in examining whether companies have implemented effectively policies to create a gender-diverse workforce. This thesis aims to discuss such issues and examine the reasons so few women are employed in the mining industry.

Literature Review

This section addresses three broad areas of the literature. First, it briefly examines the gender inequality theory underpinning this study. It also considers mining-specific research that incorporates broader gender relations (and women's roles), and how these have continued to produce an inequitable culture. Second, it discusses company reports and policies to provide contextual background to the study, and establishes the proactive measures taken to create gender equity. Third, it presents a brief overview of the research methodology and research methods used to assist in interpreting the responses and lived experiences of the participants.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is a radical feminist perspective. As Betsy Wearing explains, the concept of patriarchy is central to radical feminist theory in examining the difference in power and gender relations between men and women.⁶ To further theorise, according to Raewyn Connell, “gender order and gender regimes assist in explaining the construction of the expected gender order that creates differing power relations between men and women”.⁷ Connell’s contemporary work examines the gender order and gender relations through “empirical research from all parts of the world in addition to theory and politics, but maintains that a gender arrangement in large-scale organisational structures still remains”.⁸ Moreover, Barbara Pocock similarly states that the gender order has remained uninterrupted in gender regimes.⁹ These theories were helpful in deciphering the participants’ responses as they confirmed that middle management

⁶ Betsy Wearing, *Gender: The Pain and Pleasure of Difference* (Melbourne: Longman, 1996), 14.

⁷ Raewyn Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 98. Please note that Raewyn Connell and RW Connell is the same person. For consistency, I will use “Raewyn Connell” throughout this paper.

⁸ Ibid, 11.

⁹ Barbara Pocock, *Work/Life Collision: What Work is Doing to Australian and What to Do About It* (Annandale: The Federation Press, 2003), 35.

held outdated views that manifest in a reluctance to employ more women in non-traditional roles. In this thesis, “outdated” attitudes or views are defined as being attitudes and views that were commonly accepted in Australian society prior to the introduction of equal opportunity legislation in the 1980s. Employment was gendered to the extent that positions, particularly in trades and labouring jobs and many professions, were advertised as being “for men”, while clerical, nursing and other such occupations were listed as “for women”. In the context of this study, line managers who continue to hold the view that women are not suited to undertake certain jobs simply because they are women—a view that was commonly held until the 1970s—are considered to have “outdated” attitudes. Further, many of the respondents to the survey used the term “outdated” to describe the managerial attitudes and views they had experienced. Therefore, this term conveys their feelings. Outdated attitudes in the context of my argument suggest that the wider gender order institutionalised within organisations constructs women as “misfits” in a male-dominated industry. From a normative position and considering the respondents’ experiences, such attitudes are still ingrained in some people in senior positions and in some organisations as a whole despite the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* requiring companies to ensure that policies are implemented into practice. One of the weaknesses of Pocock’s text is that it outlines only a broad context of how gender applies in everyday life, rather than providing specific detail on particular situations.

Cynthia Cockburn’s theory on gender segregation is particularly accommodating because it highlights the way women are prevented from “‘invading’ the male social space, and explains how male power prevents women pursuing work in non-traditional roles”.¹⁰ Although dated, it remains relevant in explaining how gender segregation and power relations are maintained, especially in non-traditional areas of work. Joan Acker’s argument on gendered organisations states that organisational structures “are not gender-neutral as assumptions about gender underlie employers’ decisions in hiring and employing individuals in organisations”.¹¹ In a similar view, Cecilia L Ridgeway explains that coordinating social interactions is possible because

¹⁰ Cynthia Cockburn, *In the Way of Women: Men’s Resistance to Sex Equality in Organizations* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1991), 62–63.

¹¹ Joan Acker, “Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations,” *Gender and Society* 4 (1990): 139, accessed April 1, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/stable/pdfplus/189609.pdf>.

of fundamental knowledge that is presumed to be shared by all members of a society.¹² Similarly, Heidi Gottfried addresses the enduring questions about how structural inequalities are produced, and why they persist.¹³ This literature allowed my study to demonstrate that gender issues and social relations in mining continue to exist, and, as participants revealed from their personal experiences, “categorising” some women in suitable work roles enables inequity between women and men to be maintained.

Sociological studies have documented much of the way the gender order operates, and its implications in wider regimes. Kirsten Lucas and Sarah J Steimel provide an important framework analysis via interviews with many mining families, which reveals that male miners and non-mining women create a generalised perception that women are “unfit” to work as miners.¹⁴ This was a significant source because my study can be applied to understand the discrimination that women may face as a result of how they are perceived by others in their workplace.¹⁵ The main issue with this study is that the empirical research was based on the United States (US), with no case studies in Australia. However, its theoretical component was fundamental in determining in the current research that the enduring male-dominated work environment continues to exclude some women from the mining industry.

A historical account of mining (examined in detail later in Chapter 1) was important as a means for examining the way mining industries began, and their social and economic outcomes for Western Australia. Elizabeth Harman and Brian Head examine the economic importance of Western Australia to the development of mining.¹⁶ While this literature does not consider the social effects and implications of mining on individuals, and does not discuss women’s role in mining, the types of work performed by men and their experiences encouraged the way that women were

¹² Cecilia L. Ridgeway, *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 7.

¹³ Heidi Gottfried, *Gender, Work and Economy: Unpacking the Global Economy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 21.

¹⁴ Kristen Lucas and Sarah J. Steimel, “Creating and Responding to the Gen(d)eralised Other: Women Miners’ Community-Constructed Identities,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 33 (2009): 320, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.tandfonline.com/dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1080/07491409.2009.10162393>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Harman and Brian Head, “Introduction: State, Capital and Resources,” in *State Capital and Resources in the North and West of Australia*, ed. Elizabeth Harman and Brian Head (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 1981), 11.

marginalised from working on mine sites. Similarly, authors such as Kosmas Tsokhas¹⁷ and Geoffrey Blainey¹⁸ provide background contexts that detail how mining began in Western Australia. Such sources focus on the male experience and women's exclusion from mining, foreshadowing the contemporary issues experienced by the participants in my study, for example, accessing work opportunities, as detailed later in my findings.

Literature that discussed women's roles through a historical perspective provided context of the ways gender relations are reproduced and maintained in the mining sector, and continue to persist. Claire Williams's 1981 *Open Cut: The Working Class in an Australian Mining Town* employed a sociological analysis to examine the way entrenched gender roles determined women's limited positions in the mining community. This helped indicate in my findings that some women's continued marginalisation and minority status is a reflection of past historical attitudes. Similarly, Norma King's argument provided an insight to the lives of women in mining communities in a Western Australian context, where women were encouraged to only undertake roles that reflected their common traits of caring and nurturing.¹⁹ Many of these attitudes were confirmed by most of the interviewees in my study, and the contextual histories assisted in understanding how such attitudes have persisted in the present era, and produced gender inequality.

The work of Joan Eveline and Michael Booth has a different focus of discussing how gender and sexuality are central to creating restricted EEOs—one area that is focused on in my argument.²⁰ This reference was useful because it is an Australian study that specifically examines mining, while exploring the implications of gender identity and roles, and how these conflict in gendered organisations. In addition, Marilyn Lake's historical and feminist study was useful in discussing the feminist movement and the introduction of legislation to eradicate discrimination. Examining whether changes have occurred in the mining industry was a central focus of my study, and based on

¹⁷ Kosmas Tsokhas, *Beyond Dependence: Companies, Labour Processes and Australian Mining* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1986), 12.

¹⁸ Geoffrey Blainey, *The Golden Mile* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1993), 3.

¹⁹ Norma King, *The Daughters of Midas* (Victoria Park: Hesperian Press, 1988), 116.

²⁰ Joan Eveline and Michael Booth, "Gender and Sexuality in Discourses of Managerial Control: The Case of Women Miners," *Gender, Work and Organization* 9 (2002): 558, accessed May 2, 2013, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/doi/10.1111/1468-0432.00175/pdf>.

the personal experiences of the participants and the personal experiences of others, all participants indicated that some companies have not acted on policies to rectify discrimination as effectively as necessary.

According to previous studies, gender diversity is a continuing problem in Australian mining industries; however, it is particularly significant in Western Australia. In 2008, the Chamber of Minerals and Energy Western Australia (CMEWA) commissioned the report, *Attraction and Retention of Women in the Western Australian Resources Sector*, and was one of the first to undertake extensive research on mining industries to investigate whether EEO strategies were open to, accessible to and inclusive of all employees.²¹ A second report in 2012, *Mind the Gap: Solving the Skills Shortages in Resources*, acknowledged pressing issues facing women, and identified strategies for companies to improve access to EEO. This report considered mining companies in Western Australia, and compared and contrasted various companies to assess the efficacy of their initiatives and strategies. This was beneficial in developing my research objectives because EEO has thus far been unattainable for some women, as shown in my findings.

Through my research, I assessed whether senior management have undertaken proactive measures to increase the number of women overall. Companies have endeavoured to implement strategies to address this issue, and proposed a number of changes to enable a gender-diverse workforce to operate. For example, Fortescue Metals Group Ltd (FMG) published their *Diversity Policy 2011*—an initiative that aims to facilitate a merit-based approach by hiring individuals that meet job requirements based on skills and qualifications.²² In addition, BHP Billiton is seeking to create a female-friendly workplace and stated that, by 2020, it aims to create a gender-diverse workforce that allows women to enter areas where they are underrepresented, and to hire workers based on skill.²³ Although the company has adopted a longer-term strategy, its shorter-term goals are questionable. By the end of

²¹ Reflective Practice for the CMEWA, “Attraction and Retention of Women in the Western Australian Resources Sector,” November 6, 2008, accessed March 1, 2013, http://www.cmewa.com.au/UserDir/CMEPublications/081127-MPR-Women_in_Resources_Ful_report8.pdf.

²² FMG, “Diversity Policy 2011,” 1, accessed May 30, 2013, <http://www.fmgl.com.au/UserDir/FMGResources/Download/en/Fortescue%20Diversity%20Policy%20-%20Approved%2014%20Feb%20201223.pdf>.

²³ PwC, “Mind the Gap,” 20.

2012, through its *Accelerated Leadership Development Program*, it had not achieved its goal of 40 per cent female labour participation.²⁴ By assessing the efficacy of such strategies, my study confirmed that companies such as BHP Billiton have not attained their goals. To help answer the research question, this thesis applies policy analysis to company policies and annual reports to determine whether overall female participation has increased or decreased.²⁵ Further, a theoretical framework incorporating Carol Lee Bacchi's²⁶ work from 1990, 1996 and 2009, combined with responses from the interviews and surveys, will assist in drawing conclusions about whether policies are being enforced effectively by companies.

Some companies may have been successful in increasing the overall percentage of women in the workforce, and may be losing the female workforce altogether. Previous studies have identified significant issues that have affected women's participation levels. One of the first major discussions on women's experiences in the mining industry—Catherine Pattenden's (1998) study on *Women in Mining: A Report to the Women in Mining Taskforce* examines the minerals industry in Australia, using various companies as examples to show the limited number of women in non-traditional roles. One Western Australian study that discusses similar issues is Julie Pirotta's study, which interviews 20 female participants operating in a FIFO arrangement.²⁷ Another study is that by Susan Barrera, Jenness Gardner and Bob Horstman,²⁸ which provides a snapshot of the wider issues affecting women. This enabled me to extend previous research to explore whether the participants have had difficulties in attaining promotion, mentoring and career development opportunities.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Carol Lee Bacchi, *Analysing Policy: What's the Problem Represented to Be?* (NSW: Pearson Education, 2009) 18.

²⁶ Carol Lee Bacchi, *Same Difference: Feminism and Sexual Difference* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1990), 12; Carol Lee Bacchi, *The Politics of Affirmative Action: 'Women', Equality and Category Politics* (California: Sage Publications, 1996), 2; ibid, 12.

²⁷ Julie Pirotta, "An Exploration of the Experience of Women who FIFO," *The Australian Community Psychologist* 2 (2009): 37–38, accessed March 1, 2013, [http://groups.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/Pirotta-21\(2\)-2009.pdf](http://groups.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/Pirotta-21(2)-2009.pdf).

²⁸ Susan Barrera, Jenness Gardner and Bob Horstman, "Women's Experiences in the Western Australian Mining Industry: A Snapshot in 2010," 5, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.ntwwc.com.au/uploads/File/OWOL%20conference%20papers/Barrera,%20Gardner,%20Horstman.pdf>.

In considering an appropriate research methodology for understanding why there are few women in the mining sector, and to use the most appropriate research methods to maintain research vigour, I consulted sources that constructed a research methodology viewed through a feminist lens. Debbie Kralik and Annette Davies²⁹ present a concise, yet in-depth, insight to the ways a feminist methodology is useful for understanding women's lived experience. A feminist methodology is also connected to radical feminist theory to explain the ways power relations are maintained, which was examined in my research. Toby Jayaratne Epstein and Abigail J. Stewart explains how a mix of different methods has been adopted by feminists to understand the female experience, which I found helpful in deciphering the data results.³⁰ In addition, Sotirios Sarantakos, Maggie Walters and Alan Bryman were important in providing a rationale for my chosen methods (surveys and interviews) and methodology to examine the reasons for discrimination on some WA mine sites.³¹

Historical Background

Prior to the present era, women made little contribution to the production of labour on the mine sites compared to men. This is not to say that they did not contribute to other forms of work in mining communities; rather, they occupied traditional "female" roles such as nursing and school teaching, included being a "mining wife", providing physical and emotional support to men.³² The underplaying of the importance of the role of the "mining wife" and its portrayal of limited significance to mining privileged the idea of a "masculine" productive labour that excluded women.

²⁹ Debbie Kralik and Annette Davies, "Chapter 4: Feminist Research," 4, accessed April 17, 2014, <https://www.elsevierhealth.com.au/media/us/samplechapters/9780443102776/9780443102776.pdf>.

³⁰ Toby Jayaratne Epstein and Abigail J. Stewart, "Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences: Current Feminist Issues and Practical Strategies," in *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*, ed. Mary Margaret Fonow and Judith A. Cook (Bloomington: Indianapolis University Press, 1991), 92.

³¹ Sotirios Sarantakos, *Social Research Methods*, 3rd ed. (Hounds Mills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 12; Maggie Walters, "The Nature of Social Science Research," in *Social Research Methods*, 3rd ed, ed. Maggie Walters (New South Wales: Oxford University Press, Open University Press, 2013), 12; Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19.

³² See Linda Rhodes or Claire Wright, who comprehensively account for women's experience in mining history.

This section examines how the nature of the mining industry that commenced in Western Australia in the 1890s determined the kinds of jobs women were “allowed” to perform. Certainly, the mining industry is reflective of other industries from which women have been excluded, for example, the defence forces, which had strictly gendered roles that affected the types of work men and women “should” perform.³³ In mining, the passing of the *Mines and Collieries Act 1842* was shaped by the notion that women were excluded because they were considered physically incapable of enduring difficult working conditions and long hours.³⁴ This section also examines women’s historical role in the context of the Western Australian mining industry. Understanding women’s role in the early days of mining is critical because the industry’s work culture has remained unchallenged and has subsequently perpetuated gender segregation, thereby creating difficulties for some women in accessing opportunities in roles traditionally occupied by men.

While this thesis will be examining the iron ore industry, much of the historical component also focuses on gold extraction. These industries are comparable because the early gold discoveries in Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie led to settlement in the mining communities. The early mineral discoveries had a direct effect on the commencement of the steel and iron ore industry in the Pilbara region in Western Australia in the 1960s.³⁵ Further, the engendered mining culture and the rigid gender roles that existed in the mining industry occurred in all mineral industries, and was not exclusive to iron ore or gold. For example, Claire Williams and Claire Wright state that much of the established gender roles occurred well before the Eureka Stockade and the gold discovery. While women were certainly present in the mining community, they normally fulfilled “feminine” roles.³⁶ Most women maintained private homes or operated hotels and boarding houses (thus continuing to fulfil a domestic function, albeit a paid one); however, they were not allowed on the mine sites.³⁷

³³ Marilyn Lake, “Women’s and Gender History in Australia: A Transformative Practice”, *Journal of Women’s History*, 25 (4), 2013: 190–211. Accessed April 8, 2015, <http://search.proquest.com/dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/docview/1477970522?accountid=10382>

³⁴ Criena Fitzgerald, “Introduction,” *Karlkurla Gold, A History of the Women of Kalgoorlie-Boulder*, accessed March 31, 2013, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/wikb/introduction.html>.

³⁵ Tsokhas, *Beyond Dependence*, 23.

³⁶ See Williams, 23 and Wright 56.

³⁷ Katrina Alford. “Gilt-Edged Women: Women and Mining in Colonial Australia.” In *Working Papers in Economic History* 64. Canberra: The Australian National University, 1986

Resource development has always been fundamental to economic growth in Australia.³⁸ Since European settlement, the products of the agricultural, pastoral and mining industries have played a central role in attracting investment, expanding exports, developing communities and contributing to the overall material welfare of the people.³⁹ While the country attempted to create profit from manufacturing exports, Australia's economic growth has been substantially shaped by its mineral resources. Most of the resource development has taken place in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory.⁴⁰ As a result, these "peripheral" states developed regional economic specialisations.⁴¹ Bolton explains that the state's geographic isolation was seen as a negative factor, while its lack of population was an "issue as there was pressure to seek economic salvation by production of raw materials for export to the global markets".⁴² Consequently, the state government became very important in shaping and creating the economic infrastructure.

The gold boom was the first of the mineral booms in Western Australia. It gave people the chance to profit from "increased demand for consumer goods, mining equipment and stores and housing and land".⁴³ The Western Australian colony achieved the status of responsible self-government only in 1890—four decades after New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria.⁴⁴ In the 1890s, the government adopted a highly interventionist role, with public works undertaken on a relatively larger scale, and both government borrowing and rural expansion increased. The main reason for the state's expansion was the sudden increase in revenues and credit-worthiness of the new regime due to the combined influence of the gold discoveries and the achievement of responsible government.⁴⁵ The state had created the potential, capacity and opportunity to take on a more active role. Following early discoveries of gold in the Murchison area, Western Australia's major finds were in the area that

³⁸ Harman and Head, "Introduction," 11.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² G. C. Bolton, "From Cinderella to Charles Count: The Making of a State of Excitement," in *State Capital and Resources in the North and West of Australia*, ed. Elizabeth Harman and Brian Head (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 1981), 27.

⁴³ Brian Head, "The State as Entrepreneur: Myth and Reality," in *State Capital and Resources in the North and West of Australia*, ed. Elizabeth Harman and Brian Head (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 1981), 45.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

became known as the Eastern goldfields—first at Coolgardie in 1892, and then at Kalgoorlie the following year. By 1895, Kalgoorlie was being hailed the richest gold deposit in the world.⁴⁶ Most gold discoveries were made by men because women were not present on most mine sites.

With its established economic independence and ability to create and sustain a well-functioning economy and government, the importance of other commodities increased Western Australia's prominence in both the local and international context. Following the discovery of iron ore by Lang Hancock in the Pilbara region in the 1950s, Western Australia firmly established itself as a competent and rich minerals state. While the site was kept secret until 1961, the area began massive-scale operations that included Dampier, Tom Price and Newman.⁴⁷ As Rex T Prider explains, before exports began in 1966, production of iron ore in Western Australia was relatively scarce and most of Australia's needs were supplied by the Middleback Ranges Mines of South Australia.⁴⁸ The abrupt expansion was initiated by export, in which Australian and Western Australian production was relatively high, compared with other commodities, such as zinc and copper.⁴⁹ It was estimated at the time that “reserves for hematite ore stood at about 30 billion tonnes”.⁵⁰

One of the major mining developments in the Pilbara region included the establishment of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Ltd (BHP), which commenced in Broken Hill, NSW, in 1885.⁵¹ As Tsokhas states, until 1915, BHP concentrated on mining lead, silver and zinc at Broken Hill, as well as smelting and refining these ores.⁵² In 1911, after facing declining reserves, the company moved into steel production, while retaining its Broken Hill mines until 1939.⁵³ Its steelworks at Newcastle began operations in 1915 and, in the 1920s, import competition was countered by the introduction of a steel tariff, for which BHP had

⁴⁶ Blainey, *Golden Mile*, 3.

⁴⁷ Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush that Never Ended: A History of Australian Mining*, 4th ed. (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1993), 347.

⁴⁸ Rex T. Prider, *Mining in Western Australia* (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1979), 84.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 86.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Tsokhas, *Beyond Dependence*, 89.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

lobbied. By 1935, BHP acquired Australian Iron Ore and Steel Ltd, together with steel works at Port Kembla.⁵⁴

In the 1960s, BHP's organisational character—as an established steel company that also controlled coal and iron ore mines—began to shift as it diversified.⁵⁵ From a self-financing corporation, BHP increasingly organised its cash flow and borrowing potential towards diversification.⁵⁶ To accommodate the expansion of the booming mining industry in Western Australia, the railway from Mount Newman to Port Hedland was established in 1969.⁵⁷ By the 1980s, BHP was heading for change as exploration was no longer geared towards acquiring raw material—rather, the focus was on coal, iron ore, manganese, bauxite, oil and gas.⁵⁸ Despite the need to form partnerships with transnational corporations, it did not become a dependent junior partner of overseas firms, but built on alliances with firms that created a multinational mining conglomerate. By 1961, the Pilbara region generated the majority of profit from mining. Much of this was centred on men's experience because they were primarily involved in and part of the mining expansion, which excluded women. This had significant implications for women in terms of their entry to and experience in mining communities.⁵⁹

Much has been written about the economic contribution of mining to Western Australia and Australia in general, and about men's roles working in the mines, yet very little has been written to acknowledge women's roles in mining communities.⁶⁰ Claire Williams argues that the differences between men's and women's roles reflect the established gender relations that saw both genders fulfil "suitable" work roles.⁶¹ Women were certainly present in the mining community; however, they normally fulfilled "feminine" roles. For example, they were expected to undertake the bulk of family responsibilities, particularly "domestic and childcare roles, yet they were also involved in other paid employment outside the home, such as nursing and working as

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 120.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Blainey, *The Rush*, 347.

⁵⁸ Tsokhas, *Beyond Dependence*, 120.

⁵⁹ Blainey, *The Rush*, 347.

⁶⁰ Katrina Alford, "Gilt-Edged Women: Women and Mining in Colonial Australia," in *Working Papers in Economic History* 64 (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1986), 5.

⁶¹ Ibid, 12.

barmaids".⁶² As my study investigated, many of these "appropriate" gender roles have caused problems for women because some companies still do not wish to associate the idea of activities such as caring with mining, as this takes place outside the public sphere. Women's association with these feminine-type jobs has had significant implications for their acceptance into non-traditional roles. For example, in colonial Ballarat, women were stereotypically associated with the home and care roles.⁶³ In the 1850s, during the "golden decade", few women had jobs in the Victorian era, particularly in traditional male roles. According to Katrina Alford, in the mines in 1854, "men made up 36,332 in roles such as labouring while only 22 women were present overall near mines".⁶⁴ Further, "64.5% of all women were located in domestic servant roles in paid employment".⁶⁵ However, many historians, such as Claire Wright, argue that women were more active than historical accounts suggest. For example, Wright states that women had an active role in providing provisions during the Eureka Stockade rebellion.⁶⁶

In contrast, men were associated with production and considered ideal workers and the main breadwinners. They were viewed as being able to pursue work without any obligations to domestic responsibilities.⁶⁷ Many associated the Eureka Stockade with masculinity, and did not acknowledge women as playing any important role. However, a 1954 painting by Noel Counihan depicts women at the scene at Bakery Hill, thereby suggesting that women were present and played an active role during the stockade.⁶⁸ Wright argues that Counihan's painting depicts women playing an active role in community politics through both mob violence and force. Women were not demanding female suffrage or campaigning for women's rights, but educated women were writing letters to the newspaper, advocating workers' rights in the mining community.⁶⁹ This proves that women were present in the mining community and contributed to various forms of work outside the home, yet the roles they

⁶² Ibid, 5.

⁶³ Ibid, 10.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 37.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 18.

⁶⁶ Clare Wright, "The Eureka Stockade: An Alternative Portrait," in *Making Australian History: Perspectives on the Past Since 1788*, ed. Deborah Gare and David Ritter (Victoria: Thomson, 2008), 214. On a further note, the Eureka Stockade was the result of an increase in taxes that had affected miners and workers.

⁶⁷ Alford, *Gilt-Edged Women*, 5.

⁶⁸ Wright, "Eureka Stockade," 217.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

undertook reflected their feminine traits and characteristics.⁷⁰ This is may be a reflection of why some current mining companies will not employ women—simply because they do not “fit” roles that are deemed appropriate only for men, thus limiting their overall participation.

It was not merely social mores that prevented women from working in the mining industry. In 1891, a Miner’s Federation Conference was held in Birmingham, England, with delegates representing 130,000 votes, at which a resolution was moved “preventing the employment of women at the mines”.⁷¹ This resolution was eventually passed with a clear majority, and Australia followed suit in banning women from entering mine sites.⁷² No women were allowed to work in the mines after this 1891 decision. During the colonial era in Kalgoorlie, for example, women’s main contribution to mining life was seen as undertaking the roles of wife and mother.⁷³ Although, in the nineteenth century, there were no legal requirements for women to marry, “women were obliged to establish an economic future by marrying a man who worked on the mines”.⁷⁴ With limited access to education and entry to professions, women had few opportunities to establish individual careers.⁷⁵ As this study indicates, such limited opportunity appears to continue in the contemporary context of mining, with some women continuing to experience overt and subtle gender segregation and discrimination.

Consequently, in 1895, women joined their husbands on the Kalgoorlie–Boulder Goldfields, as they did on other Western Australian mine sites.⁷⁶ The family was considered an institution in which the reproduction and socialisation of children were women’s responsibility because women were “suited” to caring and nurturing roles, while men held instrumental roles in which they were viewed as the main provider of the family.⁷⁷ These arrangements between men and women reinforced the patriarchal

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ “The Eight Hour System—Miners Declare for It,” *The Daily News*, January 10, 1891, accessed May 2, 2013, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article77423716>.

⁷² Eveline and Booth, “Gender and Sexuality,” 558.

⁷³ Linda Rhodes, *Two for the Price of One: The Lives of Mining Wives* (Netley: Griffin Press, 2005), 9.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 14.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Fitzgerald, “Introduction,” *Karlkurla Gold*.

⁷⁷ Claire Williams, *Open Cut: Working Class in an Australian Mining Town* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1981), 12.

hierarchy in society that oppresses women.⁷⁸ Women were expected to provide emotional support to their husbands as the men endured difficult conditions in the mines. However, they were also active agents in developing mining communities through establishing school, religious and social activities.⁷⁹

As Criena Fitzgerald explains, women were also expected to undertake “gendered” work in the mining community.⁸⁰ Paid work for women included traditional female roles, such as “barmaids, housekeepers [and] nurses … [women] were expected to provide services for diggers such as board, lodging and prostitution”.⁸¹ Many women—both married and single—had jobs in hotels and boarding houses, or worked in all kinds of shops, offering such services as hairdressing, dressmaking and staffed tearooms.⁸² At the turn of the century, women began to be employed in offices, ran church and welfare organisations and were even involved in prospecting.⁸³ In contrast, men usually undertook traditionally masculine roles, such as driving stationary engines in mines, pumping lowering and raising lifts, and labouring in mills.⁸⁴ The work also involved digging out the lode with a pick and shovel underground. Clearly, gender segregation was evident not only in the mining community, but in every sector of society, creating a distinction that saw men and women performing the most “appropriate” roles according to their gender. Such gender segregation has endured to some extent, with women still working in disproportionately small numbers in the mining industry, particularly in non-traditional roles. The historical context indicates that mining as an industry has actively excluded women from the workforce. This study has found that the attitude that states that a mine site is not a suitable place for women continues to prevail, despite women gaining limited entry into mining employment, including in areas such as labouring and hole blast drilling.

⁷⁸ Fitzgerald, “Introduction.”

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Criena Fitzgerald, “Early Town Life,” Karlkurla Gold, accessed March 31, 2013, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/wikb/earlytownlife.html>.

⁸³ Criena Fitzgerald, “Employment,” Karlkurla Gold, accessed March 31, 2013, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/wikb/employment.html>.

⁸⁴ Blainey, *Golden Mile*, 30.

Prospectors possessed miners' rights because they undertook work outside the home.⁸⁵ In one rare instance in 1894, a woman possessed this gold miner's right—a Coolgardie resident, Lena Green. In 1898, Mrs SA Holman became the only female appointed manager of Main Reef Mine in London.⁸⁶ Other ambitious women also occasionally arose. For example, as King explains, Herbert Hoover and Lou Henry Hoover arrived in Coolgardie in 1897 from the US.⁸⁷ Lou Hoover had a degree in geology and was one of the first women to graduate from university in the US. Her husband was an engineer who had come to the Eastern goldfields to assist in developing the mines.⁸⁸ Even though Lou Henry was a qualified geologist and had a keen interest in her husband's work, the law prevented her accompanying her husband down the mineshaft. This example helped the analysis of my own findings because while the participants were not deterred from working in non-traditional roles, they noted that the number of women in male-dominated roles remains low, which may indicate that cultural attitudes have not changed despite EEO legislation such as the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* being passed.⁸⁹

Even in the 1940s and 1950s, men and women continued to undertake "gender-appropriate" roles in all sectors of mining in Western Australia. A study by the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy—an association for industry professionals that delivers ongoing programs to support attracting and retaining women employees—states that although there were vacancies in the mining workforce in the 1950s, women were still limited to performing roles such as housemaids, cooks, housekeepers and cleaners in private homes.⁹⁰ A few women were able to undertake jobs such as dingo trapping, oyster fishing and bark stripping;⁹¹ however, these roles were within the domain of the "appropriate" roles women were permitted to undertake. Much of this attitude is reflected in the gender segregation evident in contemporary mining, with women representing a minority in non-traditional roles.

⁸⁵ Rhodes, *Two for the Price of One*, 18.

⁸⁶ Fitzgerald, "Employment."

⁸⁷ King, *Daughters of Midas*, 116.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ The Kalgoorlie Auxiliary of the Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, *Staking Our Claim: A Century of Women in the Goldfields 1893–1993* (Kalgoorlie: Williams Broadly Printers, 1992), 14.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ "Demand for Labour Steady," *The West Australian*, April 14, 1947, accessed May 2, 2013, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article46276251>.

It is noted that this study does not focus on the experiences of Indigenous women in the mining industry because it was broadened to include all women participating in iron ore mining and did not exclude any group. The surveys did not categorise or request participants to specify their ethnicity because the survey and research method/s would have appeared that this was a requirement to be a part of the study. However, it is important to recognise the contribution of this group of women to the mining industry. Indigenous women have worked in the mining industry in Western Australia since the 1940s. The Australian National Census for 2011 identified “395 indigenous women working in the mining industry, representing nearly 0.4 per cent of the workforce”.⁹² Since 2011, most Indigenous women working in mining were “concentrated in semi-skilled labour, administration and engineering roles.”⁹³

During the 1950s, attitudes were changing and beginning to broaden in the goldfields, and new businesses, such as grocery stores, began to open in mining towns. Before the FIFO revolution, companies created mining towns; thus, spouses and families lived in the town near the mine site. In the late 1950s, unemployment figures in the goldfields were steadily decreasing in some sectors, and women had difficulties finding “traditional” female employment in the mining towns, where there were plenty of jobs for men. This was particularly evident in the new mining towns of the Pilbara region and other regions that were established during the iron ore mining boom. As an example, Alford cites one period in 1956 during which there were “3,416 vacant positions for men, and only 1,137 for women.”⁹⁴ Men continued to perform “male” jobs, such as operator and mine roles, filling 522 mining occupations, while women continued to undertake female roles, such as nursing and home duties.⁹⁵ Based on my findings, many of these traditional discourses that dictate the most “suited” roles for women and men are maintained today.

The following section examines the legislative changes encouraged by the feminist movement that allowed women to enter mining. In so doing, this section examines

⁹² Kuntala Dutt-Lahiri, *Gendering the Fields: Towards Sustainable Livelihoods for Mining Communities* (Canberra: ANU), 2011, 55.

⁹³ Dutt-Lahiri, *Gendering the Fields*, 55.

⁹⁴ Alford, *Gilt-Edged Women*, 37.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

the extent to which women have encountered difficulty gaining non-traditional work. This raises the question why, if companies have adopted legal requirements to employ women in non-traditional roles, there remains disproportionate numbers of women and men working in mining.

The Feminist Movement, Policies and Legislation

This section outlines the turning points for women and the gains made during the feminist movement that affected major legislation passed through parliament (particularly the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*) to enable women to enter non-traditional areas of work such as the mining industry. In the mining industry in general, it should be noted that women are overrepresented in traditional female occupations such as human resources (HR) and administration, accounting for over 70 per cent of “traditional” female occupations.⁹⁶ This is a significant aspect of the literature because it examines whether companies have adhered to this legislation by implementing policies that reflect EEO, or whether they have breached the legal requirement of the Act that compels companies to remedy discrimination.

The feminist movement began in the late nineteenth century and had undergone three waves by 1990—the most prominent being First and Second Wave Feminism. As Lake describes, the first wave focused on women gaining the vote and accessing diverse work roles and education.⁹⁷ Feminists such as Sylvia Walby argue that women have been oppressed by the idea of patriarchy, which is considered the primary source of gender inequality.⁹⁸ There are two forms of patriarchy: private and public. Private patriarchy is based on “household production, with a patriarch controlling women individually or directly”.⁹⁹ Historically, most women have been restricted to “appropriate” gender roles, such as maintaining the household and rearing children. Their rights to access EEOs and citizenship were not recognised. In contrast, as Walby explains, public patriarchy meant that women were “denied

⁹⁶ Linley Lord, Therese Jefferson and Judy Eastham, “Women’s Participation in Mining: What Can We Learn from EOWA Reports?” *Australian Bulletin of Labour* 38 (2012): 87, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://search.informit.com.au.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/fullText;dn=445261723390957;res=IELAPA>.

⁹⁷ Sylvia Walby, *Theorising Patriarchy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 200.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 178.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

access to certain areas of the public arena and were subordinated within them".¹⁰⁰ Walby argues that the expropriation of women was by a group of patriarchs, rather than by one individual. Thus, the strategy used by men was to segregate women, confining them to jobs that were gendered and paid lower than men's work.¹⁰¹ The notion that men's work had more value in contributing to the production of labour was reinforced through the Harvester Decision, which was established in 1907 to set a minimum living or family wage that would supposedly "allow an unskilled labourer to support a wife and three children to feed ... and clothe them".¹⁰² This established the notion that women would be supported by a male breadwinner and therefore did not and could not earn the equivalent wage of their male counterpart. The movement from private to public patriarchy was attributed to capitalists' demands for increased supply of labour, which conflicted with the private patriarchy strategy of keeping women in the home.¹⁰³

It is important to acknowledge the changes that occurred for women as the feminist movement vigorously encouraged and foreshadowed future legislative changes. First Wave Feminism was a multifaceted movement that represented the interests of some women, with many campaigning for women to gain access to "employment, training and education, reforming the legal status of married women so they could own property".¹⁰⁴ This movement is sometimes credited only with helping women gain the vote, yet this was not the case. Despite women not achieving equal employment rights, First Wave Feminism was a powerful movement that gained women citizenship rights and formal entry into the workplace in varied roles.¹⁰⁵ The considerable gains of this movement were that the patriarchal strategy of restricting women to the private sphere of the home and of women being subordinate to their fathers and husbands (or other male relatives) was no longer effective.¹⁰⁶ The suffrage movement was important because it acknowledged the women's movement. For example, in the nineteenth century in Britain, a series of Acts of Parliament

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 178.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 179.

¹⁰² Fair Work Commission. 2014. "Harvester Case 1907." Accessed March 28, 2016.

<https://www.fwc.gov.au/waltzing-matilda-and-the-sunshine-harvester-factory/documents/harvester-case>.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Walby, *Theorising Patriarchy*, 191.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 187.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 191.

sought to regulate women's paid employment by restricting women to less secure work in terms of hours, pay and the type of work undertaken.¹⁰⁷ After World War I, working men's unions were able to call on the state to win back their jobs that were supposedly "stolen" by women during the men's absence. Despite the pressure to exclude women, legislation was never passed to formally ban women from seeking and participating in any type of work.¹⁰⁸ However, these actions shaped the kinds of work women were "supposed" to do, with certain roles not deemed appropriate for women and perceived to be more appropriate for men, such as manual labour. This appears to be an ongoing issue that has not yet been resolved.

The preoccupation with equality had a profound effect on feminist policy in Australia. To gain equality with men, it was thought that sexual difference must be disavowed by encouraging women to enter men's traditional types of professions, such as working in mines and factories.¹⁰⁹ Women demanded equal rights with men in their capacity as wage earners.¹¹⁰ The feminist principle came to be that women's right to work was "no prerogative of men ... women's rights does not rest upon men, but is the absolute right of a free human being, a taxpayer and a voter to economic independence".¹¹¹ The defence of women's right to work led to a campaign for equal pay because women could claim the same jobs only if this did not undermine men's wages.¹¹² Equal pay was not only a right, as it was argued, but a precondition for women to move into non-traditional occupations.

When World War II began in 1939, many women in Australia saw a new opportunity to assume the responsibilities of equal citizenship, with many wanting to join the armed forces. The war gave women an opportunity to undertake non-traditional work that was no longer completed by enlisted men.¹¹³ However, while wartime created opportunities for women, it did not lead to equal pay, with women paid only 75 per cent of men's basic wage.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, this was a 50 per cent improvement on the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 192.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 192.

¹⁰⁹ Marilyn Lake, *Getting Equal: The History of Australian Feminism* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1999), 173.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 180.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid, 184.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 188.

pre-war female basic wage.¹¹⁵ Large numbers of women began entering non-traditional forms of work, such as transport and munitions. Although denied an active service roll, from 1942, women were permitted to enter the auxiliary defence forces.¹¹⁶ Between 1939 and 1943, the number of women in the paid workforce increased “by nearly 50% from 437,000 to in July 1939 to 646,000 in December 1943”.¹¹⁷ In effect, women were able to prove their efficiency in paid work alongside men, yet remained unable to be classified as equally productive to men. Today, many fields of work (such as construction, law and politics) in addition to the mining industry have a disproportionately small number of female employees.¹¹⁸ The mining workforce composition has remained undisrupted, with most respondents from my study affirming that gender segregation is a major and continuing problem.

By the 1960s, feminists of what became known as the “Second Wave” fought not only for “sexual and reproductive rights but also for equal opportunity in education and the workplace”.¹¹⁹ This shifted attitudes and allowed women to move into areas in which they were underrepresented or that were traditionally associated with men. In a global context, women in the US were leaders in the movement for change.¹²⁰ Feminists argued that gender roles were not simply about difference, but were a hierachal division produced by patriarchal domination. Radical feminists, such as Walby, argue that patriarchy is not autonomous to other structures—rather, it is related to a set of power relations that are prominent in areas such as paid work and family responsibilities.¹²¹ The roles of caring for and raising families remained primarily a woman’s responsibility, which has persisted into contemporary times, creating problems for some women, particularly when requesting flexible working arrangements from employers. This situation is also evident in my findings.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 188.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ See, for instance, Elizabeth H. Gorman, “Gender Stereotypes, Same-Gender Preferences, and Organizational Variation in the Hiring of Women: Evidence from Law Firms,” *American Sociological Review* 4 (2012): 704–705, accessed April 8 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4145383>; Mona Lena Crooks and Sarah Childs, *Women, Gender and Politics*, ed, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 56–58 and Tessa Wright, “Uncovering Sexuality and Gender: an Intersectional Examination of Women’s Experience in UK Construction,” *Construction Management and Economics* 4 (2013): 835, accessed April 8 2016, <http://www-tandfonline-com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1080/01446193.2013.794297>.

¹¹⁹ Annabelle Queince and Keri Phillips, “Second Wave Feminism,” *ABC News*, October 13, 2013, accessed October 17, 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/second-wave-feminism/4983136>.

¹²⁰ Gottfried, *Gender, Work and Economy*, 21.

¹²¹ Sylvia Walby, *Patriarchy at Work: Patriarchal and Capitalist Relations in Employment* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), 33.

Each wave of feminism had been accompanied by different feminists who argued that women were subordinate in comparison to their male counterparts. The 1970s wave applied new feminist thought. In Australia, early feminist historians were Anne Summers and Miriam Dixon. Other enduring theorists, such as Kate Millett, view the role of patriarchy as establishing differing “gender relations between women and men, which were identified to be political, particularly with reference to the family”.¹²² This means that power-structured relationships are viewed, in which one group exercises power over the other, who is the weaker sex. Millett refers to this power of dominants (men) over subordinates (women) as embedded patriarchal relations.¹²³ In terms of women’s employment opportunities, Cockburn similarly argues that women and men are segregated in “appropriate” gender roles, and that “keeping men and women in such roles confirms the power relations that favour men over women”.¹²⁴ Much of the feminist thought that was discussed through the 1970s and 1980s continues to reflect pressing issues for some women, particularly in male-dominated industries where some have limited opportunities to advance in their careers.

In Australia, Second Wave Feminism significantly altered women’s roles in society, and provided them with new work opportunities. Equal pay was made a commitment in the 1960s, and the introduction of Equal Pay Week brought this to the public consciousness. Slogans such as “equal pay for work of equal value” were promoted to ensure that issues surrounding equality were brought to the forefront in order to allow women to be paid the same rate for the same work performed by both sexes.¹²⁵ From 1966 to 1967, the Meat Industry Employees Union achieved equal margins for its female workers in Western Australia.¹²⁶ The government under Premier David Brand contemplated amendments to the *Industrial Arbitration Act* to grant female employees equal pay. With the 1969 equal pay decision, feminists secured victory, though it was limited. The Arbitration Commission awarded ““equal pay, but only

¹²² Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (London: Virgo Press, 1977), 24.

¹²³ Ibid, 25.

¹²⁴ Cockburn, *In the Way of Women*, 25.

¹²⁵ Lake, *Getting Equal*, 218.

¹²⁶ Bobbie Oliver, *Unity is Strength: A History of the Australian Labor Party and the Trades and Labor Council in Western Australia 1899–1999* (Bentley: API Network, 2003), 262.

for equal work’, hence this did not apply to work that was essentially or usually performed by females”.¹²⁷ The jobs performed by women were not considered of equal value, with established gender roles restricting female work from being considered equal to male work. Certain characteristics of female work—such as caring and nurturing—were viewed as the less “accepted” norm that men’s work did not embody. This benefited very few women workers in female-dominated professions, such as nursing, because these were not deemed to be of “equal value”. However, it is possible that equal pay was instrumental in at least allowing women entry to the mining industry, and gave women new opportunities to work in areas that were traditionally reserved for men.

The 1970s and 1980s led to the institutionalisation of feminism, with programs, legislation and policies established by governments—both federal and state—to promote the status of women, equal opportunity and non-discrimination.¹²⁸ Perhaps one of the most important decades for change, the 1980s reawakened a women’s movement—the so-called “femocrat experiment”—in which women with feminist credentials were committed to developing and maintaining equal opportunity policies for women.¹²⁹ For example, in 1981, the Shadow Minister on the Status for Women, Senator Susan Ryan, introduced a private member’s bill; however, this failed to pass parliament. This would have outlawed sex discrimination and introduced a requirement for all Commonwealth government employers and private sector employers with a “minimum of 100 employees to introduce an affirmative action management plan for women”.¹³⁰ In retrospect, this would have made significant changes to all industries across the board.

This review of the most important relevant legislation helped my research explore why so few women work in mining and—through the study interviewees’ responses—determine the efficacy of legislation if put into practice. Given that mining companies are supposed to comply with laws to eradicate discrimination through adopting and formally implementing legislation, my research raises

¹²⁷ Lake, *Getting Equal*, 218.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 253.

¹²⁹ Eveline and Booth, “Gender and Sexuality,” 558.

¹³⁰ Bacchi, *Politics of Affirmative Action*, 80.

questions as to why this has not occurred. The law states that companies are required to implement EEOs to allow women entry into non-traditional roles, but it appears that these are not effectively put into practice, thus limiting women's access to promotional and career development opportunities. The findings of my study suggest that this problem remains unaddressed in mining.

In 1984, the Australian Government enacted its commitment to women's rights by passing the Commonwealth *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, which outlawed discrimination "on the grounds of sex, marital basis and pregnancy in employment".¹³¹ In the same year, the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* was passed, which outlawed discrimination on "the grounds of sex, marital status or pregnancy or breast feeding".¹³² This Act, as well as others that followed (particularly in Western Australia), permitted women to gain entry to areas such as mining. Women had been banned from working in or entering a mining site since the *Mines and Collieries Act 1842*—British legislation that was adopted in Australia. The aim of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* was to eliminate this type of discrimination from the workplace, and promote community recognition and acceptance of the equal status of men and women.¹³³ In addition, the state legislation *Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act 1986* was passed, requiring employers to develop and implement workplace programs for women, and submit annual reports on the progress of these programs.¹³⁴ However, previous research suggests that, although there has been an increase in the number of women employed in the mining sector, there remains a disproportionately small number of women in mining. My research findings question whether companies have the will to enforce policies effectively as required to eradicate discrimination, or are prepared to alter the established culture. Further, the ongoing discrimination revealed by the survey respondents and interviewees (in relation to career limitations, restricted access to promotions and mentoring, and lack of overall advancement to more senior roles)

¹³¹ Lake, *Getting Equal*, 264–265.

¹³² Equal Opportunity Commission Western Australia, *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*, accessed November 19, 2013, 1,
[http://www.slp.wa.gov.au/pco/prod/FileStore.nsf/Documents/MRDocument:25164P/\\$FILE/Equal%20Opportunity%20Act%201984%20-%20\[06-d0-00\].pdf?OpenElement](http://www.slp.wa.gov.au/pco/prod/FileStore.nsf/Documents/MRDocument:25164P/$FILE/Equal%20Opportunity%20Act%201984%20-%20[06-d0-00].pdf?OpenElement).

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Australian Commonwealth, *Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act 1986*, date of assent September 3, 1986, accessed October 23, 2014, 2, <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2004A03332>.

indicates that some companies may not have enforced policies as effectively as required.

Equal opportunity policies have helped shape the context for the employment of women miners. Organisations operate within legislative environments that selectively and partly construct them.¹³⁵ For example, from the mid-1800s, the *Mines and Collieries Act 1842* (better known as “the Mines Act of 1842”) “excluded both women and children from the dangerous work of mining”.¹³⁶ However, its abolition was meant to be an achievement for human rights, especially in the case of child workers in mines. Australia based its legislation on the British example, until the era of equal opportunity and new technologies (such as mechanisation, which took the brute work out of manual occupations) enabled a wider scope for women’s occupational opportunities.¹³⁷ Women, as workers, helped determine the issues and elect the politicians who shaped those legislative changes.

As the 1980s progressed, women began graduating from university with degrees in the traditionally male-dominated disciplines of the mining industry, such as metallurgy, geology and engineering.¹³⁸ In the early 1980s, the State Minister of the Mines in Western Australia proposed allowing women to work as underground miners; however, resistance from the Australian’s Workers Union prevented this.¹³⁹ Thus, women were viewed as being incapable of undertaking roles usually reserved for men. In other Australian states, the situation was slowly beginning to change. Just as legislation changes in Western Australia allowed women entry to mining, in July 1977, the Queensland Miners’ Convention decided to repeal the Queensland *Coal Mining Act 1966*, which stated that “no boy under the age of 16 and no female shall be employed underground”.¹⁴⁰ In less than two years, Queensland’s Colliery Union Employees had their first female employees in the mines. As one female employee explained, “usually mining companies don’t take women … [but] we are just as

¹³⁵ Eveline and Booth, “Gender and Sexuality,” 558.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Kalgoorlie Auxiliary, *Staking our Claim*, 82.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Georgina Murray and David Peetz, “Women Miners: ‘We’re Like a Virus and We Don’t Mind the Work Either,’” in *The Future of Sociology* (2012), 3, accessed June 2, 2013, <http://www.tasa.org.au/conferences/conferencepapers09/papers/Murray,%20Georgina%20&%20Peetz,%20David.pdf>.

capable as the guys ... we just need to be given the chance to show it".¹⁴¹ My research certainly indicates that some women in Western Australian mining are still considered an oddity (both in terms of numbers and gender) in the mining sector. Thus, it appears that this issue has not been addressed.

During the 1990s in the Kalgoorlie–Boulder region, women entered the mining sector due to a pressing skill shortage, after a decade of economic instability in the goldfields. In the Pilbara region at Port Hedland, the *Northwest Telegraph* reported that women had entered non-traditional roles, such as the electrical, automotive and building trades.¹⁴² At the time, BHP experienced a critical skills shortage, which led to new opportunities being created for female workers. BHP provided a preparation course that lasted 10 weeks, involving intensive training and workshop attendance to increase skills in chosen fields.¹⁴³ Mining companies also offered a 12-week course for women to undertake paid work experience so they could move into different areas in the sector.¹⁴⁴ Company annual reports and policies stated that they would attempt to increase the number of women over the following several years; however, my research findings suggest that such goals may not have been achieved.

In Western Australian mines in the twenty-first century, focus has been placed on increasing participation through initiatives and strategies to access equal opportunities for all employees, particularly women. Despite the implemented legislation recognising women's marginalisation in the workplace, such as in mining companies, studies indicate that women still do not share equal value, rewards and status with men.¹⁴⁵ Women continue to be underrepresented in vast areas in the mining sector, where they comprise only 22 per cent of the workforce.¹⁴⁶ Further, the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Amendment Act 2012*—an amendment to the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999*—focused on strategies to promote and improve gender equality (including equal

¹⁴¹ Georgina Murray and David Peetz, *Women of the Coal Rushes* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010), 255.

¹⁴² "Better Career Access for Women," *The North West Telegraph*, 6, June 24, 1992, 1.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 9.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Eveline and Booth, "Gender and Sexuality," 559.

¹⁴⁶ Vicky Validakis, "Women at Risk Due to Job Cuts," *Australian Mining*, November 28, 2012, accessed March 10, 2013, <http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/news/women-in-mining-at-risk-due-to-job-cuts>.

remuneration between women and men in employment and in the workplace), and ways to support employers to “remove barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce”.¹⁴⁷ Chapter 6 of this thesis investigates whether such legislation has increased the overall number of women and improved their progress in male-dominated work.

Currently, the number of women in non-traditional areas, as well as the overall female workforce participation in the Western Australian mining industry, is decreasing. As previous findings show, discrimination remains embedded in mining companies and, despite legislation to encourage female talent, “women still feel that there continues to be some form of harassment or discrimination because they are female”.¹⁴⁸ My survey and interview findings demonstrate whether access to EEO has been denied. Chapter 6 examines these findings in greater detail.

Overview of the Thesis

Following this chapter, Chapter 2 will establish the fundamental theoretical groundwork on gender order and gender regimes, particularly drawing on the works by Connell and Acker. This theory will then be applied to the mining industry in order to demonstrate how gender regimes reproduce gender inequalities that disadvantage women. I will use examples from studies on Western Australia and other parts of Australia to compare and contrast women’s experiences in mining.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology and details how this study’s chosen methods and theoretical paradigm assist the development of my argument. The primary theoretical paradigm’s elements—such as its epistemology—will be detailed as a basis to investigate how women create meaning in their social world. Further, this chapter will explore the way feminists apply such frameworks to their analysis of women’s experiences. This chapter will also discuss how the sample was selected, briefly describe the participants involved (participants’ names are withheld) and

¹⁴⁷ Australian Commonwealth, *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Amendment Act 2012* (C2012A00179), date of assent December 11, 2012, accessed October 30, 2012, 2, <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2012A00179>.

¹⁴⁸ Validakis, “Women at Risk.”

describe how the data were collected and analysed. In addition, this chapter will discuss the study's reliability, validity and limitations, as well as the ethical considerations undertaken prior to the study.

Chapter 4 discusses the literature on the underrepresentation of women in the mining industry, and the factors limiting women's access to EEO. In examining this, I review company initiatives that have been implemented in an attempt to rectify the small number of women working overall, particularly in non-traditional roles. Further, secondary documents—such as company policies and annual reports—are analysed to determine whether the number of women has increased over the last few years, or remained static. These documents are compared with participants' responses regarding whether such initiatives offered by companies have been operative in creating a gender-diverse workforce.

Chapter 5 presents the findings from my research, from both the survey and interviews. The survey results are presented using graphs and diagrams, and include my literal interpretation of what the surveys found. The interview findings use verbatim quotations, with a literal interpretation applied.

Chapter 6 analyses the results of my findings. The theoretical framework, alongside relevant theorists, will be employed to explain why there are a small number of women participating overall. Further, respondents' answers and comments are tested against the theory and previous studies. In this manner, a pattern is established as different participants ratify similar experiences on the mine sites, which will assist in drawing conclusions.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion to the thesis, which provides a summary of the overall findings of the thesis, and proposes recommendations and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Gender Relations in the Mining Industry—A Theoretical Perspective

The gender relations established in the mining industry have presented significant obstacles to women's progression and retention. The mining industry has been constructed as male terrain, where women have had difficulty accessing equal employment opportunities in non-traditional roles. This study examines this construct through the lens of radical feminism, which attributes the differing power relations between men and women to a wider system of patriarchy.¹ As Allan G Johnson theorises, patriarchy is a system of power that organises society in complex relationships based on the idea of male supremacy—an idea that oppresses women.² Radical feminists further argue that patriarchy has a direct influence on creating gender roles. However, within contemporary literature, feminists have shifted from using the term "gender" in relation to patriarchal arguments, and have begun to use the term to explain power inequalities through gender to foreground "structural, rational and symbolical differentiations between men and women and as implicated in the fundamental constitution of all social life".³ Earlier notions of patriarchy were criticised for being "too rigid and essentializing in [their] analysis of gender subordination".⁴ A focus on gender means looking at how inequalities are established through assigning differing roles to women and men according to societal expectations that are played out in gendered organisations. As McNay notes, such roles are:

lived and transformed in the embodied practices of men and women. The instability of gender norms arises from the inherent historicity of social practices. There is a shift, therefore, from understanding the sex–gender system as an atemporal structure towards an alternative concept of a series of interconnected regimes whose relations are historically variable and dynamic.⁵

¹ Wearing, *Gender*, 14.

² Allan G. Johnson, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology: A User's Guide to Sociological Language*, 2nd ed. (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 223.

³ Acker, "Hierarchies, Jobs and Bodies, 238.

⁴ Lois McNay, *Gender and Agency: Reconfiguring the Subject in Feminist and Social Theory*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 14–15.

⁵ Ibid., 13.

The concept of “gender”, which highlights new and existing inequalities while acknowledging that some elements of traditional patriarchy have been transformed will be explored in this chapter specifically and the thesis as a whole.

First, this chapter discusses this study’s central theory by examining the form and nature of patriarchal power relations, which includes the gender order and its expression via gender regimes. Second, through using previous sociological studies—particularly Eveline’s important work—this chapter explores how this theory applies to the mining industry. Finally, this chapter addresses gender regimes in the contemporary context, and their implications for women’s progression and retention in the mining industry.

Gender Order and Gender Regimes: A Sociological Perspective

The allocation of certain roles to women and men is an important element that begins at the societal level. The term “gender” can be defined as the principle structure of widespread subordination of women, which results in the different roles men and women are expected to undertake.⁶ The concept of gender refers to the relationships between the sexes that are constructed based on the values, beliefs and customs of a society, and determines men’s and women’s roles and responsibilities.⁷ This can have implications—particularly for women—because people are designated rigid roles that are deemed to be most suitable for their gender.⁸ Sex is associated with nature because gender represents more accurately than sex the social construction of the identities and roles dividing societies into women and men.⁹ The differences in the social roles of women and men that are performed on a daily basis can be explained by the notion of the gender order. Connell proposes that the gender order is the pattern of different power relations between men and women, which constructs definitions of masculinity and femininity.¹⁰ This gender order is located in the wider realms of society, and establishes complex relations between women and men.

⁶ Amy Wharton, *The Sociology of Gender: An Introduction to Theory and Research* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 23.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Joan Acker, “From Sex Roles to Gendered Institutions,” *Contemporary Sociology* 5 (1992): 565–569, accessed April 12, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2075528>.

¹⁰ Connell, *Gender and Power*, 98–99.

The dominant cultural assigning of vastly different roles can be attributed to the socialisation process, in which women and men learn from a young age the “appropriate” gender roles most suited to their sex.¹¹ Similarly to Connell, Ridgeway argues that the gender order creates beliefs about men and women that should be “viewed as stereotypes that are cultural instructions or rules for enacting gender within society”.¹² Ridgeway and Connell’s arguments are premised on the processes of socialisation, whereby individuals take on gendered qualities and characteristics through which they learn to acquire a sense of self.¹³

Socialisation involves learning one’s social status and performing the roles attached to that status. In this way, people learn what society expects of them as males and females. The socialisation of both sexes creates stereotyped sex categories that establish particular traits for men and women. As discussed earlier, the allocation of these gender roles can have implications, particularly for women. As Millet explains, “through the process of socialisation, in which gender roles are acquired and learned, dominant groups dictate traits that render subordinate groups as docile, passive and weak”.¹⁴ This can be seen in women’s roles, in which mothers are ascribed to women’s sex role status, while men are liberated from primary childcare duties and exercise more power in the home.¹⁵ As Millet further explains, these arrangements between women and men establish power-structured relationships, whereby one person controls the other.¹⁶ Millet further theorises that patriarchal gender relations create male superiority and female inferiority.¹⁷ Hence, through socialisation, people tend to fit into an “accepted” gender category.¹⁸ The allocation of the most “appropriate” gender traits to both women and men shapes individuals’ gender identity, and they subsequently become gendered.

¹¹ Millett, *Sexual Politics*, 26.

¹² Ridgeway, *Framed by Gender*, 56.

¹³ Wharton, *Sociology of Gender*, 31.

¹⁴ Millett, *Sexual Politics*, 26.

¹⁵ Walby, *Theorising Patriarchy*, 68.

¹⁶ Millett, *Sexual Politics*, 26.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Wharton, *Sociology of Gender*, 31.

Patriarchal gender relations create distinctions between men's and women's work, investing the former with more power and significance. This produces an inclusive culture of certain groups of people, and a zone of exclusion for others. Power can be defined as a probability that an "actor within social relationships will be in a position to carry out their own will despite resistance".¹⁹ This posits that men maintain this power through establishing rules and distributing awards accordingly, which disadvantages and excludes women.²⁰ Rutherford and Connell's arguments are similar in that Connell argues that those who have more power are deemed superior. The notions of advantage, inequality of resources and inferiority are the basis and expression of power that deems inferior those who do not have access to such privileges. Accordingly, men's and women's roles are a result of the established power relations that are formed at a societal level and reflected in organisations.²¹

Power in patriarchal systems is structured through forms of hegemonic masculinity that establish different societal values to roles normalised as either masculine or feminine. Masculinity and femininity are social constructions or expectations that stem from culture and are adopted by individuals who create hegemonic masculinity. According to Connell, hegemonic masculinity can be explained as the "legitimacy of patriarchy and a guarantee of dominance of men and subordination of women".²² Hegemony refers to a process in which cultural authority is negotiated and contested, resulting in such authority being accepted as "normal" and common-sense by non-dominant groups.²³ This indicates that men maintain power through establishing rules and authority, which becomes natural, accepted and unchallenged. Accordingly, this disadvantages and excludes women.²⁴

Hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some connection between the cultural ideal and institutional power. Through hegemony, authority is established

¹⁹ Sarah Rutherford, *Women's Work, Men's Culture: Overcoming Resistance and Changing Organizational Cultures* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), PDF e-book, 23.

²⁰ Barbara F. Reskin, "Bringing the Men Back In: Sex Differentiation and the Devaluation of Women's Work," *Gender and Society* 2 (1987): 58, accessed May 2, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/stable/pdfplus/190469.pdf?&acceptTC=true&jpdConfirm=true>.

²¹ Connell, *Gender and Power*, 98–99.

²² Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 77.

²³ Rutherford, *Women's Work*, 23.

²⁴ Reskin, "Bringing the Men Back In," 58.

and presents men as superior to women.²⁵ Hegemony relates to the cultural dominance of society as a whole. In this framework, specific gender relations of dominance and subordination are played out between individuals. Connell states that men conform to a certain ideal (of power, order and authority), whereby their dominance becomes a fixed norm that remains unchallenged and accepted at a societal level.²⁶ This has implications for creating unequal gender relations. Gender relations create a self-contained and self-reproducing system that operates at a micro (societal) level and is embedded at a macro (institutional) level that creates inequality.²⁷ To maintain hegemony, men resort to discrediting and excluding women, which reproduces and reinforces this pattern of dominance.²⁸ Further, hegemonic masculinity is seen to regulate the value placed on gendered roles not only between men and women, but also among men. For example, certain forms of masculinity—such as the alpha male type—are more highly valued than others.

The gender order that is located in dominant culture (and the cultural beliefs that individuals hold) tends to shape behaviour, and the orderliness of gender relations is institutionalised in specific gender regimes. As such, Connell states that these “wider social relations construct different gender power relationships between women and men”.²⁹ Connell states that, “within contemporary society, gender regimes, in particular organisations, are reflective of the wider patterns of the established gender order of society”.³⁰ These arrangements (which are the gender regimes of institutions, or the gender order of the entire society) produce social relations for how certain groups interact and initiate gender relations on a daily basis.³¹ Pocock presents a very similar argument to Connell, stating that the gender order is situated in institutions and is a direct reflection of the societal expectations that have already been allocated.³²

²⁵ Connell, *Masculinities*, 77.

²⁶ Raewyn Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender and Society* 19 (2005): 844, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/stable/pdf/27640853.pdf?acceptTC=true>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Connell, *Gender and Power*, 99.

³⁰ Raewyn Connell, *Gender: In a World Perspective* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 73.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Pocock, *Work/Life Collision*, 35.

This idea of men and women performing different roles can be understood through how they operate at a more general level in the wider realms of society. The ideology of domesticity means that family responsibilities are allocated to women, and the notion of them as the “ideal” carer is perpetuated in institutions. Pocock states that certain values are set in institutions, which identify women as the “proper” carers, who are expected to perform both their care and work commitments, hence fulfilling their ascribed gender role.³³ Pocock theorises that the “work/care regime reflect[s] dominant and institutionalised cultural values, which are perpetuated and interplay between three factors: values, institutions and people’s preferences”.³⁴ The divide between reproduction and production constitutes the gendered structure of society’s institutions. This divide is perpetuated in institutional processes that are organised on the assumption that reproduction takes place elsewhere, and that responsibility for reproduction is located separate from organisations.³⁵ This arrangement between women and men affects the outcome of more specific gender relations.

The implications of women being responsible for both care and work roles outside the home direct them towards particular types of employment. According to Glover and Kirton, “women’s positions within the market are determined by mothering responsibilities, which shift them from full to part time work”.³⁶ Women who are channelled into part-time work are often provided with a “diminution of work benefits such as job security and promotion and offered less flexible working arrangements”.³⁷ Women are presented with a need to choose to become career women or mothers, while men are not. Rosemary Crompton explains that women commonly take on flexible working arrangements and part-time work to enable them to combine work and care responsibilities.³⁸ Women’s work patterns are characterised by the “M” shape as they move into and out of employment to raise children.³⁹ They are seen to be less oriented to more demanding and challenging roles, and are subsequently sidelined for important promotions and career

³³ Ibid, 19.

³⁴ Ibid, 35.

³⁵ Acker, “From Sex Roles,” 567.

³⁶ Judith Glover and Jill Kirton, *Women, Employment and Organizations* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 60.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Rosemary Crompton, *Employment and the Family: The Reconfiguration of Work and Family in Contemporary Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 7.

³⁹ Ibid, 8.

development opportunities. Hence, the cultural devaluation of the care performed by women is found in most institutions.⁴⁰ This tends to be located in organisations as a whole, but particularly in specific industries and sectors of the economy.

While women's careers are affected because of their work/care roles, the full-time continuous employment model built around lifetime non-disrupted work patterns remains the accepted and dominant career structure.⁴¹ Institutions intersect with the dominant culture of maternal care that leads to part-time work, which temporarily affects women's careers, while gender culture has left men's paid work/care undisturbed.⁴² At times, women cannot offer their full devotion to their roles; thus, they experience repercussions. Acker argues that organisations are built on the idea that family (reproduction) should be kept separate from paid work (production) because "this separation highlights the gender division of labour that sees men have less association with family responsibilities".⁴³ For this reason, Acker theorises that men are not obligated to combine both roles, and are thus constructed as the "proper" worker who is devoted and dedicated in the workplace.⁴⁴ Therefore, men are "constructed as the 'abstract' or 'ideal' worker whose work patterns and availability is a highly desirable model within organisations".⁴⁵ The manifestation of the "abstract" worker varies among organisations, and is more pronounced in particular sectors of the economy.

The concept of the "abstract" worker, which is determined through the assigning of "suitable" gender roles in wider sectors of society, is located at an organisational level. This dichotomy that exists between men's and women's work is also accredited to a culture embedded in organisations.⁴⁶ Through specific organisational cultures, gender regimes operate and are reproduced. Gender inequalities are reproduced through the notion of gendered subcultures, which establish gendered

⁴⁰ Ridgeway, *Framed by Gender*, 278.

⁴¹ Barbara Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations: Challenging Men* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 99.

⁴² Pocock, *Work/Life Collision*, 36.

⁴³ Joan Acker, "Gendered Organizations and Intersectionality: Problems and Possibilities," *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 31 (2012): 211–224, accessed April 12, 2013, <http://www.emeraldinsight.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/02610151211209072>.

⁴⁴ Pocock, *Work/Life Collision*, 177.

⁴⁵ Acker, "Gendered Organizations," 216.

⁴⁶ Rutherford, *Women's Work*, 25.

assumptions about women and men.⁴⁷ Similarly to Connell and Pocock, Acker explains that most organisations are “saturated with male characteristics and qualities, which makes it difficult for women to progress”.⁴⁸ Acker combines the terms “gender” and “organisations” to explain gender inequality and the notion of male dominance and power as an issue.⁴⁹ Acker theorises that, if an organisation is gendered, it pertains to:

advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity. These are patterned and thought of in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine. Gender is not an addition to ongoing processes conceived as gender-neutral, rather a site of inequality.⁵⁰

The theoretical concepts of gender and gendering are also important in understanding how gender inequalities are produced and reproduced in general, and specifically in organisations.⁵¹

The implications of the gender order that is situated in gender regimes at the macro level assigns men and women gender-labelled jobs. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the dissimilar roles men and women undertake in a culture is reflective of the gender-segregated work they perform in organisations, particularly in specific industries. As previously stated, the concept of patriarchy is viewed as a system of dynamic social practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. As Walby argues, it is believed that this may play a role in keeping women out of well-paid work and higher positions, gendering this as male work.⁵² This can be seen in gender-segregated work. Gender segregation usually operates in two ways: horizontal and vertical segregation. Horizontal segregation refers to work in different *types* of occupations, while vertical segregation refers to work in different *levels* of

⁴⁷ Acker, “Gendered Organizations,” 214.

⁴⁸ Acker, “Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies,” 139.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 146.

⁵¹ Acker, “Gendered Organizations,” 214.

⁵² Walby, *Patriarchy*, 178.

occupations.⁵³ Horizontal segregation refers to differences in the number of people of each gender present in occupations. The reproduction of the gender (or occupational or sexual) division of labour is a “persistent pattern, which clusters men and women in separate industries and different occupations according to one’s gender”.⁵⁴ The persistent gendering of jobs, in terms of which sex is most suited to certain roles, sees certain types of work emphasise the gendered “appropriate” aspects of individual jobs.⁵⁵

Organisational and occupational structures, processes and practices are dominated by culturally defined masculine meanings. Masculinity is a vague concept that can be defined as the values, experiences and meanings that are culturally interpreted as masculine and often ascribed to men. A typical description of masculinity is imbued in roles that are “hard, dry, impersonal, objective, action-orientated, linear and rationalist”.⁵⁶ Femininity is defined differently—it is seen as the “prioritising of feelings ... feminine principles are characterised by interdependence, co-operation, emotional tone, dependence, control separation and rationality [as] the key essential dimensions of gender-stereotypical organisational archetypes”.⁵⁷ These traits are directly responsible for the construction of masculinity and femininity. Since masculinity is tied directly to the world of work, men establish their identity as the main breadwinner (in the private sphere) and in relation to productive work (in the public sphere). As discussed earlier in this section, one of the ways men’s sense of power and control is maintained is in relation to women’s position in the home (division of labour) and gender division of labour in the workplace. Men’s jobs give them an illusion of control in relation to women’s jobs.⁵⁸

Men’s authority over women—particularly through the kinds of jobs they perform—is constantly reproduced at an organisational level. In organisations, power is arranged hierarchically, with a concentration of men at the top and power delegated

⁵³ Cynthia Cockburn, “The Gendering of Jobs—Workplace Relations and the Reproduction of Sex Segregation,” in *Gender Segregation at Work*, ed. Sylvia Walby (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988), 23.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 29.

⁵⁵ Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations*, 45.

⁵⁶ Mats Alvesson and Yvonne Due Billing, *Understanding Gender and Organizations* (Los Angeles/London: Sage Publications, 2009), 72.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 73.

⁵⁸ Ann Game and Rosemary Pringle, *Gender at Work* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1983), 23.

downwards only under close supervision.⁵⁹ Organisations usually have many levels with defined differences in authority, seniority and salary.⁶⁰ They are also gendered, with the top levels occupied by men, and women clustered at the bottom of the hierarchy ladder, representing powerless and subordinate positions.⁶¹ Even though women do occupy managerial roles that have normally been performed by men, they do not have the same level of authority as men because these roles carry certain assumptions about the “ideal” type of worker.

In effect, the gendering of roles is observed as “natural” because the “skill, competence, strength, and other qualities are tied up with masculinity and femininity ... femaleness and maleness are stereotypically linked supposedly to certain capabilities”.⁶² This means that men and women are found to be working in distinctive roles as a reflection of their “gender-appropriate” traits and characteristics. Cockburn argues that the way gender segregation operates in the workplace sees men and women inevitably be “employed in gender-differentiated work to avoid any comparison of men and women ... this prevents the female invading the male social space”.⁶³ These supposed differences ensure that women’s and men’s jobs are kept different. The general processes have different outcomes for gender relations in organisations, and are a requirement of different industries. Once a job becomes associated with a particular sex, there is lower potential for members of the opposite sex to work in that role. Gender stereotypes grant each sex some specialised skills and competencies that deem certain individuals suitable for certain jobs.⁶⁴ While nothing inherently makes work either male or female, the way jobs are gender defined and “masculinity and femininity are constructed in relation to each other through work, produces apparent differences”.⁶⁵ For example, gendered ideas and meanings are implicated in the construction of managerial work, which reflects power and status that traditionally associates the role with positive male

⁵⁹ Raewyn Connell, “Glass Ceilings or Gendered Institutions? Mapping the Gender Regimes of Public Sector Worksites,” *Public Administration Review* 66 (2006): 842, accessed March 12, 2015, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/doi/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00652.x/epdf>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations*, 45.

⁶³ Cockburn, *In the Way of Women*, 62–63.

⁶⁴ Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations*, 45.

⁶⁵ Game and Pringle, *Gender at Work*, 23.

values.⁶⁶ Values defined as feminine, such as caring and being people oriented, are not compatible with non-traditional roles. Roles such as nursing and retail are seen to be more female “appropriate” because these roles carry prescribed traits to undertake this type of work. These characteristics and traits do not align with the requirements of non-traditional roles, and subsequently keep women out.⁶⁷

Minority Status, Tokenism and In(visibility)

Organisational culture is reflected in the horizontal and vertical segregation that exists in gender regimes. Gender segregation is embedded in gender regimes as a whole, and in particular industries. Why women occupy a minority status in mining industries can be understood through the theory of power relationships in organisations. Women who enter professional roles outside the traditional female stereotypes, and women employed in male-dominated professions, remain “tokens” in most sectors, emphasising their difference from the dominant group.⁶⁸ As a token group, women are highly visible and subject to intense scrutiny. This token status makes it difficult for women to move into areas where male traits and characteristics form the dominant culture.⁶⁹ Men’s work has not been traditionally associated with women, and these roles strongly favour the group who is numerically dominant within them—namely, men. Hence, the minority encounters difficulties when attempting to undertake this kind of work because “women’s traits are only ‘suitable’ for female work that does not align with work traditionally associated with men”.⁷⁰

Rosabeth Moss Kanter identifies the importance of the proportion of a workgroup or workplace occupied by women (or other minorities). She focuses on the problems faced by tokens in “skewed groups”, which are “those in which there is a large preponderance of one type over another, up to a ratio of perhaps 85:15”.⁷¹ As

⁶⁶ Alvesson and Billing, *Understanding Gender*, 80.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 81.

⁶⁸ Margaret Whittock, *Feminising the Masculine? Women in Non-traditional Employment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 177.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Barbara Gutek and Aaron Groff Cohen, “Sex Ratio, Sex Role,” in *Gendering Organizational Analysis*, ed. Albert J. Mills and Peta Tancred (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1992), 135.

⁷¹ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, “Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women,” *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (1977): 966, accessed October 12, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/stable/pdfplus/2777808.pdf?&acceptTC=true&jpdConfirm=true>, accessed October.

proposed by Kanter, “tokens are not merely deviants or people who differ from other group’s members along any one dimension”—rather, they are individuals identified by a “certain ascribed characteristics, in this case, being their sex”.⁷² Kanter theorises that the skewedness of some groups creates perceptions of the tokens by members of the dominant group. This suggests that it can determine the interaction dynamics between tokens and dominants, and create pressures that dominants impose on tokens. Similarly, Lewis and Simpson posit that certain “individuals who are very visible because of their minority status are categorised as being in(visible) or in view of others”.⁷³ Lewis and Simpson define “in(visibility)” by suggesting that being viewed is more problematic than being invisible (not viewed). When women are classed as a minority and are outnumbered in roles where they traditionally do not comprise the majority, they are viewed as being in(visible) because they are the exception. This exposes them to the disciplinary gaze, which reinstates existing power relations between the “viewer” and “viewed”.⁷⁴ Those who are “invisible” (not seen) are considered unproblematic because they make up the greater number and their authority is unquestioned and accepted. Those who are invisible in organisations are normally highly desired individuals (namely, men) because they are classed as the norm and as the most suitable individuals in traditional roles.⁷⁵ Consequently, women’s in(visibility) and lack of desired masculine traits does not align with the stereotypical expectations that men embody; thus, they are excluded from such roles.

The process of being assigned the status of a token group and cast as different causes tokens to respond to certain pressures. According to Kanter, the first pressure is visibility, which generates performance pressures because female tokens attract greater awareness than their male peers.⁷⁶ This heightened visibility creates an overwhelming pressure to perform successfully, and tokens tend to respond with either overachievement or underachievement. As Kanter further theorises, this overcompensation in trying to impress is the result of male workers scrutinising

⁷² Ibid, 968.

⁷³ Patricia Lewis and Ruth Simpson, *Revealing and Concealing Gender: Issues of Visibility in Organizations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 2.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 1.

⁷⁶ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 212.

women's moves in every social situation.⁷⁷ For example, female managers are viewed as not being as capable as men; thus, they are subject to intense examination when performing this traditional "male" job. A second pressure is polarisation, in which differences between the tokens and dominants are exaggerated, which leads dominants to "heighten their group boundaries".⁷⁸ For example, dominants find that excluding women is simple—when an outsider appears, groups realise their common bond as insiders.⁷⁹

An implication of having a token female group in a traditionally male workplace is that men establish a cultural resistance in which they "generate a masculine culture in and around their work ... [T]his can make women feel without being told in many words 'you are out of place'".⁸⁰ This fosters a work culture that excludes non-dominant groups, which affects the kinds of workers that are favoured in organisations. According to Ridgeway, in most organisations, male employers will have a particular view of who they would like to hire—preferably someone who is similar to them in terms of thinking, gender and authority.⁸¹ Suzanne Franzway, Dianne Court and Raewyn Connell describe the importance of "male bonding in a single-gendered work culture. So while masculinity remains dominant ... homosociability [preference for other male company] will continue to provide a powerful basis for resistance to the presence of women".⁸² As Murray and Peetz argue, men fear and resent the new competition from women, and subsequently devise protective strategies that are maintained in an environment where women are excluded.⁸³ This example of exclusion is common in specific organisations and industries. The next section reflects on work in the mining industry, based on the previous discussion. The discussion below considers "minorities" in the context of mining organisations.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Kanter, "Some Effects," 965.

⁷⁹ Whittock, *Feminising the Masculine?*, 181.

⁸⁰ Cockburn, *In the Way of Women*, 65.

⁸¹ Ridgeway, *Framed by Gender*, 61.

⁸² Suzanne Franzway, Dianne Court and Raewyn Connell, *Staking a Claim: Feminism, Bureaucracy and the State* (NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1989), 145.

⁸³ Murray and Peetz, "Women Miners," 1.

Examining Organisational Cultures in Practice: The Mining Industry

Men and women undertaking work according to their gender roles is a common theme in studies of the mining industry. Research by Eveline and Booth in the 1980s at Emerald Site (Emsite) suggests that there is a production of masculine ideals and images in this industry. Eveline and Booth's study suggests that, while most men prefer an increase in the number of female employees overall, the rationale for employing women positions men as the beneficiaries through the roles they are assigned, such as managers, while women are expected to undertake "minding" work, as an extension of their femininity.⁸⁴ The study found that, "Men and women were placed into roles according to the image the industry promoted in terms of the type of worker that would best fit a carefully designed mining culture".⁸⁵ This means that industries will promote a worker who fits the ideal image of someone who is aggressive, hardworking and able to adapt to a work culture that favours a particular constructed image of masculinity. This individual may be the male archetype.⁸⁶ As this study revealed, men sought to exercise control at a macro level, which was achieved by reproducing highly desirable masculine identities to dominate and undermine women. By creating a work culture that favours a particular identity, women were ultimately excluded because they did not fit this desired image.⁸⁷

This study suggests that the system advantages men, while disempowering women. In particular, Eveline and Booth posit that men are placed in more important roles to characterise women as lacking the necessary characteristics to survive and succeed in a male-dominated industry.⁸⁸ Promotion places men in important roles, which is used as means of controlling women through discrimination that highlights men as the more dominant group. This gendered character is consolidated by customs and jobs being constructed as either masculine or feminine in a manner that becomes accepted as "normal" by both men and women.⁸⁹ For example, Eveline's study, *A Tiger by the Tail*, focuses on interviews that gathered opinion from male and female employees.

⁸⁴ Eveline and Booth, "Gender and Sexuality," 562.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 560.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 562.

⁸⁹ Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations*, 45.

One male employer asserts that women performing certain roles, such as machinery operators, are “disgusting. I think it’s not women’s purpose … we’re different … [S]ome jobs should be performed by men and others performed by women”.⁹⁰ The studies conducted by Eveline and Booth in 1989⁹¹ and 2002⁹² show similar findings that reveal an unchanged work culture, with women seemingly lacking the desired masculine image that makes it “suitable” to participate in non-traditional roles.

It has been theorised that most organisations place constraints on women by concentrating them in inferior positions as a means for employers to justify paying them less.⁹³ Additionally, some organisations create work environments that privilege the (male) majority and influence their members to construct culturally defined notions of “men” and “miners”, where women are viewed as suited for specific traditionally female roles.⁹⁴ Another study by Eveline in the 1980s found that 90 per cent of women stated that they had experienced some form of gender discrimination, particularly in terms of promotion and moving into areas where they were underrepresented.⁹⁵ As noted earlier, there is nothing inherent that determines “male” and “female” work—the distinction is developed to maintain power relations between men and women.⁹⁶ As these studies indicate, more than many other workplaces, the mining sector differentiates between men’s and women’s work. This can be explained theoretically in that men are much more inclined to employ men to fill “male-based” roles and to employ women in “female-based” roles because society dictates the most “appropriate” characteristics for each sex.

Both “gendering” (the process) and becoming “gendered” (the outcome) shape the distribution of power and division of labour in and through organisations. This is

⁹⁰ Joan Eveline, Michael Booth and Rona Chadwick, *A Tiger by the Tail: Report to the Workers on their Interviews on Women in the Workforce at Argyle Diamond Mines Expressed during 1988* to Joan Eveline and Michael Booth (Western Australia: Murdoch University, 1989), 10.

⁹¹ Ibid, 23.

⁹² Eveline and Booth, “Gender and Sexuality,” 567.

⁹³ Cockburn, “The Gendering of Jobs,” 31.

⁹⁴ John Capel, “Not Enough Women in Mining,” *Mining News*, March 8, 2013, accessed March 15, 2013, <http://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/355/90388.html>.

⁹⁵ Joan Eveline, “Patriarchy in the Diamond Mines: Women’s Work, Research and Affirmative Action” (Honours diss., Murdoch University, Perth, 1989), 53, accessed March 12, 2014, <http://prospero.murdoch.edu.au/search~S1?XJoan+Eveline&searchscope=1&SORT=D/XJoan+Eveline&searchscope=1&SORT=D&SUBKEY=Joan+Eveline/1%2C6%2C6%2CB/frameset&FF=XJoan+Eveline&searchscope=1&SORT=D&5%2C5%2C>.

⁹⁶ Game and Pringle, *Gender at Work*, 15.

evident in the mining sector. Eveline's study of the Argyle diamond mines in the Kimberly region in Western Australia found that women had difficulty moving into areas such as operator roles because they were viewed solely as "female workers".⁹⁷ Further, the women she interviewed for the study felt that they could not progress because male employees were always advanced instead, even though female employees were just as capable, skilled and competent. Other mining studies reveal a similar pattern in how women are positioned as inept in certain roles. Some areas of work have clearly defined characteristics that distinguish them as being suited for either men or women.⁹⁸ Eveline's study on female employees in the Argyle mines revealed that, because they were a minority, they stood out as women, particularly if they were undertaking work that did not "fit" or reflect women's acceptable gender roles.⁹⁹ A study conducted in 2002 by Eveline and Booth presented similar issues for women in terms of difficulty entering non-traditional roles, enduring discrimination despite legislation and a resistant culture unwilling to change to promote a more diverse workplace.¹⁰⁰

As Simpson and Lewis theorise, this then leads to "marginalisation, exclusion and power dynamics in social relations in which one group (men) exercise power and authority over another (women)".¹⁰¹ According to previous research, women are still concentrated and overrepresented in areas such as administration and professional roles, while very little undertake operator and operator roles.¹⁰² This prejudice is also found in a contemporary study by Andrews, who suggests that female apprentices in mining are viewed as a "misfit" in non-traditional areas of work as these positions are normally filled and reserved for male presence".¹⁰³ Female apprentices are viewed as not possessing the "correct" traits and characteristics to be able to

⁹⁷ Eveline, *Patriarchy in Diamond Mines*, 56.

⁹⁸ Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations*, 45.

⁹⁹ Eveline, *Patriarchy in Diamond Mines*, 56.

¹⁰⁰ Joan Eveline and Michael Booth, *Control and Resistance in Women's Work: Examples from Women in Mining* (Nedlands, WA: Centre for Women and Business, Graduate School of Management, University of Western Australia, 2002), 45.

¹⁰¹ Lewis and Simpson, *Revealing and Concealing Gender*, 2.

¹⁰² ABS, "Number of Women per Occupational Roles in Western Australian Mining Industry," 2011 Census of Population and Housing, accessed March 22, 2013, <https://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/webapi/jsf/tableView/crosstabTableView.xhtml>.

¹⁰³ Allison Andrews, "Challenging Boundaries to 'Employability': Women Apprentices in Non-traditional Occupation," *Social Policy and Society* 8 (2009): 347, accessed October 23, 2013, <http://journals.cambridge.org.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=5661596&jid=SPS&volu meId=8&issueId=03&aid=5661588&bodyId=&membershipNumber=&societyETOCSession=>.

undertake such work.¹⁰⁴ Another Western Australian study posits that certain ideas are embedded in organisations in terms of who is the most “suited” applicant in non-traditional work, such as operator roles, and that such attitudes result in men being preferred to women.¹⁰⁵

The notion of women being sidelined in certain areas of work that are deemed more appropriate for men can be also viewed from a management perspective that has prevailed into the present. At an organisational level, Bagilhole posits that there is a common belief that women’s “nature” makes them inherently unsuitable for leadership roles.¹⁰⁶ Leadership is equated to masculinity, and management historically and culturally has associated leadership roles with men. As Maddock further theorises, the “dominant symbolism of organisations is suffused with images that reflect masculinity, lean, mean, aggressive … which is all likened [to] men”.¹⁰⁷ Good managers are perceived as competitive, rational and strategic, with such characteristics deemed non-feminine and therefore undesirable traits in women.¹⁰⁸ This pattern has also been identified in the mining sector. In the Western Australian mining sector, women are still a “minority in management roles, with only 6.7 per cent of women in mining being managers”.¹⁰⁹

Male Culture and Work Cultures in Organisations

The mining sector has always had a male-dominated workforce. More importantly, it has always cultivated a particular form of masculinity.¹¹⁰ This is viewed as hegemonic masculinity, which is a “social construction and an institutionalised system of power that privileges … a certain definition of masculinity and

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 348.

¹⁰⁵ Barrera, Gardner and Horstman, “Women’s Experiences,” 10.

¹⁰⁶ Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations*, 45.

¹⁰⁷ Su Maddock, *Challenging Women: Gender, Culture and Organizations* (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 116.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Department of Commerce, “Women in the Western Australian Workforce 2014,” 2, accessed April 18, 2013, https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/labourrelations/PDF/FlexibleWorkplaces/Pay_equity_factsheets/Women_in_the_WA_Workforce.pdf.

¹¹⁰ Resources Safety Division: The Department of Mines and Petroleum (WA), “Roadshow Report Toughness in the Workplace,” accessed March 31, 2013, 6, http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/documents/Reports/MSH_R_ToughnessInTheWorkplaceRoadshowReport2011.pdf.

marginalises other competing forms".¹¹¹ In the mining sector, men's perceived physical strength and ability to survive harsh conditions situates them as the supposedly ideal choice for working in this industry.¹¹² In contrast, women are viewed as lacking the mental and physical strength to cope with "tough" work.¹¹³

Women in non-traditional roles, such as electrical fitters and operators, are working in an environment that privileges a masculine work culture. Eveline's 1995 study on women miners discusses the conventional construction of masculinity in male-dominated roles.¹¹⁴ From this study, that most women who excelled in various non-traditional roles, such as truck driving and forklifting, were exposed to offensive name calling, sexually explicit stories and "practical jokes" that highlighted their minority status.¹¹⁵ Eveline's study showed that this minority status contributed to women not fitting in with the dominant work culture. Previous studies indicate that, in order to be accepted in male-dominated areas, women undertake strategies to fit into their workplaces. For some women, this means acting and behaving like men.¹¹⁶ This can cause their existing social identity to be invisible or changed so that they blend in with the larger group.¹¹⁷ For example, truck drivers are typically associated with men; thus, women submerge their traditional feminine traits to "fit" the roles occupied by men. As one female truck driver stated in a 2014 study:

It's a man's world ... one needs to learn skills essential to combat the lack of respect, which is very high. To combat this, I try to be like one of them [by] being tougher, swearing and doing boys' things.¹¹⁸

A similar view was expressed by a female operator on the mines who undertook different strategies, such as being very loyal to other male employees and creating

¹¹¹ Dennis K. Mumby, "Organizing Men: Power, Discourse, and the Social Construction of Masculinity (s) in the Workplace," *Communication Theory* 8 (2006): 165, accessed March 1, 2013, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2885.1998.tb00216.x/pdf>.

¹¹² Resources Safety Division, "Roadshow Report Toughness," 6.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Joan Eveline, "Surviving the Belt Shop Blues: Women Miners and Critical Acts," *Australian Journal of Political Science* 30 (1995): 97, accessed March 1, 2013, <http://www.tandfonline.com/dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1080/00323269508402325>.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations*, 43.

¹¹⁷ Lucas and Steimel, "Creating and Responding," 320.

¹¹⁸ Neena Bhandari, "Australia: Australia's Women Truckers Join the Boys' Club," *Women's Feature Service*, March 2, 2014, accessed March 6, 2014, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/755275862?accountid=10382>.

dialogue to gain trust in the “inner circle” so she could be accepted in the homogenous group.

Women undertaking such roles place their social identities in sharp contrast to gendered occupations and organisations.¹¹⁹ They have to constantly challenge every aspect of their femininity by adopting certain traits and characteristics to make them “fit” and blend in with the dominant group. However, despite their blending into the larger group, women are still seen as different and their presence as unsuitable for workplaces and roles in a dominant male work culture. As Lucas and Stiemel suggest, even if women attempt to “alter their identities to ‘fit’ in within the majority, women are still viewed by the community [men] as the ‘gen(d)eralised other’ that positions women unfit for mining”.¹²⁰ This is similar to previous discussions of men wanting the company of other men, such as Franzway, Court and Connell’s argument of “homosociability”.¹²¹ As a consequence, this provides a powerful basis for excluding women. Hence, the mining industry is constructed as an organisation that is only accepting of the masculine identity, and as a culture that emphasises homogeneity.

Women, Family Responsibilities and Flexible Working Arrangements

Previous research findings suggest that working arrangements on mine sites are often not compatible with childrearing and part-time work, with some mining companies not having strategies or initiatives that allow women to balance both their family and work responsibilities. In a 2008 study in the Western Australian mining town of Ravensthorpe, Mayes and Haslam-McKenzie found that women were expected to undertake the majority of caring responsibility and arrange suitable flexible arrangements with their employer. This study also suggests that, since men were unwilling to request flexible work arrangements, female employees were expected to combine long working hours and familial work.¹²² This example indicates the

¹¹⁹ Lucas and Steimel, “Creating and Responding,” 320.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Franzway, Court and Connell, *Staking a Claim*, 145.

¹²² Fiona Haslam-McKenzie and Robyn Mayes, “The Shire of Ravensthorpe: How Women Experience a Rural Community in Transition,” *Working Paper Series* 13 (2008): 14–15, accessed March 2, 2013, http://espace.library.curtin.edu.au/webclient/StreamGate?folder_id=0&dvs=1411986303580~493&usePid1=true&usePid2=true.

dichotomy that exists between the private and public spheres, which results in men and women being channelled into undertaking roles according to their gender. A Queensland study in the Bowen Basin on women's experiences in the mining sector also posits that employers hold gendered assumptions about the roles men and women "should" perform. For example, "managerial roles are considered male roles that have the least interruptions during their working lives",¹²³ while female apprentices, operators and technicians are viewed as being less dedicated than males because of their additional family obligations.¹²⁴

In some cases, flexible working arrangements are not associated with success in the labour market, and women (who request them) are pushed down the occupational hierarchy.¹²⁵ Currently in the mining industry, "only 11.1% of women are found to be working in these arrangements, highlighting they are not favoured by companies".¹²⁶ While institutions have proposed different strategies and initiatives that specifically provide flexibility, while enabling women to undertake diverse areas of work, women's careers are affected due to part-time work and working fewer hours.¹²⁷ As a result, women who temporarily leave the workforce to raise and care for children can be disadvantaged in terms of career progression and promotion opportunities. Women who undertake part-time work or flexible work arrangements are often viewed as being less productive in output, particularly in large organisations.¹²⁸

In many masculine-dominated areas, such as mining and construction, there is a strong emphasis on long hours and professional commitment.¹²⁹ As such, the emphasis on "presentee-ism" in areas such as mining assumes that there are only

¹²³ Sanjay Sharma, "The Impact on Mining on Women: Lessons from the Coal Mining Bowen Basin Queensland," *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* 28 (2010): 202, accessed October 30, 2013, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.3152/146155110X12772982841041>.

¹²⁴ Andrews, "Challenging Boundaries," 347.

¹²⁵ Crompton, *Employment and the Family*, 7.

¹²⁶ Barrera, Gardner and Horstman, "Women's Experiences," 4

¹²⁷ Ibid, 8.

¹²⁸ Barbara White, Charles Cox and Cary Cooper, *Women's Career Development: A Study of High Flyers* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1992), 12.

¹²⁹ Jacqueline H. Watts, "'Allowed into a Man's World' Meanings of Work-Life Balance: Perspectives of Women Civil Engineers as Minority Workers," *Gender, Work and Society* 16 (2009): 40, accessed October 30, 2013, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2007.00352.x/pdf>.

certain workers (namely men) who are able to undertake longer work hours.¹³⁰ This suggests that male senior managers often hold stereotypical perceptions about the skills and ambitions of female workers, which contributes to a lack of career progression. In one study of female miners' experiences in civil engineering, many respondents explained that a certain culture still existed, in which:

People work long hours ... however there are particular people that work long hours and there are some people, I guess, that just don't ... I must admit that I cannot work very long hours ... even though I wouldn't mind it.¹³¹

From this, women often cannot work the same hours as men because of family commitments. They are viewed as individuals who combine work and care, and whose work patterns are interrupted because of familial obligations, even though they wish to work long hours. Mining industries prefer workers who can show commitment and dedication, and women are perceived as being unable to demonstrate the same level of commitment as men. Barrera, Gardner and Horstman's findings indicate that many women with family obligations who were provided with suitable flexible working arrangements were not encouraged to move into more challenging, non-traditional areas of work, such as operator roles, because they did not work "proper" hours.¹³² This issue is partly because women's careers have been characterised by assumptions about their commitment, capabilities and maternal responsibilities.¹³³

Employers' decisions to hire, promote or offer career development largely or solely to male workers are discriminatory when they are based on the perception that women are not ideal workers who can dedicate themselves completely to their work because they are undertaking roles in the reproductive and productive sphere. This leads to men being viewed as the desired workers.¹³⁴ For example, a 2010 study conducted in Western Australia revealed that female participants who had

¹³⁰ Susan Durbin and Jennifer Tomlinson, "Female Part-time Managers: Networks and Career Mobility," *Work, Employment and Society* 24 (2010): 622, accessed March 12, 2014, <http://wes.sagepub.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/content/24/4/621>.

¹³¹ Watts, "Allowed into a Man's World," 46.

¹³² Barrera, Gardner and Horstman, "Women's Experiences," 8.

¹³³ Durbin and Tomlinson, "Female Part-time Managers," 622.

¹³⁴ Gottfried, *Gender, Work and Economy*, 59.

undertaken FIFO work felt restricted in progressing to executive positions and senior management roles.¹³⁵

Promotion, Mentoring and Career Development

Well-established career paths, combined with targeted employee training and development, are essential to attracting and retaining women in the mining sector.¹³⁶ Company reports show that employee development has a positive contribution to gender diversity. Many propose that successful career development is effective only when training is targeted and checks are regularly made to ensure that it is effective. However, some studies indicate that career development is lacking, with many women not being provided the opportunity or support to further their careers.¹³⁷

Several studies have found that women are not encouraged to advance in traditionally male careers. This is particularly evident in the Australian mining industry. Pattenden's study suggests that women are not receiving the same quality career development opportunities as their male counterparts.¹³⁸ In a more recent study conducted by the NSW Minerals Council, a survey showed that "71.4% of women believed that more should be done to encourage women to consider a career in mining and ... to develop their careers once they have worked a set number of years in their current role".¹³⁹ The CEO of NSW Minerals Council claimed that, to attract and retain women in mining, it is necessary to increase career development opportunities to "push women in more challenging areas such as being given the opportunity to commence work in senior leadership roles".¹⁴⁰

Pattenden also places particular emphasis on the importance of mentors, who might prove crucial in the development of individuals' careers and sense of satisfaction with their career choice. The study focuses on gender and mentoring, highlighting that several complications arise with the male as mentor and female as mentee. Many

¹³⁵ Barrera, Gardner and Horstman, "Women's Experiences," 8.

¹³⁶ Reflective Practice, "Attraction and Retention of Women," 39.

¹³⁷ Barrera Gardner and Horstman, "Women's Experiences," 8.

¹³⁸ Catherine Pattenden, "Women in Mining: A Report to the Women in Mining Taskforce," The Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, accessed March 9, 2013, 41–42, <https://www.ausimm.com.au/content/docs/wimreport.pdf>.

¹³⁹ "Push to Attract More Women to Mining," *Coal Face Magazine*, May 7, 2014, accessed August 8, 2014, <http://coalfacemagazine.com.au/push-to-attract-more-women-to-mining/> versity.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 1.

women suggested that the inappropriate expression of paternalism—such as “think of me as your father”—indicated the exercise of power and the dominance of men.¹⁴¹ The findings of the report also indicate that these men were not interested in mentoring women, despite the important role of mentors in career progression.

In some organisations, there are indications of perceptions regarding men’s and women’s competency in roles, with women seeming to need to perform consistently above average to be considered equal to their male peers.¹⁴² Evidence indicates that mining organisations are discriminatory towards women in providing opportunities for promotion.¹⁴³ For example, Pattenden’s findings indicate that female geologists with 10 years of experience and consistently high performance reviews were being placed “under the supervision of male geologists who were 4 years out of University”.¹⁴⁴ The findings suggest that these women needed to constantly prove that they were competent across all areas, and had to consistently over perform to be considered for a promotion.¹⁴⁵ The participants in Pattenden’s study also discussed the implications of the “halo effect”, which states that, if a male employee demonstrates competencies in one or two areas, he is assumed to be competent in all work roles.¹⁴⁶

In Eveline’s study of the Argyle diamond mines, “75% of women who were interviewed stated that women were equally (or better) in performing different tasks than some men”.¹⁴⁷ Many of the men stated that women were not capable in one area, such as heavy lifting or driving trucks. This resulted in men being promoted or given training, while women missed out altogether. Many of the women were perceived as not being physically capable of performing certain roles, and as mechanically weaker. Men were ultimately viewed as preferential to women to be selected for career advancement.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴¹ Pattenden, “Women in Mining,” 33.

¹⁴² White, Cox and Cooper, *Women’s Career Development*, 15.

¹⁴³ The definition of “promotion” is considered to be the advancement of an employee from one position to another, recognised through an increase in salary, higher level job title and higher level job responsibilities. See *ibid*.

¹⁴⁴ Pattenden, “Women in Mining,” 35.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁷ Eveline, *Patriarchy in Diamond Mines*, 56.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

Theory, Data and Shaping the Research Findings

My findings (presented in Chapter 5) will be tested against the previous literature and theory to determine if the gender order affects women in the mining sector. Further, the few women in non-traditional roles and their difficulties in accessing EEO roles will be compared with previous research findings to determine how women currently fare in the Western Australian mining industry, and whether improvement has occurred. The respondents' answers will be tested against policies to determine whether they are effective or only cosmetic. Whether women have difficulty in adapting to the culture will also be examined in order to ascertain whether female miners in Western Australia are accepted as miners, or whether they are excluded and marginalised based on their gender and minority status.

Summary

Using a sociological framework, this chapter has discussed the unequal gender relations between men and women that are embedded both in the wider realms of society and in organisations, and the implications these have for women. This discussion was applied in the context of the mining industry to examine the way men and women are theoretically portrayed as being different, and how these differences are reproduced to create inequalities. Finally, this chapter also explained how the findings of this discussion shaped my research.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Research methodology can be defined as the “world view or theoretical lens through which research is constructed, designed and understood”.¹ A methodology normally consists of three areas: a method, conceptual framework and standpoint. As explored below, my standpoint as a female researcher has shaped the way I have interpreted and understood the unique stories of women’s mining experiences. The theoretical paradigm (a feminist one) and chosen research methods—including surveys, interviews and document analysis—supplement this standpoint in four ways.

First, the surveys enabled me to gather anonymous data from a greater population to capture a large scope of women’s experiences in different work roles in the mining sector. In addition, the interviews gave women the opportunity to present their own reality and discuss the conditions in which they were working. Second, company policies were reviewed and tested against the respondents’ answers to evaluate whether policies are effective in achieving or maintaining EEO. Third, the theoretical framework, together with the research methods and company annual reports and policies, informed my own understanding of women’s difficulties attaining EEO. Fourth, the way women operate in their social world, as well as their interpretation and knowledge of this, helped me comprehend their underrepresentation in the mining industry.

This chapter outlines the design and principles of the chosen methodology and its relationship to the research in ascertaining whether particular barriers prevent women from accessing EEOs in the Western Australian iron ore mining industry. This chapter explains the reasons for choosing a feminist methodological approach, justifies the chosen participants and discusses how the data were collected and interpreted.

¹ Walters, “Nature of Social Science,” 10.

Research Question and Objectives

My central objective for this study was to ascertain why women continue to be underrepresented in the mining sector. My research question was:

What factors continue to affect women's overall participation in the iron ore mining industry in the Pilbara region of Western Australia?

To help answer the research question, this study addressed the following questions, which reflect factors and issues that mining companies have identified in various reports, newspaper articles and academic studies as persistent barriers to women remaining in the mining industry:

- What factors affect women securing EEOs in non-traditional sectors?
- How do companies support the career progression of female employees?
- Do workplace culture and limited gender diversity negatively affect attracting and retaining female workers?
- In which ways do companies' policies assist or hinder employees in managing their family responsibilities?
- To what extent are employees aware of (and able to access) company policies, such as EEO and gender diversity?

Social Position and Standpoint

This research was shaped by my personal connection to the mining community on which this research is based. Several key points are outlined here to explain the reasons for selecting this topic and employing a feminist paradigm. Social position created the frame for my research standpoint. Who we are and the categories in which we fit—economically, culturally and socially—shape the questions we pose, the answers we seek and the interpretations we make.² Our social position not only prescribes our life circumstances and experiences, but also influences our individual worldview. My social position is a white, middle-class, female researcher, and this had a substantial effect on the way I approached my topic, such as the way I

² Ibid, 11–12.

perceived the experiences of the respondents. My middle-class position does not lessen my personal connection with the individuals under study. Being the daughter of a miner (of a working-class background) helped provide greater insight to and a deeper connection with the experiences of working-class people in mining.

A standpoint is one's individual position—how one sees oneself in relation to others in society.³ The way I view the world is not neutral, but is influenced by my life experiences and circumstances, together with my social, economic and cultural background. Due to being a female, alongside my lived experience (which stems from my Pilbara roots and affiliation with the community), allowed me to better relate to and comprehend the participants' opinions. In addition, my upbringing in the mining town of Port Hedland in Western Australia (which is the centre of mining in Australia) and my passion for women's interests further assisted in deciphering the diverse opinions of the female employees.

Theoretical Paradigms and Contribution to Study

Feminist research encompasses different paradigms to explore the lived experience of individuals and groups of people. However, because feminists adopt different paradigms to analyse women's experiences, they are classed as separate schools of thought. This section explains the different paradigms that contribute to understanding the social world and the ways this will be used to explore women's experiences in the mining industry. It then explains how feminists have adapted these paradigms that align with their own values to explore the experiences of women.

Epistemology is about the theory of knowledge and what can be “counted as valid knowledge”.⁴ It is a branch of philosophy that raises questions about who can be the “knower” and what beliefs can be legitimised as knowledge.⁵ From an epistemological viewpoint, the knowledge that is presented is gained from others' perspectives. Gender has a particular influence on how I approached this topic and

³ Ibid, 11.

⁴ Kralik and Davies, “Feminist Research,” 37.

⁵ Sandra G. Harding, *Feminism and Methodology: Social Sciences Issues* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 2.

the way knowledge is produced. This affects the value of the enquiry and its authority.⁶ Understandings of the subject may be reflected by my relationship with the subject under investigation—in this case, women—and the reasons for their limited participation in mining. Those who have more knowledge about a phenomenon being studied are likely to “interact with and react to the studied phenomenon in different ways from those who have no particular knowledge on the topic”.⁷ While this methodology can be used by all researchers to explain their topic, it has particular significance for my study because my interpretation of the participants’ responses was shaped by my experiences and existing knowledge to analyse the findings.

A feminist methodology also helped me decode the perspectives of the female employees studied, which can be considered valid knowledge. As discussed in Chapter 2, feminists have identified that dominant ways of knowing may disadvantage women and other oppressed groups because they reflect a male model or lens. For example, Harding argues that all knowledge produced seems to test only against men’s experiences, thus excluding and ignoring the female experience and social situation.⁸ A feminist lens aims to challenge power constructions and reshape understandings and practices in order to improve the situation of the oppressed group. Thus, this is a very important tool with which to explore the structures and conditions that contribute to the present situation.

Feminist methodology has been viewed as placing emphasis on women and their position in society.⁹ It explains the world in a unique way (that is based on patriarchal gender relations), which guides the structure and process of research, and the choice and type of methods employed. In addition, a feminist methodology is fundamental because it is “viewed through a ‘female prism’ that discusses women’s experiences”.¹⁰ This is important because men and women differ in their perceptions of life due to their lived experiences and social status.¹¹ Examining this topic through

⁶ Kralik and Davies, “Feminist Research,” 36.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Harding, *Feminism and Methodology*, 3.

⁹ Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 37.

¹⁰ Ibid, 55.

¹¹ Ibid.

a feminist lens helped me understand the wider gender relations that occur in mining, and their implications for women’s progress. As such, feminists cannot simply state what the social world is really like—they must be able to explain the knowledge of reality.¹² As this research was conducted via a feminist lens through insight directly gained from female employees currently working in the mines, the theory assisted me in explaining my findings, which are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Other theories that are useful in examining the differing power relationships embedded in the mining sector and their implications for women’s access to diverse work opportunities include constructionist, interpretivist and phenomenological views. First, a constructionist perspective means that, in practice, there is neither objective truth nor objective reality.¹³ Instead, reality is constructed. This means that what people perceive as reality is not reality, but something constructed through people’s experiences and interpretation.¹⁴ This methodology is employed by feminists to “assist in exploring the social world and the inequalities and injustice women experience within it based on their interpretation”.¹⁵ During the analysis phase, I interpreted the kind of social world in which the respondents were operating. By doing this, I began to understand the lived experience from the respondents’ point of view.

Second, an interpretivist view provides a framework within which qualitative research is conducted. It looks for “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life”.¹⁶ The theory goes beyond exploring the processes of constructing social situations and everyday structure. Rather, it examines the factors, conditions and social order that generate certain situations and social structures. In this study, women were asked to discuss their personal experiences and establish whether they believed that, as women, they were disadvantaged in mining industries, by describing both their own experience and those of other female

¹² Caroline Ramazanoglu and Janet Holland, *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices* (London and California: Thousand Oaks, 2002), 50.

¹³ Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 37.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid, 54–55.

¹⁶ Kralik and Davies, “Feminist Research,” 37.

employees. This enabled me to gain an overall picture of the issues facing a larger group of female employees.

Phenomenology is an important paradigm that is used extensively in qualitative research. One of its main elements is that *pace* is a constructivist viewpoint. Phenomenology states that an objective world does exist; however, the “objective world is experienced and becomes only real through consciousness and through the senses”.¹⁷ As McNay argues:

Constructionist thought frequently alludes to material dimensions of power, but an understanding of the way in which the symbolic dimensions of subjectification are refracted through these structures is often not developed sufficiently. Whilst all social practices are to some degree linguistically mediated, they are not necessarily linguistic in nature; patterns of employment discrimination or economic exclusion are deeply sedimented, complex and reproduced in ways that the linguistic model does not adequately capture.¹⁸

For this reason, this thesis approaches women’s experiences in mining via a phenomenological position influenced by the perspective of critical realism. From this perspective, the construction of reality is defined as attempting to clarify the “foundation of knowledge in everyday life … thorough which inter-subjective common-sense is constructed. All consciousness is intentional and presented against some object, however these objects can present themselves different spheres of reality”.¹⁹ As a result, critical realism is presented in ways that are “pre-structured whilst also presenting an intersubjective world … which we share with others”.²⁰ In relation to the underrepresentation of women in mining in non-traditional roles, the notion of a gender regime or a gender order implies that these mechanisms, by which social reality is pre-structured, exist independently of the interpretations of the interviewees; however, their interpretations shed light on the manner in which patriarchal social relations associated with these gender regimes are lived and

¹⁷ Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 44.

¹⁸ McNay, *Gender and Agency*, 14.

¹⁹ Alvesson, Mats and Kay Skoldberg, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research* 2nd Ed (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 25.

²⁰ Ibid.

transformed in the practices of women and men. This thesis seeks to draw insights from the different perspectives utilised by the constructionist, interpretivist and phenomenological views; however, the limitations and incompatibilities of the different approaches are considered.

Other theories have been imperative for my research in understanding women's experiences. For example, axiology is the "philosophical study of values that inform how we see the world and the value judgements we make within our research".²¹ We need to understand our own value systems, as well as those of the groups and institutions that affect our research approach. This theory is also used in a feminist paradigm. My values were a factor in my choice of this topic. As a female interested in the topic of women's studies, it became evident to me from the literature that there were few women working in mining, and that these women were facing discrimination. My will to determine the reasons for this shaped the research question and objectives that formed part of the analysis, and made me feel that this issue was worth researching. Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being. Our ontological framework refers to understanding the nature of reality and how we perceive it.²² The way I perceive the opinions and experiences of the respondents is shaped by my own standpoint, and by the reality that they create. Both the axiology and ontology frameworks align with the feminist paradigm in terms of understanding the social conditions of individuals, which was essential for my research.

Theoretical Conceptual Framework

As established in the previous chapter, radical feminism is a theory that is derived from a woman-centred worldview that challenges patriarchal systems.²³ The theory states that "patriarchal gender relations produce unequal gender relations between men and women, which centre the male as dominant".²⁴ As discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, such a theoretical perspective is useful in understanding the gender

²¹ Walters, "Nature of Social Science," 13.

²² Ibid, 14.

²³ Kralik and Davies, "Feminist Research," 36.

²⁴ Annette Davies, "Radical Feminism," in *Encyclopaedia of Case Research*, ed. Albert J. Mills, Gabrielle Durepos and Elden Wiebe (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2010), 3.

relations that exist between women and men, and the ways they are perpetuated in organisations, particularly in the mining industry. As previous research has found, there are few women working in the mining industry, and there are factors that inhibit their long-term retention. This study investigates why this persists through testing the respondents' answers against existing feminist theory and other studies to determine why certain work cultures persevere despite attempts to change them. This will assist in establishing whether particular hindrances account for the lack of representation of women in non-traditional areas of work.

This thesis utilises the theoretical paradigm of radical feminism to explore the gender relations within the mining industry. However, much of the strategies and initiatives that the mining companies have implemented appear to be more consistent with a liberal feminist approach. As David Bouchier argues, liberal feminism is the “open-ended set of egalitarian and humanistic values. Liberal feminism is about individuals wanting to improve and reform the existing situation rather than creating [from the liberal feminists’ perspective] a utopian society”.²⁵ Liberal feminists argue that the existing democratic structures constitute an essential condition for successful reform, and the only way to achieve such reform is by creating freedom and justice to reform society.²⁶ This view suggests that individuals are trained by social institutions into patterns of behaviour that are preformed unconsciously and become an integral part of a person’s identity.

While radical feminists believe that the construct of gender relations is learned through the socialisation process, liberal feminists argue that the retribution of existing social and economic rewards (status and power) is fundamental to change. In the following chapter, many of the strategies adopted by companies to change the status quo and increase the number of women in non-traditional job roles in the mining industry and in the mining industry overall channel a liberal feminist approach. To effect such increases, companies have identified that deep-rooted discriminatory behaviours must be removed. Such changes would not only alter internal structures, but would also shift wider societal thinking, thus allowing greater

²⁵ David Bouchier, *The Feminist Challenge: The Movement for Women's Liberation in Britain and the United States*, (London: Macmillan Press Limited, 1983), 64–65.

²⁶ Ibid, 65.

opportunities for women in wider society. This would create an equal workforce by increasing the number of women to create a gender-balanced environment. It appears that companies are willing to address the issues and alter outdated thinking to address barriers that prevent women from entering the mining industry by constructing policies using inclusive language. For example, using terms such as “all” and expressing sentiments that “all employees are welcome within the organisation”, without exclusion. This strategy can assist mining companies in reforming the views of senior managers who oversee policies and help improve the manner in which such policies are implemented. However, underlying gender relations within the mining industry and in the prevalent gender order embedded in the gendered institutions is a reflection of the power asymmetries that can be thoroughly explored using a radical feminist paradigm, which is imperative in exploring the wider gender issues that exist.

In relation to theoretical paradigms, the ontology, epistemology and axiology positions align with the theoretical framework. My axiological position that values knowledge as a means to transform social relations or enable positive change certainly aligns with radical feminist theory. One of the main principles of feminist research is to transform the lives of women by seeking to gain answers to research questions, by being “critically aware of women’s different experiences, values and ideologies”.²⁷ Epistemology is primarily about the theory of knowledge, and posits that those who have more knowledge on a topic are likely to interpret the subject differently to those with limited knowledge.²⁸ Having an understanding of power relations and the way the gender order is embedded in and centred on the gender regimes helped me interpret the social world of the female interviewees. Ontology is the nature of reality—it is seen as the way others construct reality. This aligns with the radical feminist perspective in that, by reviewing literature on radical feminist theory, it can be said that power relations have continued to pervade contemporary society, and that women’s experiences of direct discrimination and limited opportunity reinforce that women encounter ongoing inequality that reflects the radical feminist views in inequality between men and women.

²⁷ Kralik and Davies, “Feminist Research,” 37.

²⁸ Walters, “Nature of Social Science,” 12.

Research Methods

Research methods are techniques used to extract and collect data relevant to research.²⁹ They may involve observing, analysing and studying behaviours in different environments. This study's two chosen methods were selected for two important reasons. First, the methods chosen for this study will contribute to understanding the barriers produced in male-dominated industries, while enabling women the opportunity to provide first-hand opinions. Second, they will assist in understanding why only a small number of women work in the mining industry, particularly in male-dominated areas.

Many feminists have engaged in debates about the most suitable research methods for a radical feminist paradigm. Some theorists, such as Ann Oakley, argue that, while the methods used by the feminist paradigm are borrowed from existing methodologies that have been developed by men, “women have ‘moulded’ these methods to be consistent with feminist values and purposes for conducting research”.³⁰ Oakley suggests that, while feminists prefer qualitative methods, which bring depth and substance to their research, methods can come from both quantitative and qualitative research because both are adjusted to meet feminist principles.³¹ As Jick further explains, “the combining of methods, sometimes termed triangulation, permits researchers to capture a more complete, holistic and contextual portrayal”.³² My research uses both quantitative (questionnaire surveys) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) methods.

Survey research methods are some of the most efficient ways to gain data from a set target population (sample) or large number of people.³³ This permits broad statistical analysis of what the data represent for the overall population, and allowed me to gain a rich understanding of the issues being investigated. Feminist survey researchers

²⁹ Harding, *Feminism and Methodology*, 2.

³⁰ Ann Oakley, “Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms,” in *Doing Feminist Research*, ed. H. Roberts (London: Routledge, 1981), 63.

³¹ Ibid.

³² T. D. Jick, “Mixing Methods Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Triangulation in Action,” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 24 (1979): 602.

³³ Yolanda Wadsworth, *Do it Yourself Social Research*, 2nd ed. (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1997), 46.

follow a similar route. However, what makes their research different to other survey research is that the survey questions relate to the individual experience, which is explored through both open-ended and closed-ended questions (see Appendix D for the survey questions).³⁴ For example, the central questions in the survey were designed to ascertain whether there are barriers to attaining EEOs, and the interpretation and application of the results were done in a way that aligned with feminist research. These issues were formulated through statement questions that covered a range of the potential issues that may affect women. Since the participants were aware that their names would not be revealed during analysis of the data, they were able to write honestly and at liberty—particularly in the open-ended questions—without fear of adverse consequences.³⁵

In a feminist paradigm, qualitative research is a useful means of exploring the female experience. Interviewing is one of the most commonly used methods to illuminate women's lived experiences while providing in-depth insight to individual experiences. Fonow states that feminist researchers use interviews to understand the lived experience of the individual, while gaining a subjective understanding of the kinds of worlds in which women are situated.³⁶ For my research, I first employed interactive interviewing by posing questions directly relating to women's experiences in mining, such as: do you believe that gender discrimination is an issue in your current workplace? This aimed to enable me to gain detailed insight to the views and attitudes of female participants. Second, I transcribed the interviewees' answers to draw out themes in order to give me insight to their situations.

Since my research included a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, this gave me the opportunity to use open-ended questions (as part of the surveys) for participants to provide their own descriptions of experiences in their workplaces. This also helped me discover the meaning of these events and how they had affected the participants, their careers and—in some cases—their families. It helped me interpret the meaning that the participants applied to their social world in terms of how they viewed women working in a male-dominated industry, and the implications

³⁴ Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 239.

³⁵ Ibid, 262.

³⁶ Epstein and Stewart, "Quantitative and Qualitative Methods," 92.

of this. By using interviews and surveys, this study examined the unique social world through a feminist lens. Implementing a radical feminist theory enabled the exploration of perspectives and stories from the participants' viewpoint, and provided a context within which to examine the underlying gender relations, and the effect of these not only on women's participation in the workforce, but also on their access to EEO.

The theoretical paradigms used in this study align with a set of research methods. As discussed previously, a constructionist view is based on the argument that there is neither objective truth nor objective reality. One way of exploring people's interpretations of their reality is by using interviews. My study used semi-structured interviews that allowed the women to freely express their thoughts regarding why they believed they had limited career opportunities. This was an interpretation of their reality. Second, an interpretivist view provides a framework to explore the factors and conditions that generate situations and social structures. Interviews were a research method that was useful in exploring the women's plight and difficulties progressing in their work roles. Third, phenomenology states that the objective world is experienced and becomes real only through consciousness and the senses. One research method that aligns with this paradigm is surveys. Surveys are normally a way of gaining an overall understanding of emerging themes, while interviews allow more in-depth analysis to occur.³⁷ Surveys are not only a common research tool, but a guide to explore the ways social situations persist to create barriers for women to progress in mining.

Sampling Procedures

Recruiting the particular types of respondents and the required sample for this project was a long and difficult process. Initially, this project was intended to target four mining companies in the Pilbara mining region of Western Australia. However, due to confidentiality issues in identifying specific companies, it was decided that my research and recruitment method would be broadened to include all female employees working in the Western Australian iron ore industry. The original method

³⁷ Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 239.

of recruitment was to conduct the research onsite, where participants would be in their own work environment. The rationale was that this strategy would have assisted their responses, providing enriched answers when in their work field. However, due to significant difficulties gaining permission with access onsite, an alternative venue was used. In line with Curtin University's ethical requirements for human research, no reward incentive was offered to entice or recruit women for this research project.

The sampling procedure used was purposive sampling, where prior knowledge assists in determining the types and kinds of participants recruited for the study.³⁸ Since the purpose of this study was to determine the continuing barriers that prevent women from remaining long term with their employers, I required participants who were working onsite, where most issues regarding gender diversity were occurring. In recruiting participants for this study, I used two methods to obtain an adequate number of respondents. First, I contacted the Women in Mining Network (WIMnet) organisation to assist in employing the most effective methods of recruiting relevant participants for my research. The WIMnet organisation is a national Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (AusIMM) association for industry professionals that delivers ongoing programs in supporting the attraction and retention of women in the minerals industry, including affiliate groups throughout Australia.³⁹ After my initial contact, WIMnet was able to place my request for respondents, as well as the aims of my study, in their internal newsletters that are mailed to employees. However, despite the newsletter's wide coverage, my request drew very few expressions of interest for this research.

The second recruiting method involved placing advertisements in three newspapers—*The West Australian*, *Pilbara Echo* and *Northwest Telegraph*—to find the most relevant participants. Despite advertising in three newspapers that were widely distributed in the mining region, especially *Pilbara Echo*, there were still few respondents willing to participate. The recruitment procedure involved inviting all women who were working directly for any iron ore-producing mining company to

³⁸ Ibid, 262.

³⁹ AusIMM, "The Minerals Institute: Women in Mining Network (WIMnet)," accessed August 12, 2014, <http://www.ausimm.com.au/content/default.aspx?ID=236#>.

participate. From the surveys, women voluntarily consented to part take in the interviews.

Sample

The target population in this study was adult female employees working in the Western Australian iron ore mining industry. The main sample method used to find participants was based on a purposive method, as the aims of the research dictated the types of participants that were required. However, a snowball sampling method was used, in which I asked the participants to encourage other women in their work area to contact me if they were interested in being a part of the project. The sample included residential FIFO from Perth; interstate, international and local residents; DIDO workers; and regional employees. The sample size for this study was relatively small, comprising nine participants (all nine participants responded to the survey and four of those nine participants volunteered to be interviewed). Initially, the study planned to include as many female employees as the study could gather, at least 50 to 100. Further, this study aimed to undertake an investigatory approach; however, due to circumstances beyond my control, the results that are presented in Chapter 5 and the analysis following the results represent the findings of the study only and do not represent the entire female population working in the iron ore mining industry.

Employing a feminist methodological lens, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were selected to investigate this topic (see earlier in this chapter), which involved a survey (see Appendix D) and semi-structured interviews (see Appendix E for the interview questions and Appendix F for part of an interview transcript).⁴⁰ The participants provided written consent to allow extracts from their interviews to be quoted in the research (see Appendix G). Towards the end of the recruitment phase, I used my judgement to determine whether an adequate number of participants had been attained. According to Fonow, the quality of data is not determined by the number of participants, but by the richness of the data collected.⁴¹

⁴⁰ The transcript that has been included is only part of one selected participant's answers from the interview. The full interview can be provided on request for examination purposes.

⁴¹ Epstein and Stewart, "Quantitative and Qualitative Methods," 92–93.

Sixteen surveys were sent out and nine were returned, which represented a 56 per cent response rate. This was considered adequate (given the difficulties in recruiting participants) for data analysis, as the recruitment phase was the culmination of both research strategies, and the exercise had taken many months. Given the resulting small sample that emerged from the data collection and the type of research methods utilised for the study, data saturation may not have been reached. According to Sarantakos, data saturation is the stage in the research process at which no further new or relevant data emerges.⁴² This study was more exploratory due to the small number of participants that expressed willingness to participate. As a result, the findings presented are indicative in nature, and are based on the personal experiences of the participants in this study.

At the analysis stage, further categories are well established and the relationships between categories show a similar pattern among responses.⁴³ In the analysis stage of the study, no new themes emerged when no new themes between the surveys and the interviews overlapped. Once participants began to ratify similar experiences by confirming personal stories of other female employees' negative experiences in mining, analysis ceased and a cross-check of the data occurred.

The surveys were distributed by emailing copies to the participants, together with related documents, such as a consent form (Appendix C), information sheet (Appendix B) and cover letter (Appendix A). The surveys were sent to the participants on 17 April, 24 April and 17 May 2014. No surveys were distributed to employers because I had been unable to gain permission to interview staff onsite. In addition, there is anecdotal evidence that being interviewed onsite can make employees even more reticent to volunteer for fear of being identified. Hence, the decision was made not to involve the companies in any capacity in the research. The completed surveys and signed consent forms were returned to me via email within a two-week period.⁴⁴

⁴² Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 349.

⁴³ Sarantakos, *Social Research*, 349.

⁴⁴ See the bibliography for the date that the surveys were returned via email.

From the survey data, 77 per cent of the women were currently based at operating mines, while only 22 per cent worked at a company's head office. The women had varied working arrangements, with 55 per cent FIFO workers from Perth, 33 per cent commuting to work daily from home, and 11 per cent stating they lived at or near the mine site during the working week, and drove home for leave periods (DIDO). There were no FIFO workers from outside of Perth. All respondents were currently employed and there were no former employees. Of the 14 participants, four per cent had an average of five to 10 years of experience. Further, 57 per cent were working in the areas of mining, and 29 per cent were working in support (professional and human resources [HR]). From the surveys, four women gave their consent to undertake a semi-structured interview. This provided an opportunity for a deeper, qualitative analysis based on the methodology, which allowed first-hand opinions of women's experiences in the mining industry, and contributed to understanding the research issues from the participants' stance, as well as answering the research question and objectives.

Four semi-structured interviews were conducted. Two of the participants were in the 45 to 49 age range, and the other two were in the 20 to 24 age range. All were FIFO workers, travelling from Perth to their place of work, with an average of 10 years of experience in the mining industry. All were working at a mine operation. Three had no children, while one had one child. All participants worked in non-traditional work roles, with only one identifying herself as working in a professional role. This diversity offered interesting insights to the lived experiences of these women, which contributed to explaining why few women are presently working in the mining industry. Table 3.1 below outlines the demographic of the interviewees:

Table 3.1: Interviewees' Demographics

	Years of Experience	Dependent Children	Type of Work
Interviewee 1	10+ years	Yes	Management
Interviewee 2	0–5 years	No	Health and safety
Interviewee 3	5–10 years	No	Geology
Interviewee 4	5–10 years	No	Hole blast drilling

The interviewees represented 44 per cent of the surveys that were returned. It is acknowledged that the number of surveys returned and interviews conducted was small. Two major reasons contributed to this. First, the surveys were sent only to those employees who had indicated willingness to participate in the study, and the interviews were subject to the participants' inclination to be interviewed and complete the survey. Those who consented to be interviewed indicated this by completing, signing and dating the consent form. Under the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines for ethical practice in human research,⁴⁵ participants cannot be coerced to be part of a study; thus, only those who expressed interest voluntary participated in this study. I had the responsibility to demonstrate that informed consent had been obtained, and that the interviewees could withdraw at any time with no prejudice against them. It should also be noted that a fifth person did not go ahead with the interview, despite initially indicating willingness to participate.

Second, the participants all expressed their wish for a pseudonym to be used. They were fully informed in writing (and in a recorded statement at the commencement of the interview) that their confidentiality would be preserved and their answers could be traced back to them as individuals. The interviews were conducted in Perth city over three weeks, from 13 May to 6 June 2014.⁴⁶ The semi-structured interviews lasted between 35 and 60 minutes, and all interviewees were provided with the same set of questions. All responses were recorded and fully transcribed. The field notes to all interviews were recorded after each interview, and later written up as a narrative to assist with analysis of the data.

Data Analysis

The data of the surveys were organised into themes, which were then tested against existing theory and other literature, such as company reports. This was undertaken to assess how female employees fare in the Western Australian iron ore mining industry, and the extent to which women are underrepresented in the workforce.

⁴⁵ NHMRC, "National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NHMRC)," March 2007, accessed August 6, 2015, 20, http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/publications/synopses/e72.pdf.

⁴⁶ See the bibliography for details of when the interviews took place.

Analysis was undertaken using a process in which the statistics from the first part of the surveys compiled from the data were manually calculated to reach an average. Once the average was found, I tabulated the results for my own analysis, which were presented visually in a graph. The second area of the surveys was the in-depth research questions that related to the mining industry and women's experiences. There were question statements with agree/disagree options that participants could select. Once all surveys were collated, I calculated the frequency at which each statement occurred from the respondents. This enabled an average to be determined.⁴⁷ This assisted in determining which issues were considered continuing or new barriers for female employees.

The data from the interviews and surveys were also analysed together and thematically in order to identify any significant patterns or themes. For analysis purposes, themes were first tabulated, and then a relationship was drawn between the different responses and whether a recurring theme emerged. Overlaps between surveys and interviews were acknowledged when they occurred. In this manner, a pattern was identified from the survey and interview responses of different participants relating to similar experiences in the mine sites, which assisted in drawing conclusions. The findings are presented in graphs and charts in Chapter 5, while the results are discussed in Chapter 6.

Limitations of the Study

While every attempt was made to maintain the rigour of this study, there are some limitations in the design and procedures of the research that require consideration, based on the assertions of the respondents. First, the results and conclusions drawn from this study are based on a very small sample, which may result in validity issues. From the surveys, only four interviews were conducted, since this reflected all the women who were willing to be interviewed for the study. However, this was overcome through data saturation, when no new themes emerged. As a result, the data collated were varied, with the surveys representing different years of experience,

⁴⁷ Jennifer Mason, *Qualitative Researching*, 2nd ed. (California: Sage Publications, 2002), 10.

ages and types of work, which gave broader insight to the women's experiences. Given that the surveys included women working in different roles over a number of years across the Western Australian mining industry, this compensated for the small number of women who participated in the study. The interviews gave great richness and depth, and confirmed many of the current and newer themes that emerged.

Second, since the study was based on so few people, the results may not be representative of the overall population, and may not reflect all women working in the mining industry. However, the small group of individuals was a positive factor because it showed that the interviewees had personally experienced issues that were reflective of the emerging themes in the wider literature. Further, given that the respondents were from different mining companies, it gave the research broader scope by providing an overview of some of the issues facing women in more than one company.

Third, this type of data is likely to be subject to issues of bias because it is based on the responses of individuals, who may have been motivated by negative work experiences to participate in the study. However, the fact that themes and patterns could be identified from the participants' responses indicates that these may be recurring experiences for women in the wider realms of the mining industry. Further, the respondents in both the surveys and interviews were able to include experiences from other female employees that contributed to a broader and richer analysis.

Ethical Considerations

At all times, this study complied with the joint National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)/Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) guidelines for conducting ethical research.⁴⁸ I participated in a seminar called *The Ethics and the Significance of Your Research*, offered by Curtin University to discuss ways to conduct and fulfil proper human ethical research. This project was approved by Curtin University's Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number

⁴⁸ "Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research," March 2007, accessed August 6, 2015, 1, https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/r39_australian_code_responsible_conduct_research_150107.pdf.

MCCA-20-13) on the understanding that no participants would be identified. The participants in my project were all adult women, who were fully informed of their rights as participants, which were provided via a consent form of their right to withdraw from the study and that they would incur no penalties if they did so.

All participants in this study were given written information about the aim of the study (see Appendix A for cover letter), an information sheet (see Appendix B) and a consent form (Appendix C), which each participant signed and dated to signify their agreement to take part. This was to ensure the informed consent of each participant was fulfilled in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* outlined in the NHMRC/AVCC guidelines.⁴⁹ The information included the reasons for the research, the anticipated benefits of this research and the actual data collection method employed.

Prior to the interviews commencing, the participants were again fully informed of their rights, including detailing the protection of their privacy. Names were withheld and pseudonyms were used to conceal the identity of the employees. The project strictly adhered to ethical guidelines at all times in this regard. The quotations that appear in the following chapter are as close as possible to the actual words spoken. Due to the confidential nature of the research, specific examples and names of individuals and mining companies have been omitted from the study in order to protect the identity of both the participants and companies. The participants were also encouraged not to mention any specific names (of companies or individuals) during the recording of the interviews to preserve anonymity. All data collected were stored according to Curtin University guidelines, with access only available to me and my supervisors. All audiotapes were transcribed and a copy was returned to the participants to verify the accuracy of the responses.

Validity

Validity refers to gaining knowledge and “understanding of the true nature … of a particular phenomenon … while reliability focuses on identifying and documenting

⁴⁹ NHMRC, “National Statement.”

recurrent, accurate and consistent or inconsistent factors".⁵⁰ Accuracy is important, particularly when a project of a larger scale is being conducted. This is to ensure consistency of results. Feminists have used methodologies to investigate the social world through debates on what reality is like, and whether realities can or cannot be validly known and accepted.⁵¹ In challenging existing knowledge of inferiority, feminists have had to validate their claims to knowledge. Validity in this research was important because it is necessary to check that the research data truly represent the group of individuals being studied. The following points are the main aspects of validity:

1. Credibility: This is thoroughly described by Bryman through a feminist perspective. It is achieved when those who experience the phenomenon recognise descriptions and interpretations of it.⁵² The findings of the data analysis from my research were checked against other data and previously published literature on women in the mining industry and the barriers facing women. Commonalities, where they existed, were established.
2. Aptness: Bryman refers to aptness as how well the research aligns with other comparable situations.⁵³ My findings have been checked against other published data to determine whether any similar themes emerged and whether conclusions could be drawn to show if there have been improvements or if the status quo has been maintained.
3. Auditability: Rea and Parker state that auditability occurs when an outside researcher can follow the trail of the original researcher.⁵⁴ In my study, information was gathered using field notes that were made during the research. The findings were subject to scrutiny and reviewed by my supervisors to ensure that the data were presented as accurately as possible.
4. Confirmability: This is said to be attained when the above three criteria have been met, according to Miles and Huberman.⁵⁵ In order to achieve this in my study, all data collected from the participants were checked against

⁵⁰ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 457.

⁵¹ Ramazanoglu and Holland, *Feminist Methodology*, 13.

⁵² Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 457.

⁵³ Ibid, 350.

⁵⁴ Louis M. Rea and Richard A. Parker, *Designing and Conducting Survey Research: A Comprehensive Guide* (California: Sage Publications, 2005), 24.

⁵⁵ Mathew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *An Expanded Sourcebook: Qualitative Data Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1994), 30.

previously published data and theory on the topic. If any similarities were identified, they were recorded.

Reliability

Reliability is the extent to which the measurements of a test are consistent when repeated over identical conditions in an experiment.⁵⁶ It is reliable if it yields consistent results of the same measure, and unreliable if repeated measurements give different results.⁵⁷ Feminist researchers explain that the concept of reliability can also be related to how consistent and reliable a research instrument is.⁵⁸ Through a feminist perspective, it is important that the knowledge produced via the interviews and surveys explores and analyses women's experiences, which are designed to benefit women and improve their social conditions.

In my research, since each employee voluntarily discussed her story of the factors that she believed were causing women to leave the mining industry, the information collected directly from respondents can be taken as reliable. This can be justified through the similar stories that were told by the respondents, with most confirming personal conversations with other female employees who had negative experiences with other (male) employees and (male) senior managers. The participants discussed first-hand experiences and stories that involved an interpretation and understanding of their own social world, and, in relevant cases, the social worlds of others.

While only a small number of women expressed willingness to participate in the interviews, the fact that the female employees spoke frankly about their experiences indicates that their stories are representative of at least some of the experiences of other female employees across the mining sector. Despite the fact that the group of participants was small group and there was a possibility of the participants being identified, the participants spoke frankly about their personal difficulties and about

⁵⁶ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 350.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ranjit Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-by-step Guide for Beginners*, 2nd ed. (Frenchs Forest: Pearson Education Australia, 2005), 153.

witnessing the difficulties of others, which provided a broad perspective of the issues female employees encounter in the mining industry.

The research instruments used to collate the data were reliable because they allowed an in-depth examination of the responses. The surveys allowed me to collect data from a wider sample, such as from workers with different travel arrangements, different types of work and varied years of experience in mining. This permitted a more effective cross-sectional analysis. The interviews provided a deeper and richer conversation that revealed in detail the extent to which these women were exposed to discrimination. At the end of the analysis, a final check was done with all responses, and the major findings were confirmed by all respondents.

Summary

This chapter has discussed this study's methodology, methods, paradigms and standpoint, and the way these align with my values. This chapter had demonstrated the relationship between my standpoint and the chosen methods, and how these assisted in analysing the respondents' answers. It also described how the sample was selected, and ways the data were analysed. In addition, this chapter discussed the study's limitations, reliability and validity, including their significance to the research.

Chapter 4: Strategies to Attract and Retain Women in Mining—Company Initiatives and Policies

Research evidence indicates that women are still a minority in the mining sector, particularly in areas of work that traditionally and historically have been exclusively male. This imbalance continues because marginalisation and discrimination have been long ingrained in the work culture, which prevents women moving into areas where they are underrepresented.¹ By using literature such as company reports, media releases and statistics, this chapter highlights the current issues surrounding women's underrepresentation in non-traditional roles. In particular, it discusses the strategies and initiatives implemented by mining companies to attract and retain women and rectify some issues identified by research studies. Most significantly, this chapter reviews several company policies and examines annual reports to assess whether there has been an overall improvement in the number of women employed in the industry, over a four-year period. This chapter uses a theoretical analysis, employing Bacchi's work on policy analysis,² to supplement the review of policies.

This literature will inform my research in determining why there are very few women working in mining. Further, the literature will assist in determining how women fare in the Western Australian context by testing my findings against previous research conducted (see Chapter 6 for more detail). The chapter will focus on Western Australia, but draw on examples from the mining sector across Australia and overseas to compare and contrast the pervasiveness of gender inequity.

Barriers to EEO in the Mining Sector

Previous research indicates that, currently, in the mining industry across Australia, there is a persistent lack of gender diversity. According to 2011 census figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the total percentages of women employees in the mining workforce were as follows:

- Queensland—13 per cent

¹ Capel, "Not Enough Women in Mining," 1.

² Bacchi, *Politics of Affirmative Action*, 22; Bacchi, *Analysing Policy*, 184.

- South Australia—5.1 per cent
- Victoria—5.5 per cent
- Tasmania—0.85 per cent
- NSW—11.6 per cent
- Northern Territory—1.5 per cent
- Western Australia—18 per cent.³

Despite the much smaller proportion of women participating in mining industries in Tasmania and NSW, Western Australia was selected as a case study for this project because it has the lowest proportion of female participation in traditionally male-dominated roles in the iron ore industry.⁴

Moreover, the number of women in particular *types* of work has not seen a great improvement in the last 15 years. In a 1998 study by Pattenden, figures indicated that women comprised only “25% in geology, and 18% in engineering, indicating that they are unevenly represented in the more non-traditional areas”.⁵ This issue has continued to be a pressing one in the contemporary era. As recent research indicates, in 2006, Jackie Hill—the HR manager at Western Australian Corporate Migration and HR Management—stated that there was “fair under-representation at the entry level but very few are in trade, technical and supervisor roles at the frontline”.⁶ This indicates that companies remain resistant to employing more women because this would put them in direct competition with men, who have traditionally been associated with this form of work. While there is no job that women cannot do, some continue to be underrepresented in the areas of geology, engineering, environmentalism, truck driving and labouring.⁷ A 2010 report from the Equal Opportunity Workplace Agency further found that women were still underrepresented in various sectors.⁸ These statistics showed the number of women in mining at the time, which appears to be occurring in the contemporary mining

³ ABS, “Number of Women per Occupational Roles,” 1.

⁴ ABS, “Towns of Mining Boom,” Australian Social Trends Census Data April 2013, accessed March 21, 2014, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features10April+2013#p2>.

⁵ Pattenden, “Women in Mining,” 34.

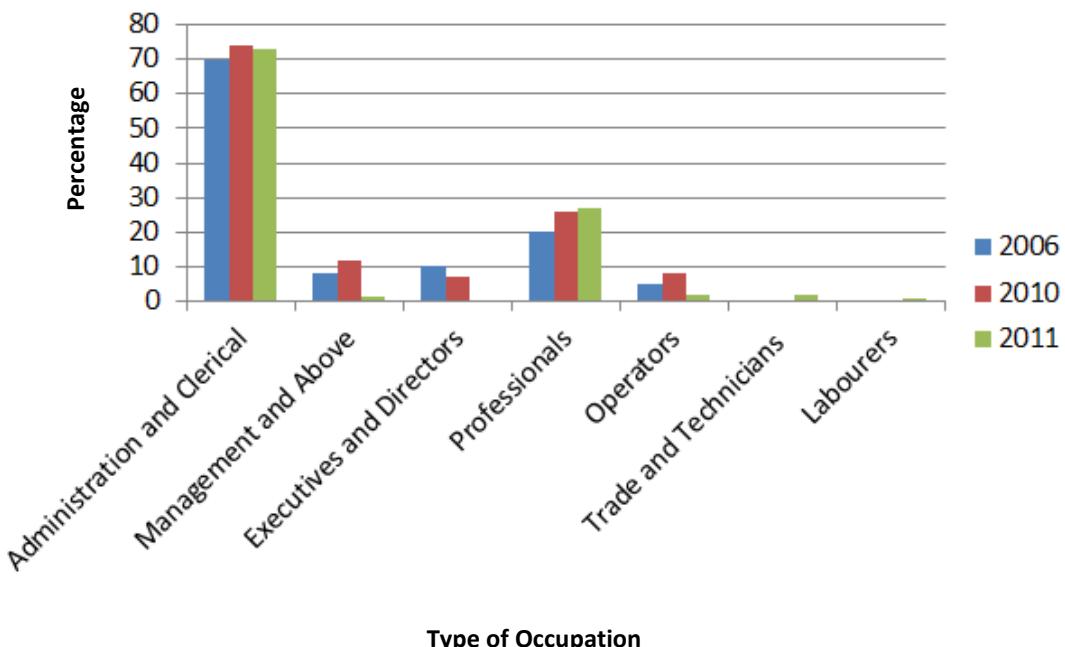
⁶ “Women Favoured for Jobs in Mining,” *The West Australian*, April 15, 2006, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://thewest.smedia.com.au/Default/Skins/WANA/Client.asp?skin=WANA&enter=true&AW=1382495559253&AppName=2>.

⁷ Babs McHugh, “Women in Mining—An Untapped Resource,” *ABC News Rural*, October 5, 2009, accessed January 21, 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/site-archive/rural/content/2009/s2705191.htm>.

⁸ Lord, Jefferson and Eastham, “Women’s Participation in Mining”, 87.

context. Figure 4.1 below shows the imbalance in different work sectors for women across the Australian mining industry.

Figure 4.1: Concentration of Female Workers across Diverse Occupational Roles in Western Australian Mining⁹



This figure shows that, in 2010, only eight per cent of women were situated in operator roles, and 23 per cent were in professional roles.¹⁰ However, more concerning is that the figure presents that women are still concentrated in traditionally female roles, comprising 70 per cent in 2010 and 2011, with no significant difference from 2006.¹¹ While there was a slight decline in the number of administration workers from 2006 to 2011, the increase in non-traditional work did not change. The graph shows a slight improvement in 2010 in the number of women in management roles—higher than in 2006—yet this significantly drops to less than five per cent in 2011. Moreover, women remain in small numbers in other roles, such as operators at eight per cent, with a substantial drop to less than five per cent in 2011. For trade and technicians and labourers, there were no women participating in 2006 or 2010, with less than one per cent in 2011. The overall average of women in all work roles was slightly higher for 2010; however, women still represented just 13

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

per cent of the work roles in mining. Overall, the graph shows that women's participation in professional roles is increasing each year, with 25 per cent working in such roles in 2011. The most disturbing fact is that, in more senior positions, such as executive and director roles, the number had decreased in 2010 to eight per cent, and there were no women in these roles in 2011.¹²

Currently, the reality for most mining sectors across Australia remains very similar to that of Western Australia. A Queensland study conducted in 2010 posits that a major obstacle to "recruiting female workers was that they were underrepresented in areas such as engineering (6.2 per cent), trades (1.2 per cent) and operator roles (0.8 per cent)".¹³ This study provides an overview of some of the emerging issues within other mining industries in Australia. Another 2010 study in the Bowen Basin area of Queensland shows that "over 66 per cent of male workers in mining were technicians, trade workers, machinery operators and drivers while only 10 per cent of females were in these occupations".¹⁴ A 2010 South Australian study found that, "36.8 per cent of female workers are concentrated in administration roles and 25% are employed as operational staff".¹⁵ The above comparison indicates the difficulties women have had in different roles, with a similar pattern occurring in different mining areas in Australia. This study explores the extent to which this is prevalent in Western Australia. Barrera, Gardner and Horstman's 2010 study showed that, "32.7% of men are technicians and trade workers, while only 9.7% of women undertake this role".¹⁶ They identify a similar pattern among machinery and operator drivers, with women comprising only 14.2 per cent of these positions.¹⁷ These studies indicate that such issues may be prevalent in different types of mining in Australia.

My study examines whether female employees' decisions to remain in the mining industry are affected by their limited access to EEO, and whether this affects gender

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Dayne Eckerman, "South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy Women in the South Australian Resources Industry Survey," 6, accessed March 12, 2013, https://www.sacome.org.au/images/stories/PDFs/wir_report_2010.pdf, accessed March 12, 2013/.

¹⁴ Sharma, "The Impact on Mining on Women," 201.

¹⁵ Eckerman, "South Australian Chamber," 6.

¹⁶ Barrera, Gardner and Horstman, "Women's Experiences," 6.

¹⁷ Ibid, 3.

diversity. According to 2011 statistics from the Western Australian Pilbara mining town of Port Hedland, “83% of employees are male; 17% are female”.¹⁸ Based on the table below, women are not highly concentrated in non-traditional roles, such as technicians and trade, with most being situated in high numbers in traditional roles, such as administration.¹⁹ The table shows that women are poorly represented in machinery operator and driver roles, with only “1.83% of women undertaking this form of work while men’s representation stands at 19.9%”.²⁰ In addition, women in management roles are not well represented, with only 1.14 per cent of managerial roles undertaken by females, compared to 7.2 per cent of men in this kind of work.²¹

*Table 4.1: Proportion of Men and Women in Occupational Roles in the Pilbara Region at Port Hedland, Western Australia*²²

Occupation	Sex	Total Percentage of Mining Workforce (%)
Managers	Male	7.40
	Female	1.14
Professionals	Male	11.6
	Female	4.19
Technicians and trades workers	Male	34.1
	Female	1.60
Community and personal service workers	Male	1.66
	Female	0.40
Clerical and administrative workers	Male	3.77
	Female	7.03
Machinery operators and drivers	Male	19.9
	Female	1.83
Labourers	Male	4.57
	Female	0.81
Total	Male	83.0
	Female	17.0

More contemporary figures show that the situation in the mining sector in terms of the type of employment women are undertaking is still very much gender segregated, with women not representing a large percentage compared with men, particularly in

¹⁸ ABS, “Number of Males and Females in Port Hedland Western Australia in Iron Ore Mining,” 2011 Census of Population and Housing, accessed April 12, 2013, <https://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/webapi/jsf/tableView/crosstabTableView.xhtml>.

¹⁹ Ibid, 1.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

non-traditional roles. For example, a 2013 survey conducted by the CMEWA found that women still comprised only a small percentage of the total workforce population in the following roles: trade work (five per cent), technicians (11 per cent), surveyors (20 per cent), engineers (25 per cent) and senior/executive roles and board members (11 per cent each).²³ According to these statistics, and when compared to research from previous years, the number of women in non-traditional roles has not greatly changed.

A major cause for concern in Australian commerce and industry is that women have not been well represented in senior management roles, as demonstrated by previous findings. In Western Australia, women are also poorly represented in higher senior management roles. Of the 18 per cent of women employed in the mining sector in 2011, “only a handful of women currently hold a high level of managerial positions”.²⁴ A 2012 report, cited by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), claims that women are failing to attain senior level positions. The WGEA draws attention to ongoing inequality in organisations, positing that “at 16 per cent, the number of female employees in the mining industry is well below what we see reported by other industries, and female managers are similarly under-represented in mining”.²⁵ As of 2013, women’s representation in senior management roles stands at 19 per cent, as reported by the CMEWA.²⁶

This discrimination is not limited to Australia. International studies have reported that women’s representation in the United Kingdom (UK) is much lower on board and executive roles than in most mining industries. Of all board seats in the top 100 mining companies, “women occup[ied] only 8 per cent of the seats and only four women [were] senior executive directors in the UK in 2012”.²⁷ This indicates that

²³ CMEWA, “Employment Roles—Female Employment,” in *Diversity in the Western Australian Resources Sector Survey*, 9, accessed May 11, 2015, <https://www.cmewa.com/policy-and-publications/policy-areas/people-and-communities/preview?path=Diversity%2Bin%2Bthe%2BWestern%2BAustralian%2BResources%2BSector%2B2011.pdf>.

²⁴ Bianca Thair, “Women Sought to Fill Senior Mining Roles,” *Australia’s Paydirt*, November 5, 2011, accessed June 14, 2014, 8, <http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=692042480924692;res=IELBUS>.

²⁵ WGEA, “Resources Boom Fails to Deliver for Women,” June 4, 2012, accessed April 12, 2014, <http://www.wgea.gov.au/content/resources-boom-fails-deliver-women>.

²⁶ CMEWA, “A Need for Cultural Change,” *The Pathway to Gender Diversity in the Western Australian Resources Sector*, 6, 2013, accessed May 11, 2015, 3, <http://www.cmewa.com/policy-and-publications/policy-areas/people-and-communities/preview?path=Pathway-to-gender-diversity-2014.pdf>.

²⁷ PwC, “Mind the Gap,” 6.

there are hindrances intrinsic to mining that cause women's talents to be under-used, resulting in them being marginalised from senior roles, which are normally concentrated with higher numbers of men. In Western Australia, the contemporary situation indicates no improvement. According to Validakis, in 2012, less than four per cent of women were filling board roles in mining in Western Australia, which is "worse than the national average almost a decade ago".²⁸ This article provides insight into the opinions of mining company managers, who expressed concern that there were few women in non-traditional employment roles in the mining industry. A comparison of Validakis's article with more recent articles discussed in this chapter reveals similar trends and issues in the current mining context. This article became central to further exploration of whether women attaining senior positions in male-dominated roles was difficult in contemporary mining in Western Australia. As of December 2014, the percentage of women on mining company boards had slightly increased to 11 per cent.²⁹ However, no female representation existed on the boards of the 41 ASX200 companies listed.³⁰ Based on the findings of this report, the overall poor representation of women in more senior roles in Western Australia is evidence that "little has changed in terms of representation of women in male dominated industries over the past 17 years".³¹ My study investigates the extent to which policy changes have enabled women to move into areas where they have been underrepresented.

Employers in the mining sector have identified that a skills shortage has had a negative effect on Australia's competitiveness and productivity.³² However, despite this, women have not entered male-dominated roles in the numbers hoped for in fields such as engineering and the geological professions.³³ The resources sector is the largest contributor to Australia's export trade, growing at 15 per cent per annum,

²⁸ Vicky Validakis, "Women Scant on WA Boards," *Australian Mining*, November 27, 2012, accessed March 8, 2014, <http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/news/women-scant-on-wa-boards>.

²⁹ Ibid, 1.

³⁰ WA Mining Club, "Gender Diversity an Issue in Australia's Resource Sector," accessed July 10, 2015, <http://waminingclub.asn.au/gender-diversity-an-issue-in-australias-resource-sector/>.

³¹ Andrew Duffy, "Still Not Enough Women in Mining," *Australian Mining*, July 4, 2012, accessed March 1, 2014, <http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/news/still-not-enough-women-in-mining-report>.

³² PwC, "Mind the Gap," 6.

³³ Ibid.

with a “pipeline investment of \$174 billion in new or expanding resource projects”.³⁴ However, it has been reported that the number of women in non-traditional roles remains considerably low. The overall low percentage of women in male-dominated roles—particularly in senior roles in Western Australian mining—is due to fewer opportunities being available to progress and advance. In 2015, *The West Australian* reported that women in Western Australian mining are required to:

work harder to be recognised, to gain promotions ...
the application of the glass ceiling is still relevant to
these women ... and there is a need to break through.
The biggest barrier in advancement is the
discrimination ... male workers always try to
undermine you.³⁵

This comment highlights that women, even in the present, struggle to advance up the hierarchy to attain more leadership roles. To even be considered for a senior position, they must work twice as hard as their male counterparts in the face of overt discrimination, with their abilities reduced because of their gender. The article was useful in its inclusion of relevant research from senior managers and gender analysts to draw on wider issues affecting women’s work opportunities in the mining industry.

Women’s underrepresentation in traditionally male roles also means that the persistent gender pay gap is a characteristic of the mining sector, with Western Australia’s pay gap remaining the highest in Australia. To compare and contrast, in November 2009, “the average weekly wage was \$2,228.00 for males and \$1,338.90 for females”.³⁶ Further, in 2012, the pay gap stood at 23 per cent Australia wide.³⁷ In 2012, there was “still a 14.7% difference in men’s and women’s starting salaries, which were, respectively, \$67,826.57 and \$57,857.64 across mining sectors in

³⁴ Kerry Carrington and Margaret Pereira, “Assessing the Social Impacts of the Resources Boom on Rural Communities,” *Rural Society* 21 (2013): 2–3, accessed June 2, 2014, <http://search.informit.com.au.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/fullText;dn=950258196155167;res=IELAPA>.

³⁵ Kate Emery, “Mine Women Have to Dig Deep,” August 4, 2015, accessed August 10, 2015, *The West Australian*, <https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/wa/a/29171142/mine-women-have-to-dig-deep/>.

³⁶ Barrera, Gardner and Horstman, “Women’s Experiences,” 2.

³⁷ WGEA, “Industry Snapshot: Mining,” accessed April 13, 2013, 3, <http://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Mining.pdf>.

Western Australia".³⁸ As of November 2014, the gender pay gap was 27.1 per cent between women and men.³⁹ In 2014, *ABC News* reported in Western Australia that men were earning, on average, \$1,778 per week, while women were earning \$1,337—a difference of 25 per cent between men's and women's salaries.⁴⁰ Comparing the persistent pay gap from 2009, 2012 and 2014 indicates that this gap is caused by the concentration of women in certain areas of lower paid work, such as administration and clerical jobs, in which women comprise a very large percentage of employees.⁴¹ While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the reasons for the persistent pay gap, this gap indicates ongoing challenges for women regarding accessing EEO.

In attempting to redress the perceived problems in women attaining EEO, strategies have been implemented to provide incentives for women to enter areas in which they are underrepresented. Policies and other strategies covering EEO are essential to creating a diverse workforce, while attracting and retaining women in the long term in the sector. For example, a 2008 report explains how "many companies have put forward a range of approaches such as EEO training, procedures and evaluation to assist increasing the number of women".⁴² PwC's 2012 *Mind the Gap: Solving the Skills Shortages in Resources* reports that, "80% of mining companies are not doing enough to attract greater numbers of untapped talent".⁴³ For example, companies working with universities, governments and industry leaders would create greater retention of the female workforce.⁴⁴

One of the report's major recommendations to resolve the skills shortage and access the diversity of skills is "hiring more women to fill the shortage".⁴⁵ However, other

³⁸ Miriam Stanborough and Sarah Gafforini, "Signs of Hope Emerge in Mining Gender Pay Gap," *Bulletin*, 1, April 2012, accessed March 21, 2013, <http://www.miningpeople.com.au/assets/mpi-news/2012/mpi-newsletter-may-2012.pdf>.

³⁹ Jonathan Hair, "Research Shows Growing Gender Pay Gap in Mining Industry," *ABC News Online*, November 28, 2014, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-28/research-shows-growing-gender-pay-gap-in-mining/5925148>.

⁴⁰ Linda Skates, "Few Women in Top WA Jobs Results of 'Perfect Storm', Report Finds," *ABC News Online*, August 20, 2014, accessed February 14, 2015, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-19/report-finds-few-women-in-top-wa-jobs/5682270>.

⁴¹ Joyce P. Jacobsen, *The Economics of Gender* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), 68.

⁴² Reflective Practice, "Attraction and Retention of Women," 30.

⁴³ PwC, "Mind the Gap," 9.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 6.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 5.

literature indicates that more proactive measures are necessary to encourage the gender diversity that would allow women to enter areas in which they are underrepresented. A study conducted by the WGEA requested companies to complete surveys to assess whether gender equality was being achieved over a two-year period, from 2013 to 2014.⁴⁶ In this survey, FMG states that gender-equality policies were implemented; however, the overall workforce composition indicates otherwise. Of 104 managers, only 13 were women. Moreover, the numbers of women in other male-dominated roles were small, such as in labouring, with “262 women compared to 1,151 men, as of 2013 and 162 women compared to 1,600 men in 2014”⁴⁷. The WGEA found similar results with another survey it conducted with Iluka Resources. The results showed that, from 2014 to 2015, the number of managers had not greatly changed. As of 2014, there were 13 male senior managers and no female senior managers.⁴⁸ These results suggest that even the few women in this role had declined significantly in one year.⁴⁹ This report from the WGEA was useful because it examined whether companies are proactive in addressing issues relating to EEO opportunities. This information assisted in the analysis of my findings in Chapter 6. Other studies have also examined women’s experience not just in a Western Australian context, but in the whole of Australia.⁵⁰

The CMEWA outlined future strategies, including plans to publish companies’ diversity policies on their websites, and “encouraging diversity key performance indicators (KPI’s) on leadership performance agreements”.⁵¹ Further, creating a diversity strategy and annual action plans would ensure the efficacy of short-term goals and assist with creating a more balanced workforce. Long-term plans include “monitoring and reporting the progress and effectiveness of the company’s diversity

⁴⁶ WGEA, “2014–13 Public Report Form Submitted by Fortescue Metals Group Ltd to WGEA,” 2014, 1, accessed November 13, 2014,
<http://www.fmgl.com.au/UserDir/FMGReports/Documents/Public%20Report210.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 3.

⁴⁸ WGEA, “2014–15 Public Report Form Submitted by Illuka to WGEA,” 2014–15, accessed May 12, 2014, 2,
<http://www.iluka.com/docs/default-source/people/wgea-public-report-2015.pdf?sfvrsn=4>.

⁴⁹ A study conducted in 1993 examining the experience of female managers who were emerging in mining at the time indicates that little has changed in the contemporary context. Catherine Smith, Margaret Crowley and Jacquie Hutchinson, *The Lost Generation? Women Managers in the Australian Mining Industry* (Kingswood, NSW: University of Sydney), 1993.

⁵⁰ This research was conducted in 2008; however, based on my research, continuing issues pervade in the contemporary context. For information on this research, see: Robyn Mayes and Barbara Pini, “Women and Mining in Contemporary Australia: An Exploratory Study,” in *The Annual Conference of The Australian Sociological Association 2008*, ed. T. Majoribanks et al. (Melbourne: TASASA, 2008).

⁵¹ CMEWA, “Need for Cultural Change,” 6.

efforts to boards”.⁵² However, one CEO commented that, to improve the percentage of women, “strong commitment from CEOs and senior management and an inclusive culture are two of the most important elements to create and maintain a gender diverse workforce”.⁵³ These findings are reflective of my research, which suggest that some women are still experiencing difficulties accessing EEOs and adequate career development opportunities.

Career Development, Promotion and Mentoring for Women

Establishing career paths combined with targeted employee training is central to creating a balanced workforce.⁵⁴ According to White, Cox and Cooper, career development is a process whereby an “individual is promoted in some logical order so that they can build up their skills to enable them to reach certain promotional levels”.⁵⁵ In the mining sector, the career path development offered by mining companies varies. For employees to access career development and progress, companies must have “highly structured systems including regular reviews and good guidance and support to all employees”.⁵⁶ However, according to White, Cox and Cooper, because men’s career development opportunities are different to those of women, the systems are usually tailored to meet men’s needs, despite constant evaluation and review for both sexes based on merit.⁵⁷

Other research has found that the extent to which female employees are able to gain promotion in the mining industry remains disputable. Pattenden explains the “halo effect”, which has negative implications because “women have to consistently perform above average in order to be regarded as equal to male peers”.⁵⁸ Men do not have to demonstrate their capabilities, while women, it seems, must clearly show superior abilities to be considered equal to male candidates. This constant difficulty

⁵² Ibid, 4.

⁵³ CMEWA, “A Note from the Chief Executive,” *The Pathway to Gender Diversity in the Western Australian Resources Sector*, 2014, accessed May 11, 2015, 2, <http://www.cmewa.com/policy-and-publications/policy-areas/people-and-communities/preview?path=Pathway-to-gender-diversity-2014.pdf>.

⁵⁴ Reflective Practice, “Attraction and Retention of Women,” 39.

⁵⁵ White, Cox, and Cooper, *Women’s Career Development*, 12.

⁵⁶ Reflective Practice, “Attraction and Retention of Women,” 39.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 41.

⁵⁸ Pattenden, “Women in Mining,” 32.

for women to show they are worthy to be considered for promotion appears to have continued to the present.

To retain employees in the long term, some companies have implemented a system of formal performance appraisals, training and development, taking into account the diversity of the entire workforce and ensuring that training and development is accessible to all.⁵⁹ Some companies are willing to provide support to women who are on maternity leave by allowing them to access training.⁶⁰ The CMEWA report found that one company stated that increasing the ratio of women to men was important, especially for encouraging young women who consider mining a potential career path.⁶¹ As a result, mining companies may be eager to encourage career development through the graduate program, and to advance women who are skilled and perform their roles well. Promotions are an important aspect in advancing a career, and many companies have implemented various strategies to enable female employees to access promotion. According to *Prospect Magazine* (a contemporary Pilbara newsletter), numerous studies suggest that one way of attracting and retaining women in the long term is by providing access to promotional opportunities, which harness female talent.⁶² In 2013, the CMEWA reported that one of the many strategies companies have developed is to promote a positive industry image, as well as supporting the recruitment of women through targeted action. One of the more long-term goals is to implement ways to “monitor recruitment processes and to understand how to successfully recruit female candidates”.⁶³ My study examines whether any changes have occurred in response to this, or whether the status quo has been maintained.

Mentoring and networking are other important factors that contribute to women’s progression.⁶⁴ An effective mentor can prove a crucial factor in the development of an individual’s career, giving a sense of satisfaction with one’s career choice.⁶⁵ A

⁵⁹ Reflective Practice, “Attraction and Retention of Women,” 41.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid, 39.

⁶² Prospect, “More Women Joining WA Resources,” 12.

⁶³ CMEWA, “A Need for Gender Diversity,” *The Pathway to Gender Diversity in the Western Australian Resources Sector*, 2014, accessed May 11, 2015, 4, <http://www.cmewa.com/policy-and-publications/policy-areas/people-and-communities/preview?path=Pathway-to-gender-diversity-2014.pdf>.

⁶⁴ Reflective Practice, “Attraction and Retention of Women,” 39.

⁶⁵ Pattenden, “Women in Mining,” 32.

1998 study “found that almost 54% of men claimed to have been a mentor”.⁶⁶ While effective mentor relationships can reap benefits, the study identified possible complications that may arise, particularly between male mentors and female mentees. As the report found, many women explained that they were excluded and that “no one is interested in helping women … most males had a mentor … no one wanted to help mentor females”.⁶⁷

Mentoring is one way of ensuring that women are receiving training and being provided with guidance and support, particularly during important learning stages. This study examines whether this is actually reflected in the company’s male/female employee ratio. While some of the examined companies did not offer inclusive programs, others indicated that they were taking steps to rectify issues of discrimination and inequality. For example, in 2008, BHP Billiton implemented a “buddy system” that was specifically “tailored for new starters, focussing on creating role models rather than being gender specific”.⁶⁸ This system sought to focus on women gaining skills, while removing the power relationship that exists between female mentees and male mentors. The participants in my study stated that they have experienced insufficient mentoring and are not satisfied with the level of mentoring provided by their companies.

In addition, the lack of female role models in the industry is seen as a barrier and, in order to overcome this, companies include women in promotional advertising, such as on company recruitment pages, brochures and public events aimed to increase gender diversity.⁶⁹ Promoting more women to work in underrepresented roles provides attainable examples for women to follow. Thus, companies are striving to increase the number of women in mining. For example, to assist and increase access to mentoring, Atlas Iron Ore has recognised that well-structured mentoring is important in workplaces. They believe that adequate training and mentoring is the key to increasing gender diversity.⁷⁰ In 2013, the Australian Women in Resources Alliance—a federal government and industry-funded national initiative aimed at

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 34.

⁶⁸ Reflective Practice, “Attraction and Retention of Women,” 40.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

improving the level of female participation—established an e-mentoring program that connects mining professionals with women in the early stages of their careers.⁷¹ This article was useful because it demonstrated that companies are developing initiatives, and this enabled me to assess these against my findings that some women were not satisfied with the mentoring they received. At present, one of their aims is to increase women’s participation rates to at least “25% by 2020 since lack of mentoring is a key area that leads to attracting and retaining women both short-term and long-term”.⁷² It remains to be seen whether this strategy is effective for women in diverse areas of work. My study investigates whether a lack of female role models is a reason for women leaving the mining industry. In Queensland, there have been forums aimed at introducing young women to the mining industry. One strategy involved an excursion of 150 Grade 10 students from nine Queensland Minerals and Energy Academy schools across the region to experience working in coal seam gas as a profession.⁷³ The program also included experiments such as water testing, hydraulics and process controls. Other examples from Western Australia include Women in Mining—Western Australia, who are committed to providing seminars and programs to attract more women to the mining industry.⁷⁴

It is important to compare and contrast the situation in Western Australia with other Australian states and the worldwide context, in terms of opportunities for women’s career advancement. A 2004 survey conducted in Canada posited that women seeking promotion faced numerous hurdles.⁷⁵ Many women claimed that difficulty in achieving promotion was the second most significant issue discouraging them from remaining long term with their employer. Regarding career progress, this study found that women often reminded employers that they possessed the same experience and skills as men, and should be considered for advancement.⁷⁶ The research shows that

⁷¹ “Mentoring for Women in Resources Industry,” *Naomi Independent*, February 21, 2013, accessed March 8, 2014,
http://www.amma.org.au/assets/media/2013MediaClips/20130221_Naomi_Valley_Independent_Mentoring_for_women_in_resource_industry.pdf.

⁷² Ibid, 1.

⁷³ Jessica Burke, “QLD Girls Introduced to Careers in Mining,” *Australian Mining*, May 27, 2011, accessed August 12, 2013, <http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/news/qld-girls-introduced-to-careers-in-mining>.

⁷⁴ “Mentoring for Women,” 1.

⁷⁵ Ginger Gibson and Malcolm Scoble, “Regenderneering the Mining Industry: A Survey of Women’s Career Experiences in Mining,” *CIM Bulletin* 97 (2004): 56, accessed March 12, 2014,
<http://search.proquest.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/docview/200170249/fulltextPDF?accountid=10382>.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

in Canada, as in Australia, men tend to identify with other men, who are seen as more “deserving” of promotion. A study in Queensland found that female employees believed that promotion and career pathways were not accessible to all employees.⁷⁷ According to a survey that the Minerals Council of Australia administered to female employees in 2007 in Western Australia, career opportunities were “dismal”, with one respondent stating that, “you can’t see where you go … your career path isn’t clear … there is nowhere else to go”.⁷⁸ These comparisons show that to date, companies have not provided adequate support to help women. Based on the findings of previous studies, despite the introduction of the proactive initiatives mentioned, it appears that discrimination against women continues to exist and remains embedded within the mining industry.

Workplace Culture and Image and Their Implications

Studies have found that women frequently identify workplace culture and image as major obstacles to initially attracting them to mining, and remaining with their employer in the long term. Traditional and outmoded attitudes present women with challenges, with many regarding the mining industry as very female-unfriendly. For example, Sonti claims that continued attitudes make women feel that their visibility and minority status reinforce men’s views that women are less competent than men in “masculine” roles, such as senior management and executive positions.⁷⁹ These attitudes have contributed to the disproportionate representation of women in this area of work. This suggests that this has remained unchanged and is a continuous issue for women. Women in the Western Australian mining industry still felt the need to work “extremely hard to show their competence in any work role while the boys just cruised along”.⁸⁰ The findings from another 2010 study indicate that these attitudes are one of the reasons that only “10.6% of women are working full-time in Western Australia and remain with their employer for more than 10 years, compared

⁷⁷ Minerals Council of Australia, “Unearthing New Resources: Attracting and Retaining Women in the Australian Minerals Industry,” 2007, accessed March 12, 2013, 153, http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/unearthing_new_resources.pdf.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Chalpat Sonti, “Discrimination Still ‘Rife’ in Mining Industry,” *WA Today*, March 6, 2009, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://www.watoday.com.au/wa-news/discrimination-still-rife-in-mining-industry-20090304-8oeu.html>.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

with 21.8% of men".⁸¹ By comparing different studies from different years, it is apparent that the work culture has remained static, despite companies' intentions to create a diverse workforce.

Some studies have identified issues of gender as the primary factor that has led to an established culture that favours male presence. In the same study from 2010, female employees reported issues regarding trying to fit into their work environment, with some explaining that there is a culture that emphasises a: "bloke [masculine] attitude. It seems women [will] be tolerated in the profession ... but we are not automatically included in meetings or handing down decisions because 'the guys just got on with it'".⁸² This suggests that women are still exposed to a culture that is unwelcoming and unfriendly, and one that deems women as a "misfit" to mining, particularly in more senior roles, which men are regarded as better able to perform.

This also seems to affect women who work in roles where they are viewed as a minority. In one report, a female project manager described her experience working in a hostile culture:

[T]here were some challenges moving from a female-dominated workplace to a male dominated one ... [I]t takes time to get used to the mining language and you quickly understand what the acronyms mean ... feeling accepted was difficult ... Sometimes it is still challenging.⁸³

It seems that this issue remains prevalent. For example, in 2013, *Mining Weekly* commented that, unless the concept of gender is revisited, mining companies are unlikely to achieve gender diversity. As Swanepoel states:

At the moment, the default position is men versus women and we are in an industry that has 85% men and only 15% women ... [C]ompanies want more women ... however a boost will not solve the issue.

⁸¹ Barrera, Gardner and Horstman, "Women's Experiences," 4.

⁸² Ibid, 9.

⁸³ Courtney Green, "Women in Mining: Hear Directly from the Industry," *The Resource Channel*, March 12, 2012, accessed March 22, 2013, <http://www.theresourcechannel.com.au/blog/women-mining-hear-directly-industry>.

Dismantling the engrained culture first is important in achieving gender equality.⁸⁴

This indicates that women continue to experience significant challenges, particularly in a work environment that favours only men and not women. The article argues that the masculine work culture presents problems for companies in creating a gender-balanced workforce. The problems discussed in the article paralleled some of the issues participants raised in their responses to my study.

In 2012, *Australian Mining* reported that discrimination against women remains a problem in Western Australia.⁸⁵ It stated that women still feel as though they do not belong because of their minority status, which makes them vulnerable to performance pressures from managers, and exposes them to discrimination from peers in the workplace.⁸⁶ Based on all these studies, the issues of acceptance and marginalisation are significant problems for women, even in 2015. Santhebennur reported that many female employees have left the industry because of “inhospitable work cultures and gender discrimination that work against women in the industry”⁸⁷. This information provided insight into gender-diversity issues in some mining companies. This suggests that mining companies have done little to alter a work culture that makes women feel as though they are outsiders.

It is also useful to compare and contrast other mining industries globally in terms of the extent of discrimination. For example, a study in Tanzania indicates that, while women are actively contributing to the mining industry and economy, most female employees have experienced some form of discrimination.⁸⁸ Further, the study states that women have “found it difficult crossing over into traditional male roles such as operator and managerial roles”.⁸⁹ In Canada, female engineers stated how difficult it

⁸⁴ Esmarie Swanepoel, “Simply ‘Advertising to Women’ Won’t Help Mining Companies Achieve Gender Diversity,” *Mining Weekly*, June 7, 2013, accessed March 21, 2013, <http://www.miningweekly.com/article/simply-advertising-to-women-wont-help-mining-companies-achieve-gender-diversity-2013-05-31>.

⁸⁵ Validakis, “Women at Risk.”

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 1.

⁸⁷ Malavika Santhebennur, “Women Make up 15% in Mining: Report,” *Australian Mining*, May 21, 2013, accessed November 17, 2013, <http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/news/women-make-up-15-1-in-mining-report>.

⁸⁸ Private Sector and Infrastructure, “Tanzania: Women in the Mining Sector,” accessed November 17, 2013, 190, http://internationalwimcommunityportal.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/tanzania_women-in-the-mining-sector_aug-2001.pdf.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

was to work in an industry that is “tough, male centric and often characterised by sexist language and lack of respect”.⁹⁰ In addition, 52 per cent of women employed in Canada’s British Columbia mining sector reported being treated differently in the workplace to their male counterparts.⁹¹ In the UK, PwC’s 2013 *Mining for Talent* study found that women have been subject to direct discrimination, particularly in management roles, with some women viewed as “not being good or tough enough” to undertake demanding roles.⁹² These comparisons of different companies suggest that overt discrimination remains entrenched in the workplace environment—an issue extensively explored in my study.

To alter the hostile attitudes that are embedded in mining, companies have sought to implement change. For example, Rio Tinto implemented a “Digging for Diversity” event in 2012, which encouraged young women to visit the Yandicoogina operation to have a genuine experience on the mine site and as a FIFO worker. This event aimed to break the stereotypical mould that the industry is male dominated.⁹³ This article provided an example of the initiatives that mining companies are proposing to allow women access to such initiatives. This information assisted in assessing the participants’ responses in relation to whether the work culture has changed. To rectify some of the discrimination, in 2013, the Queensland and Civil and Administrative Tribunal granted Downer EDI Mining an exemption under the *Anti-Discrimination Act* to allow it to specifically recruit female entry-level operators.⁹⁴ Downer EDI Mining—one of Australia’s largest open-mining service contractors—stated that it wanted to “break the stereotypes around gender and occupation”.⁹⁵ My research explores whether such strategies have worked to establish female-friendly workplaces.

⁹⁰ Mining Association of British Colombia, “Women: An Unmined Resource—A Report on Female Participation with BC’s Mineral Exploration and Mining Industry,” November 2011, accessed March 12, 2013, 41, http://www.mining.bc.ca/sites/default/files/resources/women_-_an_unmined_resource_report_rev0ct2012.pdf.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² PwC, “Mining for Talent: A Study of Women on Boards in the Mining Industry by WIM (UK) and PwC,” January 2013, accessed June 6, 2014, 6, <http://www.pwc.com.au/industry/energy-utilities-mining/assets/Mining-for-Talent-15Mar13.pdf>.

⁹³ “Rio Tinto’s Yandicoogina Mine Introduces More Women to Mining,” *Rio Tinto Iron Ore Media Release*, October 10, 2012, accessed December 12, 2013, http://www.riotintoironore.com/ENG/media/38_media_releases_2658.asp.

⁹⁴ “Mining Contractor Wins Right to Advertise for Female Truck Drivers because they ‘Improve a Safety Culture,’” *News*, November 17, 2013, accessed November 17, 2013, <http://www.news.com.au/national/queensland/mining-contractor-wins-right-to-advertise-for-female-truck-drivers-because-they-improve-a-safety-culture/story-fnii5v6w-1226760089832>.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 1.

It seems that gender discrimination is not just an issue in one part of Australia. In 2013, *ABC News* reported that, because gender discrimination and imbalance is viewed as a pressing problem, the Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA) reported in 2013 that it hoped to boost the number of women in the resources industry.⁹⁶ The report stated that the AMMA hoped to see women's participation in "mining and other male dominated areas such as construction exceed 25 per cent".⁹⁷ Major companies are also working to increase the number of women in mining.⁹⁸ However, despite this, the sexist culture has remained entrenched and that companies have not rectified this—something that is further explored in my study.

Flexible Working Arrangements for Women in the Mining Industry

Issues regarding accessing flexible work arrangements are particularly significant for FIFO female employees, who must uphold their care and work responsibilities within rigid shift rosters. A 2009 study conducted in Western Australia on the experiences of women who undertook FIFO claims that, "balancing work and fickle roster shifts is a significant barrier in working in the mining sector as women have difficulties in obtaining flexible working arrangements".⁹⁹ The women in this study felt that they had limited access to good working arrangements due to the attitude of their direct employer. One female employees said that, because the "camp manager is inflexible ... we must take leave in two week blocks ... I don't see any flexibility there".¹⁰⁰ Despite being six years old, this study suggests that there may be ongoing issues with FIFO workers not providing enough support to reconcile their work and care responsibilities.

Some companies are attempting to address the challenge of women remaining long term by promoting work/life balance initiatives. While many companies have

⁹⁶ Brendan Trembath, "Australian Mines and Metals Association Seeks to Boost the Number of Women in Resources Industry," *ABC News Online*, October 31, 2013, accessed November 17, 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-10-31/blokey-mining-industry-seeks-to-boost-female-workers/5059816>.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 1.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Pirotta, "An Exploration," 37–38.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

attempted to provide flexible working arrangements, access to such working arrangements remains an obstacle for women in mining.¹⁰¹ In a 2012 interview, Julie Beeby—a non-executive director at Forge Group Limited—commented that mining companies are ignoring “50% of the population because FIFO arrangements do not seem to be compatible with women juggling family commitments, which puts further stress on the labour shortage”.¹⁰² The article also noted that some women have difficulty obtaining flexible working arrangements because such arrangements conflict with managers’ expectations of being constantly present at work. This information assisted in framing the research question for my study. Employers in the resources industry hoping to increase female talent in diverse work roles must continue to develop flexible work practices if they wish to have a highly motivated and skilled workforce.¹⁰³ In May 2013, *Australian Mining* reported that the small number of women in mining was attributed to the lack of flexibility women received.¹⁰⁴ Issues in accessing flexible work arrangements are particularly significant for FIFO female employees, which suggest that women must uphold their care and work responsibilities within rigid shift rosters.

Part-time work is considered the most suitable alternative for women wishing to combine care and work roles. As *The West Australian* reported, one of the main reasons for women leaving the mining industry could be that FIFO working arrangements are incompatible with family responsibilities.¹⁰⁵ It seems that companies are committed to providing FIFO workers with increased part-time work as an option through limiting time spent onsite for employees, where applicable. In addition, some companies are allowing employees to work from the head office in the city, rather than having to travel to sites in remote areas.¹⁰⁶ However, the lack of adequate part-time work arrangements has far greater implications for FIFO workers. The Department of Commerce’s figures show that 26.7 per cent of FIFO workers are female and, of that percentage, only “3.3% of women are part-time workers, while

¹⁰¹ “Hire More Women, Industry Urged,” *Australia’s Paydirt* 1 (2010): 54, accessed May 2, 2013, <http://search.informit.com.au.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/fullText;dn=225217705211884;res=IELBUS>.

¹⁰² Stephanie Smail, “Resource Industry in Search of Female Workers,” *ABC AM*, July 19, 2012, accessed April 7, 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2012/s3548788.htm>.

¹⁰³ Prospect, “More Women Joining WA Resources,” 1.

¹⁰⁴ Smail, “Resource Industry,” 1.

¹⁰⁵ “Women Favoured for Jobs.”

¹⁰⁶ Reflective Practice, “Attraction and Retention of Women,” 37.

men make up 12.3% of part-time workers in Western Australia overall”.¹⁰⁷ Another 2012 mining report, *Mind the Gap: Solving the Gap*, claims that, “flexibility was cited as one of the major concerns for female respondents in terms of remaining with their employer”.¹⁰⁸ As one HR director pointed out, “we need to start thinking of ways we can make industry more attractive for women”.¹⁰⁹ While the mining industry encourages more women to remain in the industry, studies suggest that women are far from satisfied with the level of flexibility they are provided.

It seems that mining companies do not favour part-time arrangements, which affects women deciding whether to remain in the industry.¹¹⁰ This is reflected in Table 4.2 below. In Australia, figures from the WGEA show that women undertake “only 2.1% of part-time work in the mining workforce, creating difficulties for those managing familial obligations”.¹¹¹ The statistics below show the percentage of the female workforce in part-time arrangements. As these indicate, women’s access to part-time work in mining is low compared to other sectors across Australia:

¹⁰⁷ Department of Commerce. “Women in Western Australian Workforce,” 1.

¹⁰⁸ PwC, “Mind the Gap,” 9.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Iminco, “Women in Mining: Future of Women in the Mining Industry,” 2014, accessed March 15, 2013, <http://iminco.net/women-in-mining>.

¹¹¹ WGEA, “Women in the Workforce: By Industry,” accessed April 13, 2013, 3 <http://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Mining.pdf>.

Table 4.2: Percentage of Part-time Female Employees by Selected Industry¹¹²

Industry	Female Part-time Workers in the Whole Industry (%)
Healthcare and social assistance	37.7
Education and training	29.6
Retail trade	35.2
Accommodation and food services	35.8
Finance and insurance services	13.4
Administrative and support services	24.0
Rental, hiring and real estate services	16.0
Professional, scientific and technical services	16.4
Public, administration and safety	11.4
Other services	21.0
Arts and recreation services	23.6
Information, media and telecommunications	12.2
Wholesale trade	11.5
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	16.8
Manufacturing	9.5
Electricity, gas, water and services	5.0
Transport, postal and warehousing	8.4
Mining	2.1
Construction	5.8

As the table above indicates, women in the areas of healthcare and social assistance, accommodation and food services, and retail fare much better than those in mining, with 37.7, 35.8 and 35.2 per cent (respectively) accessibility to part-time work.¹¹³

The findings from my surveys and interviews were compared with previous literature to ascertain whether women's level of satisfaction with flexibility arrangements has increased. As of 2013, a survey from CMEWA showed that, while less than three per cent of all employees work on a part-time/casual basis, the majority of these (70 per cent) are female.¹¹⁴ In contrast, of the three per cent, only 30 per cent of men undertake part-time work. The CMEWA survey found that companies offered part-time work to both women and men, with fewer men choosing part-time work than women. This study included a comprehensive analysis of several companies that seemed to have the least gender-diverse workforce in Western Australia. The results

¹¹² Ibid, 1.

¹¹³ WGEA, "Women in the Workforce," 1.

¹¹⁴ CMEWA, "Surveys Results: Employment Types," *Diversity in the Western Australian Resources Sector*, 2013, accessed May 11, 2015, 12, <http://www.cmewa.com/policy-and-publications/policy-areas/people-and-communities/preview?path=Pathway-to-gender-diversity-2014.pdf>.

indicate that women still prefer part-time arrangements to accommodate employment and family responsibilities.

It is useful to compare and contrast Western Australia's flexible work arrangements with other states and countries to examine how women fare in other mining sectors. The Queensland Resource Council conducted a 2005 study that examined the strategies implemented by companies to ensure a diverse mining industry.¹¹⁵ It suggested that companies need to prioritise providing suitable arrangements for working mothers.¹¹⁶ Ten women were surveyed as part of a 2007 study to determine whether work arrangements provided to employees were a decider in women remaining with their current employer.¹¹⁷ The results indicated that arrangements were not sufficiently flexible to enable women to uphold work and family responsibilities. In the Northern Territory, the overall participation rate was "directly influenced by limited access of flexibility provided to women".¹¹⁸ In 2010, a study by the South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy proposed that the largest contributing factor for women leaving the mining industry was "family/personal reasons (41.7 per cent), particularly in relation to insufficient flexibility and limited work/life balance".¹¹⁹ These studies indicate that little improvement has occurred for women in terms of accessing flexible working arrangements. My study will examine whether this is currently the case.

Australian studies have posited that women's access to flexible working arrangements is problematic, and international studies present a similar pattern. For example, in Canada, one of the major problems facing FIFO workers is that rigid schedules result in poor family time arrangements.¹²⁰ Moreover, a previous study claims that HR superintendents believe that women are not suited to FIFO work because separation from young children often results in "feelings of helplessness whilst also experiencing difficulties in adapting to roster routines and lifestyle factors

¹¹⁵ Minerals Council of Australia, "Unearthing New Resources," 162.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Alison Bevege, "Women in the Mining Sector," *The Northern Territory News*, July 25, 2012, accessed March 2, 2014, http://www.ntnews.com.au/article/2012/07/25/311921_nt-business.html.

¹¹⁹ Eckerman, "South Australian Chamber," 8.

¹²⁰ Silvana D. Costa, Ann Carolina Silva and Vivien Hui, "What are the Opportunities and Challenges for Women in Fly-in-Fly-Out (FIFO) Mining in Canada: An Exploratory Study," 2006, accessed March 1, 2013, 4, https://www.ausimm.com.au/content/docs/fifo_women.pdf.

as a result of inflexible arrangements that were not provided to women".¹²¹ The study concludes that the FIFO model is incompatible with women who have young children, particularly single mothers.¹²² It suggests that employers are unwilling to implement supportive strategies simply because unpredictable rosters would not align with women's caring roles.¹²³ A New Zealand study identified an issue regarding women's access to flexible working options and, in 2013, the New Zealand Government presented an initiative to reduce the stigma associated with flexible working hours and part-time work in mining. This was implemented to allow companies to recruit and hire more women, and for women to attain rewarding positions.¹²⁴ This comparison demonstrates that there appears to be barriers to obtaining access to quality working arrangements, both in the local and the international context.

Mining companies may be unwilling to provide access to flexible working arrangements for both women and men, and women are expected to move out of the workforce temporarily to care for children. Flexible working arrangements may not reflect the ideal that mining companies promote, as they prefer workers who can work long and unpredictable hours. A useful study by AMMA demonstrated that mining companies are more likely to employ male workers because men's careers tend to remain uninterrupted. This issue became a sub-question for the present study, and was further explored in the findings.¹²⁵ As Acker theorises, the gendered subculture highlights images of masculinity and femininity that situates men and women in "appropriate" gender roles.¹²⁶ This ideal is produced and reproduced in gendered institutions.¹²⁷ As a result, women are placed in lower paid positions and part-time work, often with a diminution of work benefits, such as job security and desirable work positions. Figures from the ABS show that, once women reach the age when many are planning a family, between the "ages of 25–35, the number of women employed in non-traditional roles is very low, with only six women in

¹²¹ Ibid, 3.

¹²² Ibid, 5.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Eloise Gibson, "Flexible Working for Men Suggested," *Stuff*, September 9, 2013, accessed March 2, 2014, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/9143952/Flexible-working-for-men-suggested>.

¹²⁵ AMMA, "Career and Industry Guide: Women in Mining—Opportunities for Women," accessed March 15, 2014, <http://www.miningoilgasjobs.com.au/mining/your-mining-lifestyle-guide/women-in-mining.aspx>.

¹²⁶ Acker, "Gendered Organizations," 214.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

operator roles and no women in management roles".¹²⁸ The perception that female workers are not reliable negatively affects women, as they are forced to consider undertaking less challenging roles. As reported by Atkins, one female employee claimed that, while attitudes have somewhat changed regarding women entering non-traditional roles, they remain prevalent towards women attempting to undertake more senior roles, and are particularly a problem for those with caring roles.¹²⁹ One female manager claimed that, "the obstacles today are mainly related to 'breaking the glass ceiling', especially once you've had children. As a mother, I've put restrictions on what I am prepared to do and this has limited available opportunities".¹³⁰ The findings of previous studies posit that women are viewed by employers as incapable or less reliable in more challenging roles if they devote time to both work and family care. A 2013 report by Minerals Council Australia, *Minerals Council of Australia Workforce Gender Diversity Review White Paper "It's Not Just Another Program"*, posits that there still exists a "maternal wall" that poses organisational challenges for women, who are given less desirable jobs.¹³¹ This suggests that women are not given wider career opportunities because employers may believe that family responsibilities hinder full commitment to their work roles.

Continuing delay in developing affordable and high-quality childcare facilities has been posited as a major hindrance to women remaining in the mining sector. For example, in 2008, BHP Billiton presented a plan to create 120 childcare places in the Pilbara region at Port Hedland and Newman; however, to date, no facilities have been built.¹³² In addition, the Chamber of Minerals and Energy's initial findings from their 2008 report stated that support should be extended to employees in FIFO work, which should include assistance in finding childcare arrangements, "including emergency childcare, nanny service and school holiday care".¹³³ However, many companies may be unwilling to run childcare facilities because of fringe tax benefits

¹²⁸ ABS, "Number of Women per Occupation in Pilbara Region, Port Hedland According to Age," 2011 Census of Population and Housing, accessed April 23, 2013, <https://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/webapi/jsf/selectTopic.xhtml>.

¹²⁹ Alex Atkins, "Women in Mining and Resources WA," WIMnet WA, 2013, accessed May 30, 2013, <http://womeninmining.com/portfolio-item/alex-atkins/>.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ WGEA, "It's Not Just Another Program," *MCA Workforce Gender Diversity Review White Paper*, June 2013, accessed April 15, 2014, 9, [http://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Minerals-Council-of-Australia-\(2013\)-The-MCA-Workforce-Gender-Diversity-Review.pdf](http://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Minerals-Council-of-Australia-(2013)-The-MCA-Workforce-Gender-Diversity-Review.pdf).

¹³² Reflective Practice, "Attraction and Retention of Women," 36.

¹³³ Ibid, 10.

(FTB), where companies are charged at a higher rate to maintain childcare centres onsite.¹³⁴ They may also be uninclined to do so because the demand for such facilities does not justify the additional expense.¹³⁵ For FIFO employees in larger mining towns, access to childcare can be doubly difficult because unpredictable roster shifts are not compatible with standard childcare hours.¹³⁶ A 2013 submission by AusIMM suggests that childcare availability should enable women to access a rates provision, including onsite or supported access to external childcare facilities.¹³⁷ Similarly, a 2013 report—*Cancer of the Bush or Salvation for Our Cities: FIFO and DIDO Work Practices in Regional Australia*—found that it is difficult retaining women in long-term employment, with the lack of quality childcare facilities highlighted as a significant barrier.¹³⁸ My findings explore whether this is an issue for women.

Previous studies have found that mining companies are unwilling to provide flexible work options for both current employees and those returning to work from maternity leave.¹³⁹ Studies also suggest that employers do not provide re-training courses for employees who have taken maternity leave, which limits employees' ability to acquire the new skills and knowledge that they would have gained during uninterrupted employment. It is important that women are provided with training and information to assist in learning new skills and knowledge, and enable them to keep up to date with changes.¹⁴⁰ Support specifically for employees returning to the workforce after a significant absence would enable women to gain knowledge and integrate back into the workforce.

According to previous research of women working in mining in Australia, 16.3 per cent of women in full-time work and 31.1 per cent of women in part-time work have

¹³⁴ WIMnet, “AusIMM Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012: Consultation on Reporting Matters,” January 2013, accessed April 21, 2013, 2,

[http://www.ausimm.com.au/content/docs/wimnet_workplace_gender_equality_act_2012_feb2013\(2\).pdf](http://www.ausimm.com.au/content/docs/wimnet_workplace_gender_equality_act_2012_feb2013(2).pdf).

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ AusIMM, “The AusIMM Pre-Budget Submission 2007–08 Recommendation 4.3 Tax Deductibility of Carer Expenses,” accessed March 31, 2013, http://www.ausimm.com.au/content/docs/tax_deductibility_carer.pdf.

¹³⁷ WIMnet, “AusIMM Workplace Gender Equality,” 5.

¹³⁸ House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia, “Cancer of the Bush or Salvation for Our Cities: FIFO and DIDO Work Practices in Regional Australia,” February 2013, accessed March 22, 2013, 19, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/176479103?selectedversion=NBD50509223>.

¹³⁹ Reflective Practice, “Attraction and Retention of Women,” 11.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

no maternity leave or carers' leave entitlements.¹⁴¹ By law, mining companies are required to provide 52 weeks of unpaid leave or 16 weeks of paid leave, with options to take this pay over 32 weeks.¹⁴² However, studies such as that by Barrera, Gardner and Horstman posit that women are denied access to such benefits and are unsatisfied with companies' decision not to provide them. One female employee claimed that "companies have policies ... including flexible work times, maternity leave ... [however, it] can be difficult to apply".¹⁴³ Other respondents in this study claimed that some FIFO workers who accessed maternity leave to spend time with their children never returned to their role.¹⁴⁴ It was stated that these employees did not return to their previous roles after leaving to have children as companies failed to implement such benefits into practice. This study indicates that access to diverse benefits is a continuing issue, with policies not being reflected in practice, which appears to have a detrimental effect on retention levels.

Strategies have been developed for pregnant women who are planning to take maternity leave to be provided support and to discuss with employers plans for leaving and returning to work in order to ensure they remain abreast of any changes and be kept up to date.¹⁴⁵ Companies have proposed devising "return to work programs" for women returning from maternity leave. For those on maternity leave, a few companies—such as Chevron, BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto—have devised "keep in touch" programs and plans for staff.¹⁴⁶ In addition, female employees are offered the "option of keeping company laptops and mobile phones to ensure that they are informed of any changes relevant to their work".¹⁴⁷ To determine whether these programs are effective, such studies will be tested against my survey and the female employees' interview responses. Some companies also offer women the option of taking maternity leave at half pay.¹⁴⁸ In 2012, based on the difficulties women have re-entering the workforce after having a child, an initiative implemented by AusIMM in partnership with WIMnet explained that companies

¹⁴¹ WGEA, "Women in the Workforce," 2.

¹⁴² Reflective Practice, "Attraction and Retention of Women," 33.

¹⁴³ Barrera, Gardner and Horstman, "Women's Experiences," 6.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Reflective Practice, "Attraction and Retention of Women," 11.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 38.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 11.

should monitor a rate of return to work within 24 months of an employee taking parental leave, and promptly address any barriers in returning to work.¹⁴⁹ Previous studies suggest that, if companies implement policies that allow employees to balance their work and family commitments, women would be willing to stay in the long term.¹⁵⁰ In 2013, the CMEWA reported similar initiatives that some companies had previously sought to implement and achieve. Further, companies also aimed to offer a range of flexible work arrangements and “measuring the utilisation rate of all initiatives whilst supporting career breaks and part-time work opportunities”.¹⁵¹ I will investigate whether there is evidence of these initiatives being implemented in practice.

The AMMA has presented initiatives to enable access to the best possible work opportunities for all female employees.¹⁵² Such changes would provide women with support that would not hinder their career advancement upon return. Women should have access to equal work opportunities irrespective of their “obligation” to care for children. Companies have suggested ways of providing women with benefits, such as flexible working opportunities, parent-friendly rosters, onsite childcare, comfortable working conditions and breast-feeding facilities.¹⁵³ As suggested by AMMA, while companies have presented an array of strategies and policies that specifically aim to alter the current situation, women’s careers are still affected due to part-time work or working fewer hours.¹⁵⁴ Through the respondents’ answers, my study will determine whether strategies exist to support women re-entering the workplace.

Policies into Practice? A Case Study into Company EEO and Diversity Policies

This section examines company policies pertaining to diversity and EEO that have been selected from six iron ore mining companies: BHP Billiton, Fortescue Metals Group (FMG), Rio Tinto Iron Ore, Atlas Iron Limited, Illuka and BC Iron Limited. To assess whether policies are put into practice and determine their efficacy, this

¹⁴⁹ WIMNet, “AusIMM Workplace Gender Equality,” 5.

¹⁵⁰ Smail, “Resource Industry,” 1.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 6.

¹⁵² AMMA, “Career and Industry Guide,” 1.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Reflective Practice, “Attraction and Retention of Women,” 38.

section conducts a review of company annual reports from 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. By doing this, I will ascertain whether the male/female ratio has improved each year, or whether it has stalled or decreased. In addition, the statistics from the annual reports will establish whether the policies implemented have been effective or merely superficial. This will assist my analysis in Chapter 6 of why there may be an overall small percentage of female participation. The analysis provided here will then be tested against the respondents' answers from the surveys and interviews.

The annual reports analysed in this study were selected for two reasons. First, the reports include statistics of the overall number of women participating in the mining industry while highlighting the types of employment roles in which the women are concentrated. From the different Pilbara mining companies selected, particularly from younger companies such as FMG and Atlas, the reports demonstrate that there is limited overall improvement in the number of women working in non-traditional roles such as labouring and senior leadership, with most women employees being over-concentrated in traditional female roles such as human resources. Second, while the reports selected do not represent the full range of companies engaged in iron ore mining, they are from companies that have recognised that women's participation is limited both overall and in certain work roles in which male employees constitute the overwhelming majority. Further, the size, location and purposeful sampling, together with the comparisons that could be drawn between multinational organisations such as BHP and Australian-based companies such as FMG, demonstrate similar trends in the underrepresentation of women in non-traditional roles.

Rio Tinto submitted its first annual report for public access in 2011, which they have made accessible previously. The report detailed how the company supports diversity through implementing policies and effective practices, and having solid targets and objectives to strive towards. One of the objectives for all its annual reports was for women to represent 20 per cent of senior management by 2015.¹⁵⁵ Rio Tinto's website drew attention to the composition of the board of directors. Of the 12

¹⁵⁵ Rio Tinto Iron Ore, "Annual Report 2011," accessed December 20, 2014, 73, http://www.riotinto.com/documents/Investors/Rio_Tinto_2011_Annual_report.pdf.

individuals who held positions, only two were female.¹⁵⁶ In its executive committee, six are men, with only one female.¹⁵⁷ In 2011, in senior management, women represented 14 per cent,¹⁵⁸ followed by 15 per cent in 2012,¹⁵⁹ and a slight decrease to 14 per cent in 2013.¹⁶⁰ A further objective for all its annual reports was for women to represent 40 per cent of the graduate intake by 2015. In 2011, women represented 35 per cent of the intake,¹⁶¹ followed by 30 per cent in 2012¹⁶² and 28 per cent in 2013.¹⁶³ The annual report certainly shows a decrease in overall female participation. To date, the company has stated that, via its policies and strong work culture, it aims to attract and retain a high female workforce.¹⁶⁴ However, the trends from the annual report show a gradual decline over the years, with retention levels being affected.¹⁶⁵ Rio Tinto's 2014 annual report was not available at the time of analysis. The company's *Diversity and Inclusion Policy* of 2011 suggests that it has not rectified the declining numbers of women over a four-year period.¹⁶⁶

In 2011, Illuka's annual report discussed the importance of diversity and inclusion in the company; however, it did not specify the number of women and men in different work roles.¹⁶⁷ This was similar in its 2012 annual report.¹⁶⁸ As of 2012, a clear indication of the number of women and men in the board of director roles was displayed. In 2012, of the seven board directors, only one was female,¹⁶⁹ with a similar pattern in 2013.¹⁷⁰ The annual report for 2014 was not available for

¹⁵⁶ Rio Tinto, "Board of Directors," accessed May 12, 2015, <http://www.riotinto.com/aboutus/management-board-3502.aspx>.

¹⁵⁷ Rio Tinto, "Executive Committee," accessed May 12, 2015, <http://www.riotinto.com/aboutus/executive-committee-5010.aspx>.

¹⁵⁸ Rio Tinto, "Annual Report 2011," 73.

¹⁵⁹ Rio Tinto Iron Ore, "Annual Report 2012," accessed December 20, 2014, 81, http://www.riotinto.com/documents/rio_tinto_2012_annual_report.pdf.

¹⁶⁰ Rio Tinto Iron Ore, "Annual Report 2013," accessed December 20, 2014, 65, http://www.riotinto.com/documents/RT_Annual_report_2013.pdf.

¹⁶¹ Rio Tinto, "Annual Report 2011," 73.

¹⁶² Rio Tinto, "Annual Report 2012," 81.

¹⁶³ Rio Tinto, "Annual Report 2013," 65.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 75.

¹⁶⁵ Rio Tinto's Annual Report for 2014 was not available for public access on their website at the time of submitting this thesis.

¹⁶⁶ Rio Tinto Iron Ore, "Diversity and Inclusion Policy," December 2011, accessed May 30, 2013, 1, http://www.riotinto.com/documents/RT_diversity_and_inclusion_policy.pdf.

¹⁶⁷ Illuka Resources, "Annual Report 2011," accessed December 20, 2014, 36, <http://www.iluka.com/docs/asx-releases/iluka-annual-report-2011>.

¹⁶⁸ Illuka Resources, "Annual Report 2012," accessed December 20, 2014, 36, <http://www.iluka.com/docs/annual-reports/iluka-annual-report-2012>.

¹⁶⁹ Illuka Resources, "Board of Directors," 2012, accessed May 18, 2015, <https://www.iluka.com/about-iluka/board>.

¹⁷⁰ Illuka Resources, "Annual Report 2013," accessed December 20, 2014, 38, <http://www.iluka.com/docs/default-source/annual-reports/iluka-annual-report-2013>.

viewing.¹⁷¹ Illuka's *People Policy 2011* indicates that the company remains committed to maintaining a workforce that encourages gender diversity. It outlines that employees are selected based on relevant experience, skills and knowledge.¹⁷² However, in all its annual reports, there are no strategies outlined regarding ways to improve overall participation of women. Since women's participation in this area of work has remained static, this may indicate that the 2011 policy has not yet addressed ways to increase the number of female directors on the board.¹⁷³

FMG's 2011 annual report listed the number of men and women serving on its board over a four-year period. The total number of board of directors was 10, with only three women holding such positions.¹⁷⁴ In other work roles, from 2010 to 2011, there were 2,316 male workers and 697 female workers.¹⁷⁵ In 2012, the report stated that there were 914 females and 3,054 males.¹⁷⁶ In 2013, the total workforce population was 750 females and 3,001 males.¹⁷⁷ FMG's *Diversity Policy 2011* outlines the diversity strategies the company has implemented. It claims that employees are all employed based on "recognising and appreciating the diverse skills and knowledge whilst decisions on recruitment are solely based on merit".¹⁷⁸ It states that all employees are "employed on the basis of diverse skills, knowledge and merit".¹⁷⁹ However, in 2014, the workforce totalled 4,500 males and 950 females.¹⁸⁰ All FMG's annual reports have included measures for improving the numbers of women, such as training being incorporated into induction programs, and implementing flexible working arrangement policies.¹⁸¹ However, the figures indicate a steady decline in the number of women participating. FMG's *Diversity Policy 2011* is

¹⁷¹ Illuka's Annual Report for 2014 was not available for public access on their website at the time of submitting this thesis.

¹⁷² Illuka Resources, "Policy People 2011," accessed December 2014, 1, <http://www.iluka.com/docs/2.4-governance/people-policy-january-2012.pdf?sfvrsn=4>.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ FMG, "Board of Directors," accessed December 21, 2014, http://www.fmgl.com.au/about_fortescue/Board_of_Directors.

¹⁷⁵ FMG, "Annual Report 2011," accessed December 20, 2014, 17, <http://fmgl.com.au/media/2113/2011annualreport68.pdf>.

¹⁷⁶ FMG, "Annual Report 2012," accessed December 20, 2014, 31, <http://fmgl.com.au/media/2337/fortescue-annual-report-2012146.pdf>.

¹⁷⁷ FMG, "Annual Report 2013," accessed December 20, 2014, 41, <http://fmgl.com.au/media/1087/2013-annual-report733.pdf>.

¹⁷⁸ FMG, "Diversity Policy," 1

¹⁷⁹ FMG, "Annual Report 2014," accessed December 20, 2014, 34, <http://fmgl.com.au/media/2114/20140916-annual-report231.pdf>.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 36.

revised regularly to ensure it is upholding its stated objectives.¹⁸² This policy is a concise document that outlines sections regarding the company's commitment, objectives and diversity strategies to rectify any forms of discrimination and create a harmonious and balanced work environment. The policy states that it will create a work environment that is “free of discrimination where employees *may* [my emphasis] be treated fairly and all decisions are based on merit”.¹⁸³ While the company emphasises that it will treat all employees fairly and allow access to equal employment opportunities, the workforce remains overwhelmingly male.

BHP Billiton’s 2011 annual report does not show the statistics of overall workforce participation, but does show the male/female ratio of the board of directors. Of the 13 directors, only two were women.¹⁸⁴ In 2012, the composition of the board of directors remained the same.¹⁸⁵ In 2013, of the 13 directors, only one was female—a decrease from 2012.¹⁸⁶ In 2014, there was no increase in the number of women on the board, and the annual report acknowledged that the number of women on the board was significantly lower than in other companies.¹⁸⁷ The annual report acknowledged that a critical mass was important, and that the board was committed to actively pursuing gender diversity. Since 2011, BHP has stated that it strives to increase the number of women on the board, and aims to have at least three women by the end of 2015. However, there is no indication in the 2014 annual report of how this will be achieved, and ways to measure if it is attained. In fact, the report states that it is unlikely to be achieved by the end of 2015.¹⁸⁸ As of 2014, the company has no diversity or EEO policy. In addition, no clear program initiatives have been included in the annual reports to show how numbers of women can be increased.

BHP Billiton has implemented a *Working with Integrity—Code of Business Conduct*, which explains the purpose of the code of conduct and how it affects employees and

¹⁸² FMG, “Diversity Policy,” 1.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ BHP Billiton, “Annual Report 2011,” accessed December 20, 2014, 28–30,
<http://www.bhpbilliton.com/home/investors/reports/Documents/2011/BHPBillitonSummaryReview2011.pdf>.

¹⁸⁵ BHP Billiton, “Annual Report 2012,” accessed December 21, 2014, 115,
<http://www.bhpbilliton.com/home/investors/reports/Documents/2012/BHPBillitonAnnualReport2012.pdf>.

¹⁸⁶ BHP Billiton, “Annual Report 2013,” accessed December 21, 2014, 133,
<http://www.bhpbilliton.com/home/investors/reports/Documents/2013/BHPBillitonAnnualReport2013.pdf>.

¹⁸⁷ “BHP Billiton, “Annual Report 2014,” 155, accessed December 20, 2014,
<http://www.bhpbilliton.com/home/investors/reports/Documents/2014/BHPBillitonAnnualReport2014.pdf>.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

the organisation overall.¹⁸⁹ One of the sections discusses the importance of equality in employment. BHP Billiton states that all development opportunities, employment and promotions are provided based on merit.¹⁹⁰ Yet, as indicated by the ABS figures, women are clearly outnumbered in comparison to men in the overall workforce population. In the Pilbara region at Port Hedland, “83% are male and 17% are female”.¹⁹¹ The code of conduct states that all decisions made to “recruit people for any job is *not* [my emphasis] based on gender, race, colour, disability, political beliefs, marital status sexual orientation”.¹⁹² Rather, decisions are based on merit, taking into account knowledge, skills and experience.¹⁹³ The figures presented from 2011 indicate that numbers remain disproportionate, with no recent figures indicating any appreciable change in the numbers of women and men in various work roles.¹⁹⁴

The 2011 annual report from Atlas Iron Ore states that the company is working to increase and maintain the number of women participating. The report does not give specific information on the total number in the workforce, but outlines the proportion of men and women in board of director positions. It states that the company has implemented a leadership program to assist female employees to move into such roles. Of the 12 non-executive directors, eight were men and four were women.¹⁹⁵ In its 2012 annual report, the company commits to improving access to working opportunities, such as mentoring for women and better networking; however, no figures are listed.¹⁹⁶ The 2013 figures show that female participation was at 35 per cent, with 29 per cent of women working as executive directors, 20 per cent of women working as senior managers, and 35 per cent of women working as managers and in professional roles.¹⁹⁷ In 2014, the annual report outlined that the total female

¹⁸⁹ BHP Billiton, “Working with Integrity: Code of Business Conduct,” 2013, accessed October 3, 2013, 2, <http://www.bhpbilliton.com/home/aboutus/ourcompany/Documents/2013/BHP%20Billiton%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 8.

¹⁹¹ ABS, “Number of Women per Occupational Roles,” 1.

¹⁹² BHP Billiton, “Working with Integrity,” 2.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ BHP Billiton has not provided specific details of the numbers of men and women in particular roles. This made it difficult to determine whether numbers were increasing or declining overall.

¹⁹⁵ Atlas Iron Ore, “Annual Report 2011,” accessed March 12, 2014, 31,

http://www.atlascopco.com.au/Images/%E2%80%A2atco%202011%20eng_tcm17-3149729.pdf.

¹⁹⁶ Atlas Iron Ore, “Annual Report 2012,” accessed December 21, 2014,

<http://www.atlasiron.com.au/IRM/Company>ShowPage.aspx/PDFs/5016-95807133/Atlas2012AnnualReporttoshareholderspart1>.

¹⁹⁷ Atlas Iron Ore, “Annual Report 2013,” accessed December 21, 2014, 31,

<http://www.atlasiron.com.au/IRM/Company>ShowPage.aspx/PDFs/5126-39230091/2013AtlasAnnualReporttoshareholders>.

workforce comprised 33 per cent, with 29 per cent of women working as non-executive directors, 19 per cent of women working as managers, and no women working as executive directors or at executive management level.¹⁹⁸ The annual report also refers to implementing initiatives such as paid parental leave and pay equity, with regular reviews.¹⁹⁹ However, there is no assessment of whether these objectives have been met. Generally, based on the statistics presented, there has been a gradual decrease in numbers in the number of women across most work roles over the years.

In 2013, Atlas Iron Ore compiled an *Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Policy*, which outlined ways the company can create a work environment that encourages diversity.²⁰⁰ The policy emphasises commitment to improving women's access to EEO. It specifically states that the recruitment process is the same "for all employees, including senior management roles and Board positions, as individuals are selected from a diverse pool of qualified candidates".²⁰¹ The policy further explains that employees' personal "employment and career development progression is likely to be determined by personal merit, competency, skills and qualification".²⁰² However, based on the statistics from the annual report and construction of the policy, given the decreasing numbers of women in work roles, it appears that female employees are being overlooked. Based on the figures since the policy was introduced in 2013, it has not assisted in improving the numbers of female workers, particularly in non-traditional work roles.

BC Iron Limited's annual report from 2011 focuses on the number of women on the board of directors. None of its annual reports provide statistics for the total percentage of women's workforce participation. The 2011 annual report emphasises the importance of having a diverse workforce that is inclusive of all female employees, particularly on the board. However, of the six directors, none are

¹⁹⁸ Atlas Iron Ore, "Annual Report 2014," accessed December 21, 2014, 32, <http://www.atlasiron.com.au/IRM/Company>ShowPage.aspx?CategoryId=190&Cpid=5379&Eid=26555669>.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Atlas Iron Ore, "Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Policy," 2011, accessed May 30, 2013, 2, <http://www.atlasiron.com.au/IRM/Company>ShowPage.aspx?CategoryId=190&Cpid=3971&Eid=94400139>.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

women.²⁰³ In the 2012 annual report, one woman was on the board of directors of the seven men.²⁰⁴ As of 2013, there were seven men on the board, and no women.²⁰⁵ The number of women on the board of directors in 2014 remained unchanged from 2013.²⁰⁶ The 2014 annual report shows that, as of June 2014, there were two women in this role, with an overall female participation rate of 36 per cent in the company.²⁰⁷ This suggests that women may be underrepresented in these roles.

BC Iron Limited's *Diversity Policy 2010* states that all employees are responsible for establishing a corporate culture that "embraces diversity when determining the composition of employees, senior management and the Board".²⁰⁸ However, the composition of board members over four consecutive years indicates that no significant attempt has been made to implement this policy. For the company to monitor its performance in relation to diversity, the policy states that the board "may" set measurable objectives to ensure that diversity is maintained.²⁰⁹ This suggests that it is not a definite objective that the company is seeking to achieve.

Based on the figures from these companies' annual reports over a four-year period, it is evident that there has been a gradual decrease in the number of women in each company every year, despite programs and initiatives designed to maintain the retention levels of women employees across all work roles. My study explores why this gradual decline is occurring, and what barriers affect women's decisions to remain in the long term.

²⁰³ BC Iron Limited, "Annual Report 2011," accessed December 21, 2014, 5, <http://www.bcirion.com.au/images/files/annual-report/2011-bci-annual-report.pdf>.

²⁰⁴ BC Iron Limited, "Annual Report 2012," accessed December 21, 2014, 5, <http://www.bcirion.com.au/images/files/annual-report/bc-iron-ar-2012.pdf>.

²⁰⁵ BC Iron Limited, "Annual Report 2013," accessed December 21, 2014, 22, <http://www.bcirion.com.au/images/files/annual-report/BC%20Iron%20Annual%20Report%202013%20PDF.pdf>.

²⁰⁶ BC Iron Limited, "Annual Report 2014," accessed December 21, 2014, 20, <http://www.bcirion.com.au/images/files/annual-report/17-Oct-14-BCI-Annual-Report.pdf>.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 22.

²⁰⁸ BC Iron Limited, "Diversity Policy," December 2010, accessed May 30, 2013, 1, http://www.bcirion.com.au/images/files/corporate_governance/Diversity%20Policy%20Summary.pdf.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

Analysing Policy: Affirmative Action, Legislation and Efficacy

To rectify many of the challenges facing women in organisations such as those in the mining industry, policies and legislation have been implemented in an attempt to eliminate discrimination. In line with legislation requirements, all companies have policies that address EEO, and while they endeavour to recruit and progress women based on merit, and to supplement such efforts with initiatives and strategies, their policies may not be enforced as effectively as necessary. This section presents an overview of how such policy is constructed. Policies are a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organisation or individual.²¹⁰ As Bagilhole theorises, equal opportunity policies and procedures are designed to help women move into areas where they are underrepresented, and ensure there are measures implemented that allow women to be treated equally to men.²¹¹ Family-friendly policies are also designed to help families balance work and family roles, thereby enabling women to access things such as flexible working arrangements, including part-time work, so they can better manage conflicting and demanding roles.²¹² Chapter 6 of this paper tests whether such policies are effective in allowing EEO practices to operate, through the evidence provided by the study respondents and previous research.

Despite policies being implemented to allow women access to diverse work roles, it appears that gender discrimination remains prevalent in mining industries. According to one report published in *The West Australian*, the number of women concentrated in non-traditional roles, particularly CEO or director roles, comprises only one third of the total number of executive directors in mining sectors.²¹³ To include more women in non-traditional roles—such as management, operator and trades roles—it is important to have more women in higher ranked positions who can act as role models to reinforce an inclusive work culture.²¹⁴ By law, all mining sectors are

²¹⁰ The University of Sydney, “What is Social Policy? 2002–2014,” accessed November 19, 2013, <http://sydney.edu.au/legal/policy/what/index.shtml>.

²¹¹ Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations*, 134.

²¹² Work and Family Researchers Network, “Definition of Family-Friendly Policies 2010–2014,” accessed November 19, 2013, <https://workfamily.sas.upenn.edu/glossary/f/family-friendly-policies-definitions>.

²¹³ “WA Mines Working Women,” *The West Australian*, June 17, 2006, 1.

²¹⁴ Australian Human Rights Commission, “Women in Male Dominated Industries: A Toolkit of Strategies,” 2013, accessed April 12, 2014, <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/women-male-dominated-industries-toolkit-strategies>.

required to have gender diversity and EEO policies that reinforce the company's commitment to channelling women into areas where they are underrepresented.

Theorists such as Bagilhole suggest different reasons to explain why certain policies may be ineffective in rectifying gender discrimination.²¹⁵ In terms of EEO policies, Bagilhole identifies two issues. First, the notion of treating women the same as men is problematic. EEO policies are meant to alleviate gender discrimination by "advocating 'gender-neutral' policies or same treatment to ensure women will not be disadvantaged in organisations".²¹⁶ The reliance on "fair" competition has limited effects on the majority of women because it ignores and refuses to address structural inequalities in organisations. In this manner, EEO policies can individualise the problems and effectively serve to "blame the victim"—attributing the absence of women in higher positions to their failure to take advantage of EEO.²¹⁷ If EEO policies are fair, the question remains why there are so few women in non-traditional areas of work. The blame is usually placed on women's own choice or lack of ability;²¹⁸ however, Eveline's study on women's experiences in the mines shows major defects in EEO policies and legislation. The survey shows that "70% of women wanted their company to participate in equal employment opportunity programs so [they] were able to access non-traditional roles in higher numbers".²¹⁹ It states that, while "25% of male employees and managers said that there was a need for EEO policies to be put in place, 52% stated that it was not necessary".²²⁰

The concept of considering women's personal choices from the perspective of the time they invest in productive and reproductive work was developed by theorist Catherine Hakim, who argues that personal preferences strongly predict women's employment decisions and career choices. Their choices and preferences are constrained and influenced by the wider social structures and social policy that operate at a wider level within organisations. Hakim argues that "60 per cent of women normally undertake the adaptive role in which women prefer a balance of

²¹⁵ Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations*, 134.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 135.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Eveline, *Patriarchy in Diamond Mines*, 56.

both work and family commitments".²²¹ The effect of gendered career choices is that if women "choose" to request flexible working arrangements, they may have difficulty moving into leadership roles as their established feminine, "softer" traits cast them as a misfit in such work.²²² With no incentives, mining companies do not seem obliged to implement policies that will change the structure and culture of their workforce. "Treating likes alike" gives permission for those deemed superior to treat similarly situated people differently, which is viewed as discriminatory.²²³ Thus, having a "same treatment" approach can allow men to deny the existence of inequality.²²⁴

The second reason EEO policies may not be effective is that treating women as different lessens the efficacy of EEO policies. This may be due to the dichotomy between males and females, where women are not accepted as the norm. This then reinforces the perceived gender differences that are present in some organisations.²²⁵ This also poses issues because these supposed differences between women and men justify women taking on the extra burden of family responsibilities, which can affect their opportunity to be considered for particular types of work in public roles. As Bacchi theorises, the exaggeration of differences between the sexes may see women be labelled as inferior and stigmatised.²²⁶ Differences may also be imposed from one group to another, such as through policy construction and implementation.²²⁷

Eveline's study suggests that, despite affirmative action legislation, the use of the term "disadvantage" may set a limit by which equal opportunity for women is justified. In this case, Eveline states that increasing the number of women in mining is not a sufficient indicator that transforms organisations into women-friendly places.²²⁸ In this case, women can be disadvantaged by the special treatment they receive, such as finding appropriate childcare and flexible working arrangements that

²²¹ Catherine Hakim, "Developing a Sociology for the Twenty First Century: Preference Theory," *The British Journal of Sociology* 49 (1988): 138, accessed March 28, 2016.

<http://www.jstor.org/dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/stable/pdf/591267.pdf>

²²² Ibid, 137.

²²³ Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations*, 135.

²²⁴ Ibid, 136.

²²⁵ Ibid, 137.

²²⁶ Bacchi, *Analysing Policy*, 184.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Eveline, "Surviving the Belt Shop Blues," 97.

are “suitable” for them.²²⁹ As Pocock and Connell’s arguments indicate, the gender order that allocates caring roles to women may create significant disadvantages for women in some organisations.²³⁰ Policies are directed towards women, and there is an expectation that, based on the gender order, women will combine both roles. Affirmative action can create distinct dichotomies, in which women and men are cast as different.²³¹ This may then reinforce a particular constellation of power relations that place women in subordinate positions and men in privileged positions.

While reasons have been provided as to why policies may fail to rectify gender discrimination, theorists have argued that it is the gendering of organisations that presents issues for the progression of women. Bacchi and others do not agree with the concern over the theory of sameness and difference to men because “seeing women as the same as us prevents us challenging the model against which women are being compared; seeing women as different prevents us from changing it”.²³² Bacchi theorises that what is needed is to alter the gendered culture of organisations, which is viewed as the most difficult aspect to change.²³³ Organisations have long-lived structuring practices that disadvantage women, and patterns of relationships that are difficult to alter.²³⁴ Connell argues that organisations produce and reproduce inequalities by creating the masculine as the norm, which situates men and women in gender-segregated roles. Thus, it is suggested that the implications of masculine organisational cultures—unless challenged and changed—may determine the shape of EEO policies, which can be undermined when “ability” and “merit” are defined in terms of total commitment to the organisation.²³⁵

The second area of policy that is important to discuss relates to family-friendly policies that are used mostly by women.²³⁶ While family-friendly policies are constructed as benefits granted by generous employers to support women with childcare roles, they also appear to reaffirm women’s roles and responsibilities to

²²⁹ Bacchi, *Politics of Affirmative Action*, 22.

²³⁰ Connell, *Gender and Power*, 99.

²³¹ Bacchi, *Analysing Policy*, 184.

²³² Bacchi, *Same Difference*, 261.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Cockburn, *In the Way of Women*, 220.

²³⁵ Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations*, 143.

²³⁶ Bacchi, *Politics of Affirmative Action*, 84.

these caring roles.²³⁷ For example, employers in the mining sector who have introduced family-friendly policies construct women as the people who undertake the bulk of family responsibilities, and view men as the ideal and “present” workers who are devoted to their work and have the ability and privilege to work very long shifts.²³⁸ This association of family-friendly policies with female employees may discourage some men from accessing these arrangements. Traits such as being caring and nurturing are deemed not masculine, and do not seem to “fit” with men’s roles.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the contemporary barriers women face in the mining sector, based on previous studies. In discussing the diverse literature, including media releases, previous research studies and company reports, this chapter aimed to show the current issues surrounding women’s underrepresentation in non-traditional roles. This chapter also reviewed company’s annual reports to determine whether any improvement has occurred over a four-year period. In addition, it analysed companies’ policies using the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 2, which assisted in determining whether established gender power relationships conceal discrimination, thereby rendering policies ineffective. This will be further explored in Chapter 6.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ AusIMM, “Increasing the Diversity of the Mining Industry Workforce—Strategies for Employers,” accessed April 21, 2014, <https://www.ausimm.com.au/content/docs/divers180803.pdf>.

Chapter 5: Women's Experiences Working in the Western Australian Iron Ore Mining Industry—Findings

The first part of this chapter presents the results and findings of the conducted surveys through graphs and charts to show the trends and issues affecting some women currently employed in mining. It also presents a literal interpretation of the interviews, including verbatim quotations. The second part of the chapter presents an interpretation of the results of the four individual interviews that were conducted. Based on the personal experiences of the participants, the findings of the surveys and interviews indicate factors that may account for the continued barriers to EEO in non-traditional roles, and the lack of overall female participation in the mining sector.

Explaining Women's Lack of Participation: Emerging Themes

Several themes emerged from the respondents' answers in relation to their experiences of the difficulties in progressing to more senior roles, and their perceptions of women's lack of participation in the mining sector. Given the relatively small size of the sample, the results may not be representative of all women's experiences in mining. However, they provide insight into issues that seem to remain present for some women and may indicate the experiences of other women given that previous research also finds a lack of women in mining jobs. As the survey questions were similar to what was asked during the interviews, the results are visually displayed together in tables to show the commonalities between themes. However, the surveys and interviews are discussed separately. Analysis of the results is based on the supporting evidence of verbatim quotations and my literal interpretation. The main research question was explored through the survey and interview themes. The themes and subthemes from the data are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Themes from the Survey and Interviews, Showing Overlap and Similarities between the Results

Themes	Subthemes
1. Some senior managers prefer hiring male employees over capable and competent female workers	<p>Lack of career development and training opportunities</p> <p>Male employees are promoted over more capable women</p> <p>Mentoring programs and initiatives are provided, yet some women have the responsibility to follow-up on mentors</p> <p>Some managers are not committed to improving female role models for women to follow</p> <p>Women must work harder than men to get ahead in mining</p>
2. Some senior staff and workmates foster and maintain negative work culture towards women	<p>Ingrained masculine work culture forces women to work harder to fit in</p> <p>Women must adapt to the culture</p>
3. Women are still a minority in non-traditional roles and some have considerable difficulty progressing to senior level positions	<p>Outdated attitudes have affected the number of women in non-traditional roles</p> <p>Traditional discourses influence the decisions some managers make when hiring female employees</p> <p>There is continued discrimination against women as a result of perceptions</p>
4. Policies are not enforced as effectively as required by some senior managers in companies, as some women continue to experience discrimination	<p>EEO policies do exist; however, senior management have not implemented them effectively at middle-management and company level</p>
5. Flexible working arrangements are provided by some companies, yet some women's care responsibilities do not reflect some senior managers' ideal of maintaining a "presentee-ism" culture	<p>Flexible working arrangements are available for women to access</p> <p>Caring responsibilities affect some women's participation in certain work practices, such as 13-hour shifts</p> <p>Flexible working arrangements construct some women as "unreliable" workers because they cannot perform full-time hours when required</p>

Themes	Subthemes
6. Family-friendly and childcare policies exist in some companies; however, some have not enforced these policies as effectively as required	Flexible working arrangement options exist, yet not all companies have policies to reflect this, or the policies are not implemented effectively Childcare policies exist in some companies; however, they are not applied efficiently by some companies to allow some female employees access to better care/flexibility options

Survey Results

The survey consisted of 28 questions that included demographic, closed-ended and some open-ended questions. The demographic and closed-ended questions asked respondents to select answers from a pre-determined set of options. The open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide their own answers in greater depth in the space provided.

The survey questions were divided into two parts. The first part requested a demographic profile, including the participants' age, years working in the mining industry and employment arrangements. The second part was divided into five sections. The first section asked what attracted the respondents to mining. The second section asked whether their current workplace provided certain entitlements and initiatives. The questions in the third section were designed to test their knowledge of the mining industry, such as whether there were enough female role models and whether there was a balance of males and females on work teams. The fourth section asked the respondents to answer "yes" or "no" to whether women are provided with certain initiatives, including whether there was access to EEO, satisfactory work-life balance options, opportunities for promotion and career advancement, and support for women returning to work after maternity leave. The fifth section included open-ended questions and asked respondents to detail what factors would encourage women to stay in mining, and to suggest improvements and ways to attract women to mining.

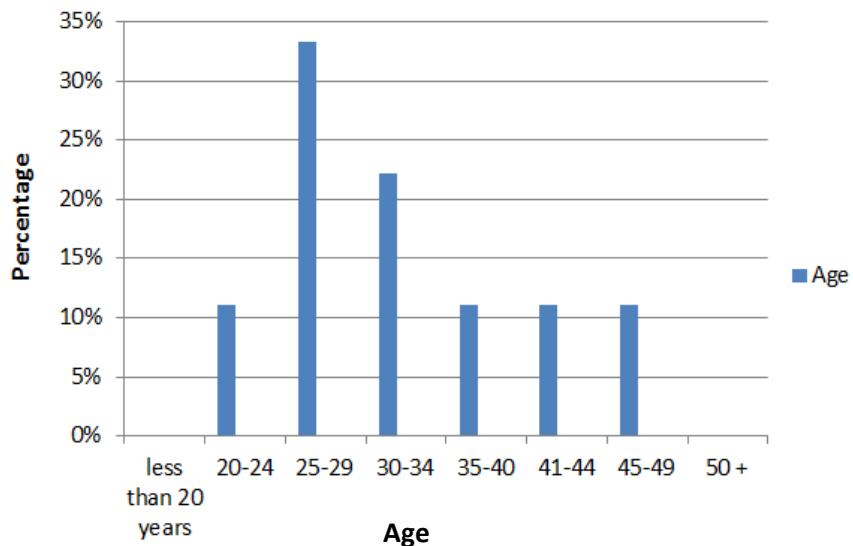
Part A: Demographic Questions

This section of the chapter presents descriptive data of the women who completed the survey. In the following analysis, while the survey was examined as a whole, the questions that emphasised the major findings are examined in greater depth.

According to Babbie, examining the survey as a whole makes “observations more explicit. It can also make summarizing data and interpreting the statistical aspects much easier … whilst also drawing conclusions effectively”.¹ The percentages in this section are rounded to the nearest whole number for ease of understanding.

Figure 5.1: Age of Respondents

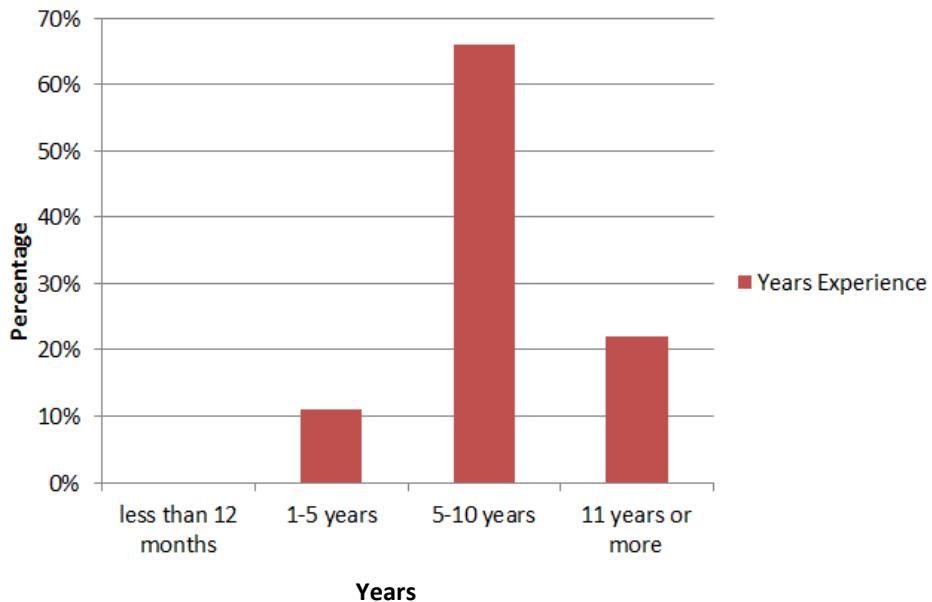
Q.1



The above graph shows that, of the nine completed surveys, 33 per cent of respondents were between the ages of 25 to 29, followed by 22 per cent in the 30 to 34 age group, and 11 per cent in each of the age groups of 20 to 24, 35 to 40, 41 to 44 and 45 to 49. The graph also shows that there were no women in the age range 50+, and no women younger than 20.

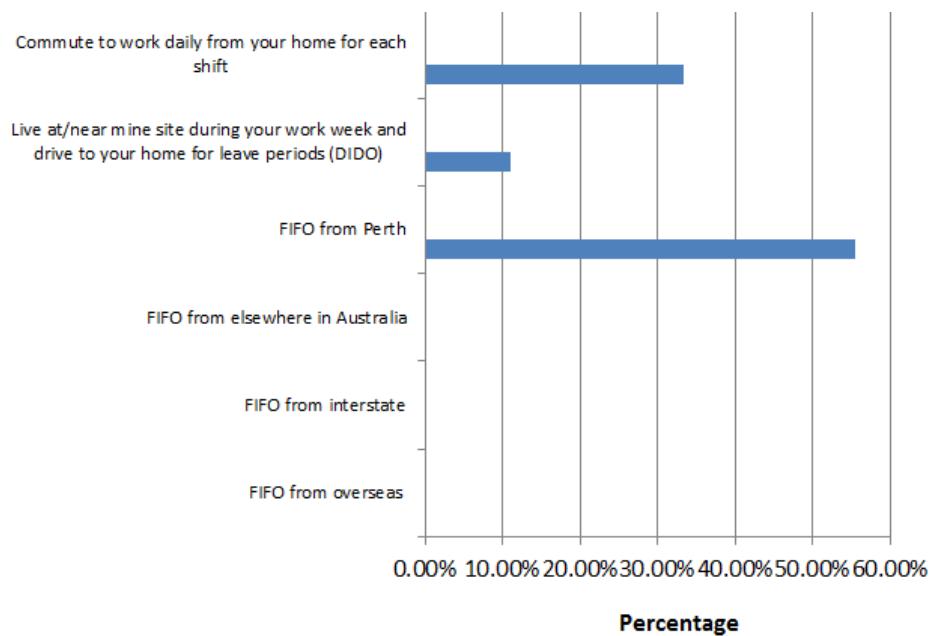
¹ Earl Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research*, 4th ed. (Belmont: Thomson and Wadsworth, 2008), 309.

Figure 5.2: Number of Years of Experience in the Mining Sector
Q.2



The above graph shows that two thirds (66 per cent) of the women surveyed had between five and 10 years of experience in the mining industry, 22 per cent had 11 or more years of experience, and 11 per cent had between one and five years of experience. No respondents had worked in the industry for less than 12 months.

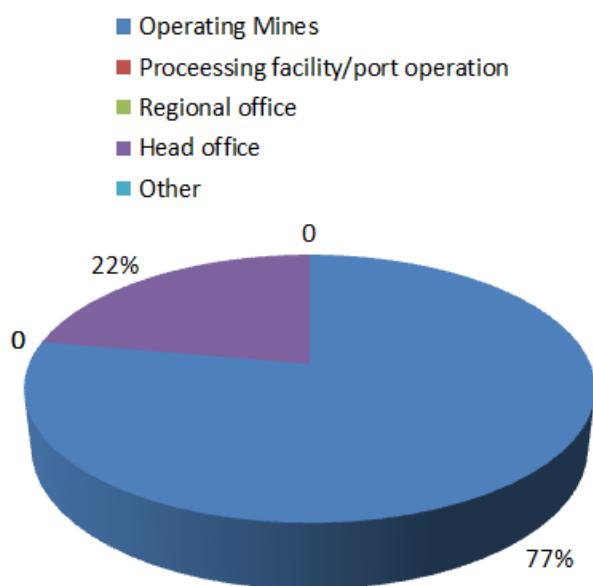
Figure 5.3: Respondents' Travel Arrangements
Q.5



The above graph indicates that 55 per cent of the workers surveyed were in FIFO arrangements to and from Perth, and 33 per cent commuted to work daily from home to each shift. Only 11 per cent lived near the site in DIDO arrangements. No respondents were in FIFO arrangements between the mine site and a centre outside Perth.

Figure 5.4: Current Area of Work

Q.7



The above chart above indicates that, of the nine respondents, 77 per cent were working in operating mines, and 22 per cent were working in head offices in the city. No women in the survey worked in the processing facility/port operation, or regional offices.

Figure 5.5: Types of Work in Mining Industry

Q.10



The above graph indicates that 55 per cent of the women undertook professional work, such as health and safety advisers and roles in HR; 22 per cent were in management roles; only 11 per cent worked in more traditionally female roles, such as administrative and clerical roles; and 11 per cent worked as machinery operators and drivers.

Regarding work patterns and hours:

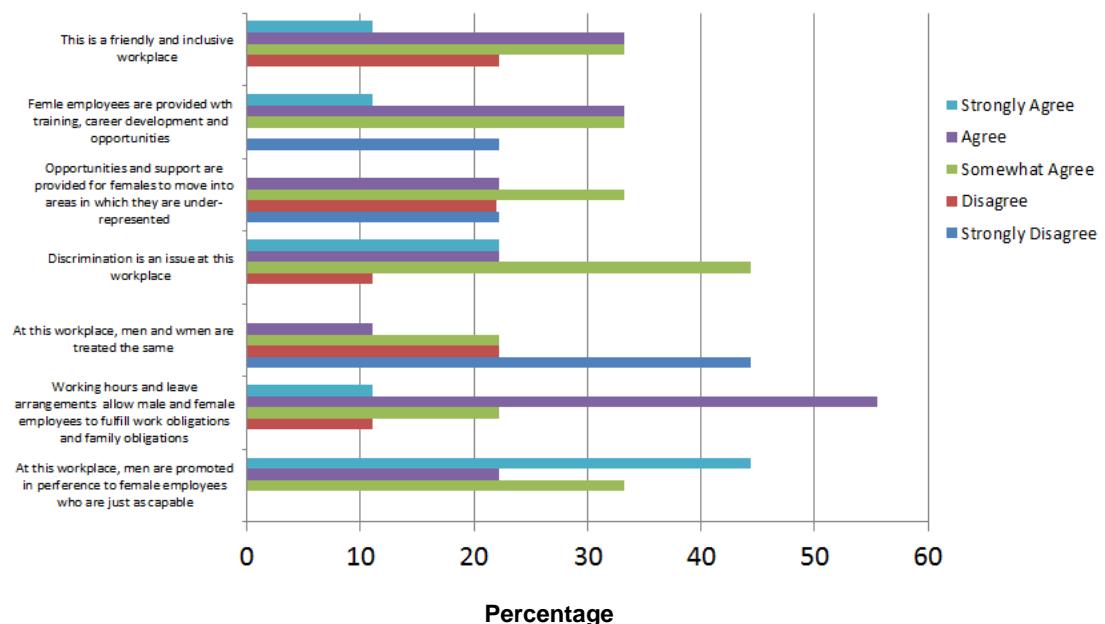
- all respondents worked full-time and were employed permanently
- 55 per cent worked in a FIFO arrangement
- 88 per cent did not work nights
- 44 per cent worked 12-hour shifts, while, at most, 22 per cent worked 13-hour or nine-hour shifts
- all stated that their direct supervisor/manager was male
- 22 per cent had dependent children, while 77 per cent did not have children
- all respondents stated that there was an uneven balance between males and females in the workplace.

Part B: Survey Questions

The following outlines the second part of the survey. These questions were framed to indicate issues the survey respondents were experiencing in their current workplace; their knowledge of any barriers in the mining industry overall; and whether they received the kind of support that would give them EEO for jobs, promotions and combining work and family responsibilities. The results are summarised as follows.

Figure 5.6: In Your Current Workplace, How Much Do You Agree or Disagree with the Following Statements?

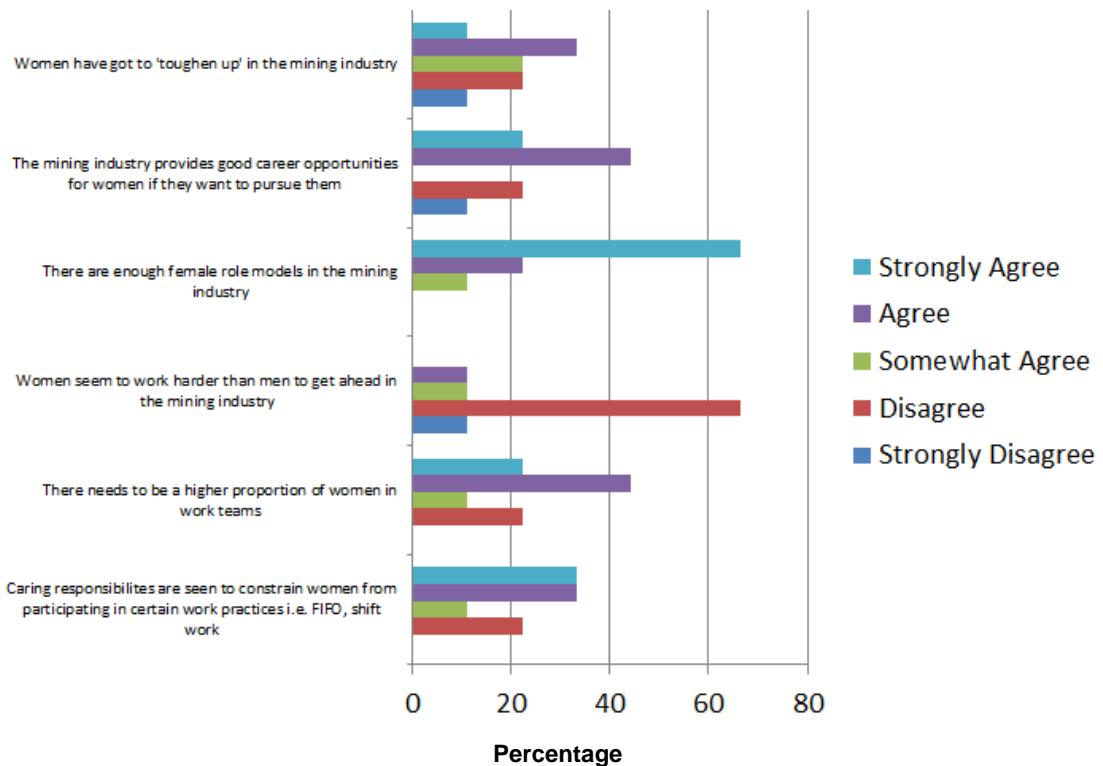
Q.24



The above graph indicates that some women faced issues of discrimination in their workplace. Overall, 44 per cent of respondents strongly disagreed that women and men are treated the same. Forty-four per cent strongly agreed that men are promoted in preference to women who are just as capable, indicating overt discrimination. The most interesting aspect of the graph is that 44 per cent somewhat agreed that discrimination is an issue. However, 33 per cent stated that there are adequate opportunities for women to move into areas where they are underrepresented. Contrary to the trend, 55 per cent of the employees felt that they were provided with working arrangements that enabled them to balance work and family responsibilities.

Figure 5.7: Focusing on What You Know about the Mining Industry in General, How Much Do You Agree or Disagree with the Following Statements?

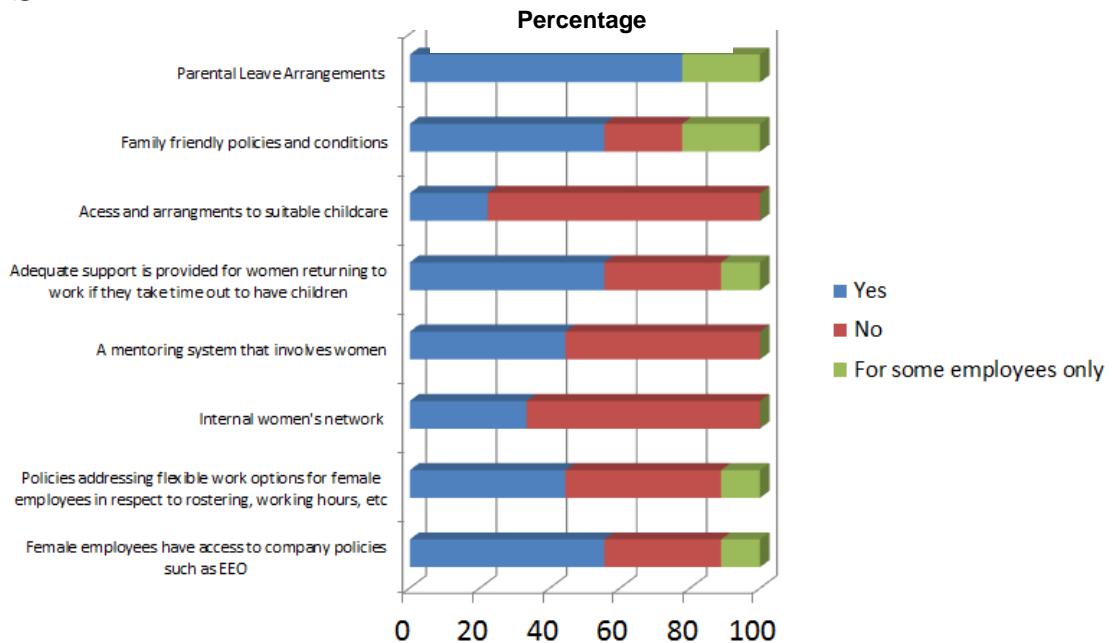
Q.24



The above graph indicates that most respondents had a negative opinion of the mining industry, particularly in terms of women's progress. From the responses, 66 per cent strongly agreed that women seem to work harder than men for their achievements to be recognised and to move ahead in the mining industry. Further, 66 per cent strongly disagreed that there are enough female role models. Another 33 per cent strongly agreed that caring responsibilities seem to constrain women's participation from certain work practices, such as FIFO and shift work.

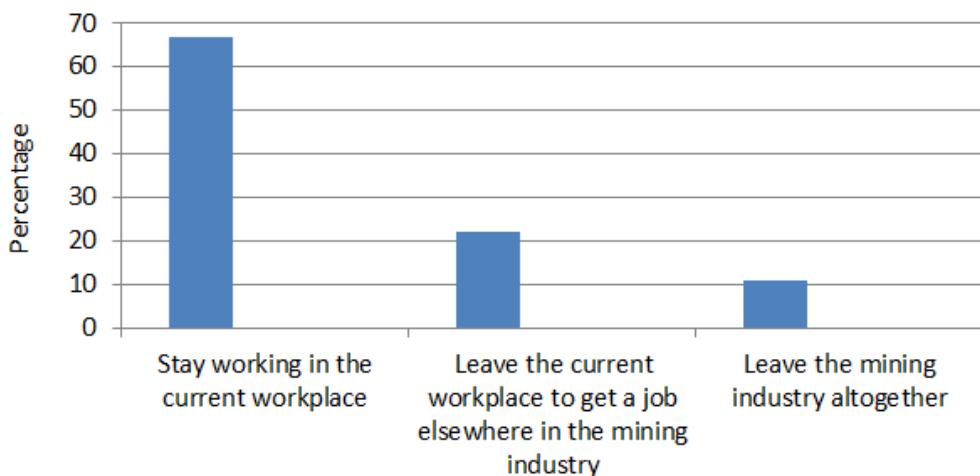
Figure 5.8: Is the Following Provided to Female Employees in Your Current Workplace?

Q.25



The above graph shows the extent to which female employees are provided support and mentoring in their current workplace. Of the results above, 77 per cent of the respondents believed that, in general, women are not provided with adequate childcare, 55 per cent believed that women are not involved in a supportive mentoring system to enable their progress, and 66 per cent indicated that there are no internal support networks that women can access. In addition, 44 per cent of the women indicated that there are no policies addressing flexible work options for female employees in respect to rostering, such as working hours.

Figure 5.9: In the Next Two Years, Which of the Following is Most Likely?
Q. 26



The above indicates that 66 per cent of women surveyed will stay working in their current workplace. Another 22 per cent stated that they may leave their current workplace and seek a job elsewhere in the mining industry, while only 11 per cent stated that they may leave altogether. The reasons for women's decisions to move elsewhere or leave altogether are outlined in the answers to the following questions.

Question 26 (b) asked the respondents to provide reasons for their answer to the above question. The respondents who indicated that they wished to stay with their current employer gave the following reasons:

- they had a good roster
- they wished to complete a traineeship to gain further skills and knowledge
- they knew the people with whom they worked
- they had invested time with the company.

Those who indicated they wished to move elsewhere in the mining industry stated that they were affected by:

- discriminatory practices (men given preference for things such as promotion)
- women not being provided with career opportunities and training
- the lack of support for women with caring responsibilities

Those who wanted to leave the industry altogether stated that it was due to:

- discrimination
- the resistance of some managers to finding ways to improve diversity

- the lack of opportunities for women's career advancement.

The final two questions in the section were designed to give the respondents an opportunity to express ways they believed the workplace could be made more accommodating. Question 27 asked: "In your opinion, what factors would encourage women to stay in the mining industry long term?" The following issues were identified as the most significant by the respondents:

- men are promoted instead of women with higher qualifications
- maternity and flexible working arrangement policies do not exist in some companies
- there is a lack of career development, particularly for younger and more recent graduates
- there is clear discrimination in terms of which employees are preferred for certain kinds of roles.

Question 28 asked: "What improvements would you like to see in the mining industry specifically aimed at attracting more women?" In response to this, the following comments were made about the current situation women are experiencing:

- there are few career opportunities for women in areas where they are underrepresented
- there are not enough female role models
- the "macho" culture tends to make women feel excluded
- sexism is a major issue that is not resolved by some managers
- there are not enough women in non-traditional roles, such as supervisors, CEOs and managers
- more should be done to assist working mothers in the mining industry.

Analysis of Part One and Part Two of the Surveys

The survey results indicate two different trends. First, they indicate that those who had dependent children (22 per cent) and were working in non-traditional areas (11 per cent) experienced difficulty accessing suitable flexible working arrangements when required. The respondents stated that their companies did not have in place

policies to assist women with caring responsibilities, indicating that some companies are not ensuring they provide flexible arrangements. The results show that women with familial obligations were not satisfied because they were not provided appropriate or adequate arrangements. Only those with no familial responsibilities expressed satisfaction with working arrangements.

Respondents with dependent children indicated that they would like to see women provided with support to progress through the mining industry. The results indicate that women who have children are more likely to experience discrimination and be exposed to employers' perceptions that certain workers should align with the "proper" worker status. Both those with children and those without stated that being involved in FIFO arrangements is difficult for working mothers. Overt discrimination and lack of policies to rectify this, alongside a problematic work culture, were all cited as barriers for women caring for young children in all areas of work (see the results from Part Two, discussed earlier in this chapter).

The second explanation of the survey results suggests an interesting trend. It shows that one third of the respondents were between the ages of 25 to 29 and working in male-dominated areas of work, such as geology and management. This one third stated that they would like to have better career development opportunities because they were at an age where they were more career oriented than family oriented. In addition, women in this age range were mostly in FIFO arrangements, which suited their lifestyle because they did not have any dependent children. There were no women in management in this age group, and 55 per cent of respondents in this group were employed in professional, full-time (and continuing contract) roles.

All respondents stated that their direct supervisor was male in their current workplace, and those in the 25 to 29 age group stated that there was a disproportionate number of women in non-traditional roles, such as labouring and trades. Their responses to both the closed- and open-ended questions indicated that the workplace culture, limited mentoring and persistence of discrimination were issues they believed created barriers to long-term retention. However, the survey results indicate that the issues outlined by female respondents may be indicative of other similar experiences throughout mining industry. This analysis shows that

women both with and without dependent children raised similar concerns about the lack of career development, men being promoted in preference to women, and problems associated with working in a masculine work environment.

Survey Findings

In Question 23, 44 per cent of respondents strongly agreed that, at their workplace, men were promoted in preference to equally capable female employees. The results indicate that, in the employees' current workplaces, women's promotional opportunities were constrained. One respondent stated, "The women I work with are far more qualified in outperforming males ... [but] they are frequently overlooked for promotions". This indicates that some female employees are less likely to be promoted than male employees, despite having the essential skills and abilities to undertake the task or role. It also indicates that not only are some talented female employees constantly sidelined in preference to male employees, but they are also overlooked for promotions, despite having the same skills and knowledge as their male counterparts.

Question 23 asked whether discrimination was a problem. Forty-four per cent of women somewhat agreed. While the respondents were divided on this issue, the open-ended questions confirmed instances in which the respondents had experienced substantial levels of direct and indirect discrimination. One respondent believed that the managers in her company held outdated perceptions about women and their roles, and that there was "existing sexism and misogyny from the managers and those in higher positions. A lot of the female graduates come into the industry with career aspirations ... however they quickly realise that there is no opportunity for progression". This suggests that some individuals in supervisory roles are likely to hold attitudes and assumptions about women's place in mining that result in an inequitable workplace.

Companies are legally required to implement policies that align with anti-discrimination legislation, such as the *Equal Employment Act 1984*. Although 55 per cent of those surveyed indicated that they had access to EEO policies, their responses indicated examples of discrimination experienced in different ways. Most

respondents revealed that their (male) managers still had “preconceived ideas about women and their suitability in the mining sector … many of them still possess sexist attitudes towards women”. Thus, despite the legal requirement of companies to shape policies based on legislation, some managers apparently retain gender-based assumptions about women’s abilities. These assumptions can determine whether these managers would recommend women for promotion or other forms of advancement.

To rectify this issue, some respondents commented that they would like to see effective policies introduced and implemented to eradicate discrimination. They believed that this would allow more women to move up the organisational ladder. As one respondent commented:

I would like to see fair work policies applied … I would like education on sexism and discrimination towards minorities … the framework is there … [however,] it is still merely lip service and has not been put into practice.

This respondent believed that while some companies have existing policies, they are not being implemented or pursued. This response suggests that some managers are not well informed about what constitutes discrimination, and attention should be focused on improving discrimination awareness.

Question 24 asked whether women have to “toughen up” to work in the mining industry, seeking their thoughts on working in a male-dominated industry. One third of respondents agreed that some companies promote a masculine work environment. They generally identified the workplace culture as unwelcoming and unsuitable, and found that they needed to work hard to fit in. Despite policies and strategies that are meant to support and encourage workplace diversity, one respondent explained that there is a “very present and existing ‘boys club’ … if you don’t play by the rules, you are clearly targeted”. Another respondent cited examples of the work culture being very strongly male dominated, as shown through “swearing and crude jokes by male workers”. As such, the respondents did not feel that they belonged in a group

comprised mostly of men, which favoured a masculine culture that marginalised women.

In Question 24, despite the fact that 44 per cent of respondents agreed that their employer offered career development opportunities, the responses to this open-ended question reveal a much broader issue for women. The respondents who were young, who were career oriented and who had no children stated that their companies provided opportunities for women to develop. However, regarding managerial roles and other senior roles, they stated that companies should provide “better professional development opportunities … as there are not many women in supervisory roles or above in the mining industry”. One respondent revealed that while there are many women in professional roles, she believes that they are not provided with development prospects, and that men are favoured in accessing such opportunities. Further, the participants expressed the belief that women who are career focused are not provided with the opportunity to progress, despite their proficiency being equal to that of men.

The responses to Question 24 indicate that 66 per cent agreed that there were not enough female role models in the mining industry. No respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the mining industry had enough role models for women to follow or emulate. Most respondents in the youngest age range felt the mining sector had an unsupportive work culture, with no female examples to showcase diverse female talent. One respondent stated that the mining sector should find ways to create “an awareness campaign to break down common stereotypes about mining and how conditions are ‘unsuitable’ for women”. In addition, some respondents suggested that companies in general should do more to attract younger employees, and that companies “showcasing career paths of highly accomplished women would help to make it [the mining industry] personally accessible to other females”. A few respondents acknowledged that, despite the slight improvement in numbers of women in overall work roles, they were aware of a “limited [number of] women above the professional level such as senior management, supervisory roles and above”. Based on their personal observations, the participants indicated that young and experienced women who aspire to these levels find it difficult because they have

inadequate examples to follow. The respondents believed that a lack of access to EEO restricts their career progression.

The respondents confirmed that no role models existed in their workplaces, and 55 per cent said that their current workplace lacked an effective mentoring system. Mentoring is one way to ensure that women receive appropriate training during important learning stages, and are provided with guidance and support.² In addition, 55 per cent of respondents said there was no internal women's network in their company, which suggests that not enough encouragement is given to women to advance.

In Question 24, the respondents were asked whether they thought women had to work harder than men to get ahead in the mining industry, with two thirds of respondents strongly agreeing that this was the case. No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. This indicates that their efforts are not as recognised as men's, even if they dedicate themselves in the same way as men. Interestingly, in Question 23, 55 per cent of respondents believed that they were able to negotiate suitable arrangements with employers to enable them to balance their work and family care. However, when they were asked whether caring responsibilities were seen to constrain women from participating in certain work practices, three of the nine respondents strongly agreed that for some women in mining, having family responsibilities created issues in undertaking certain work practices and roles.

My survey findings further indicate that some women with caring responsibilities are struggling to fully participate in the industry, with one respondent believing that "the attraction is there in terms of pay and roster. If they want to keep women in the industry ... improvement is needed for those that have children"—an indication of the lack of accessibility to the arrangements that some women require. A second respondent commented on the need to provide more assistance for employees' work and family responsibilities and for some companies to have a better "understanding

² Tara Landgraff, "Mentoring the Way to Lift Participation," *ABC News*, June 4, 2012, accessed August 11, 2013, www.abc.net.au/site-archive/rural/wa/content/2012/06/s3517804.htm.

from managers on ‘MUM’ shifts (9.00 am to 3.00 pm), with more assistance given to those returning to work after having a child”. These responses show that, while there was a willingness to provide flexible working arrangements, they were of the view that flexibility tends to attach a negative stigma to some women who cannot always be at work when required because of caring duties.

In Question 25, the respondents were asked whether childcare arrangements were provided. Seventy-seven per cent of respondents stated that their current workplace did not provide adequate childcare arrangements, while only 22 per cent stated that their employer had provided some form of childcare arrangements, albeit very limited. Most respondents commented that affordable and reliable childcare arrangements are necessary if some companies are to retain or recruit female workers. One stated that it would be sensible for companies to have an “integrated childcare system for women working on site”. Another stated that the “residential town should provide childcare and other facilities for women to access”. The women in this study commented on the difficulty other women had accessing essential childcare, in both regional and remote areas. This includes those who can access childcare in close proximity to the mine sites. In Question 25, 55 per cent of respondents stated that there were no policies implemented in their current company to address flexible working options for female employees in respect to rostering and working hours. As will be further discussed in Chapter 6, the “ideal” worker has been socially constructed as being the male. Thus, some work patterns are not associated with primary caring responsibilities because this is still seen as a woman’s role. This view at an individual employer level suggests that flexible working arrangements do not reflect their idea of what it means to be a dedicated worker because “caring” is considered a separate institution to that of work—particularly in a male-dominated industry. This dichotomy of care and work indicates that few companies have policies that address this issue and those that do may not be enforcing them as effectively as required.

While the surveys demonstrated that women in the mining industry continue to face barriers, the respondents also noted some improvements. Thirty-three per cent agreed that opportunities are provided for females to move into areas in which they are underrepresented, and that companies do encourage women to participate in non-

traditional roles. However, it should be noted that the respondents who expressed this belief were working in traditional female roles such as human resources, administration and public relations. The respondents who were working in managerial, trades and labouring roles expressed that they find it difficult to enter and progress within male-dominated roles. This could be an indication that companies are not allowing large numbers of women to enter traditionally male-dominated roles and that the culture in some companies has not adequately changed to accommodate female workers. It also demonstrates that the respondents working in roles traditionally associated with men experience the least satisfaction in moving into and progressing in such roles.

Survey Summary

This section of the chapter has outlined the main issues that emerged from the survey results, with the issues affecting women both with and without children. The lack of career development and lack of women in non-traditional roles at supervisory level and above were identified as barriers to long-term employment for the respondents in this study. In addition, the respondents stated that their promotional prospects were reduced, with men seeming to be promoted in preference to capable women.

The open-ended questions allowed the respondents to express their thoughts freely. Most stated that discrimination is rife in the mining industry and that, while anti-discrimination policies exist and women can access them, they were of the view that these policies have not rectified the problem. This indicates that the limited number of women employed in the mining industry stems at least partly from discrimination. Most respondents indicated that more flexible working arrangements and access to childcare facilities in their companies might help increase work opportunities for women with young children.

Interview Findings

This section discusses the results of the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with four of the survey respondents. Two of the interviewees were in the 20 to 24 age group, one was in the 25 to 44 age group, and one was in the 45 to 49

age group. All were FIFO workers with an average of seven years of experience in the mining industry. Three had no children and one had one child. All interviewees worked in non-traditional work roles, with only one identifying herself as working in a professional role. As previously explained in this chapter, data saturation may not have been reached, but because of the time constraints imposed when completing a master's degree, it was necessary to progress with the data available. Data collection and analysis ceased in this study when no new themes emerged. To preserve anonymity and protect the identity of the interviewees, pseudonyms have been used in place of their real names.

Some Managers Prefer Hiring Male Employees to Hiring Capable Female Workers

One theme was that some managers' perceptions and attitudes contribute to hindering women's opportunities in the mining sector. Some managers make decisions regarding the recruitment and personal development of female employees, which affects their progression. Despite companies endeavouring to implement EEO for women, an embedded organisational culture has not been disrupted by some companies, which has allowed some managers to hire a certain type of worker that they believe deserves to be promoted and to advance in the mining sector.

The subthemes were developed from a set of sub-questions that were asked during the interview. The interviewees identified limited career development and training opportunities as barriers to their progress. Career development is generally seen as a way to advance women and support the acquisition of new skills, while gaining experience. Managers are responsible for ensuring that all employees are provided access to career development opportunities. Each of the interviewees noted that her company had endeavoured to create initiatives to enable progression, but all interviewees were dissatisfied with the level of training provided by their current employers. "Pat"—an engineer with over 10 years of experience, working in a management role—said that her line manager was not interested in offering any career development that would assist her:

In the 18 months I've been working for [name of person withheld] ... they have not sent me on one

course ... I said, "I'd like to book a course". They said, "They've been cancelled".

Another interviewee "Pip", who had worked as a hole blast driller for over five years, stated she had experienced similar issues in terms of accessing adequate career development and training. She expressed disappointment that, even though her company had devised a traineeship program, she had not been offered satisfactory career development and training opportunities by her manager:

They [the company] really have tried ... They were pretty good to actually give me a go ... [T]he only thing is the traineeship that went for six months. [Other than] the traineeship, we're being put through safety and leadership courses ... that's about all really. There was no additional support from our manager.

The above comments indicate that these women were not given as much training or career development from their managers as they expected. Further, they were not provided support that focused on ways of improving their skills and knowledge.

Despite companies being responsible for devising career development plans, line managers are usually required to assist employees with their career plans, and play an important role in helping employees with their career path prospects. They are obliged to initiate regular discussions with employees and suggest the most suitable forms of training and career development based on skills, qualifications and experience. Despite the interviewees acknowledging that there were some company initiatives developed, none were satisfied with the level of training and career development opportunities offered. As Pip explained, her manager was not interested in providing greater support or guidance while trainees were undertaking the program. While a training program was initially devised by her company in which she was meant to complete a log book, she ended up undertaking most of the work herself, with very little support or guidance by her direct manager:

They [the company] gave us log books ... but the people in head office didn't communicate to site that we had log books and, after a while, when I hadn't heard anything, I just took my log book to the project manager and said, "Oh, look, I've got this and this is

what I am supposed to do and it's got a time line", and he's like, "Oh, we haven't heard anything about it". The program is good ... but it's a lot of taking on yourself to make sure that it happens. Now it's been a year and no one from head office has actually called me up to say, "Where are you with your program?"

According to a particular company's policy, the level of career development provided by employers must have "highly structured systems, including regular reviews and good guidance and support to all employees" to enable employees to progress.³ However, according to White, Cox and Cooper, while men and women have different career trajectories, career development models are mostly tailored to suit male employees.⁴ This was certainly the case for the interviewees. For example, "Angela", who completed her graduate program as a health and safety adviser and had been undertaking FIFO work for over two years, revealed that her direct manager put her on one particular program to initiate progress at a graduate level. She noted that she and her manager had only one meeting and that this one meeting did not focus on long-term career plans. The all-important development opportunities were reserved for male employees:

There is no structured plan of "this is what you should do; you're at this level, so this is what you should do to build on your knowledge", and that sort of thing. We don't have any of those things in place. I didn't really get career development support. Now, since I've started as an adviser in January, I've really only had one performance development meeting, but it wasn't much. The important performance development training was given to the boys.

While Angela had received only one discussion regarding career development, she drew attention to the fact that male employees were privileged by being provided more important opportunities, while others missed out. Interestingly, she noted that there were no career development initiatives implemented by her current company. Similarly, "Suzanna", who had worked for her current company for more than five years as a geologist and had extensive previous work experience, said that, even

³ Reflective Practice, "Attraction and Retention of Women," 39.

⁴ Ibid, 41.

though the company was somewhat supportive of offering training, some supervisors were uninterested in offering support to female employees: “It really depends on the supervisor for being provided training because I’ve worked for supervisors who are unwilling to let women go to training”. The interviewees’ comments suggest that some senior employers in companies perceive women as undeserving of career development, which creates barriers to women’s progress. Evidently, the interviewees experience indicates that there is discrimination in terms of who should be provided more career development.

Acquiring formal training was a particular difficulty, with some interviewees indicating that they were sidelined from progression opportunities. When asked whether female workers received any formal training or were sent on training courses, most made clear that this was not the case:

The current managers are all male and, at that level, I don’t see a lot of women [trained]. [T]raining was seen as a privilege and like a reward. So if you were a high performer, then you would be able to go to training.
(Suzanna, geologist)

Yes, [there was not] one female [sent on a training course]; it was only men. (Pat, manager)

Both Pat and Suzanna perceived that discrimination remains a prevalent issue in their workplace, and stated that only men are provided adequate training, while they were overlooked:

Before this [training] program, I wasn’t put on anything. But everyone else, like senior drillers or males with leadership qualities, they’d be put on safety and traineeship courses, but I wasn’t put on anything.
(Pip, hole blast driller)

Clearly, they believed that they were discriminated against in terms of training opportunities. Pip noted that, before the company devised the training program, there was no intention to provide women with training. Pip believed that managers tailored their training initiatives to advance male employees, who they perceived to be more

deserving than female employees. As a consequence, some female employees were overlooked for potential training opportunities to expand their existing skills.

The same bias was experienced with regard to promotion. Promotions are important to advancing a career, and many companies have implemented strategies to increase female employees' access to promotion opportunities. However, Pat stated that, even when some women reach managerial level, they may go no further because of prejudice, and may find themselves undermined on a daily basis. She stated that, despite her talent and relevant skills to undertake the role, she was not considered for promotion: "In this position [as a manager] that I have been in for 12 months, I have proven myself very capable ... [but I am] still not promoted".

All interviewees noted that they always had to perform consistently above average in order to be regarded as equal to their male counterparts. Angela pointed out that she knew of other female employees who had worked for their employer for a substantial number of years, but were denied the opportunity to be considered for a promotion. She stated:

I have had discussions with these girls, and I've heard of females in my office that have been working for years and have not got a promotion like the guys have. Another female worker who had been onsite for a while was not considered worthy by some seniors to be promoted. She talked about how she would have been capable. She said only men were promoted in favour of women.

Suzanna stated that women in her workplace had questioned why women were overlooked, and explained that gender can play a role in whether women are chosen to be promoted:

There has been some discussion in my department as to why women cannot be promoted. If I was chosen on my gender I would feel as though I had to work hard to earn that title ... I guess that, being promoted, you'd almost had to show them [managers] that you were worth it in the first place.

Some believed their progression is restricted by their managers perceiving them as “unsuited” for promotion based on their gender.

Mentoring and networking are other important factors that contribute to an employee’s chances of advancement.⁵ An effective mentor can prove crucial in the development of an individual’s career, and give a sense of satisfaction with career choice.⁶ However, all interviewees stated that, although their company had implemented a mentoring program at the commencement of their employment, their direct manager did not arrange for another mentor or follow-up their progress after this initial period. In addition, if a mentor left, he or she was not replaced:

They [the company] put us on a mentoring program [through Women in Mining—Western Australia] that went for about six months. The program has finished and I still talk to my mentor, but that’s just on my own ... he didn’t offer anything else. (Pip, hole blast driller)

I had a mentor. Then the person left the company, so I didn’t get a new mentor ... we only had one meeting with them. (Angela, health and safety adviser)

I did have a mentor, then [he] left ... he moved to another asset and he never followed up getting another mentor. (Suzanna, geologist)

The interviewees thought that they would have greatly benefited in their learning and development had their mentoring been extended. As direct managers are responsible for ensuring the efficacy of such programs, this has not been translated into practice. It was noted by Suzanna that the company had offered a mentoring program:

At the beginning, yes. Direct supervisors and managers are responsible for increasing women’s access to effective training schemes. A mentoring program is provided to move those up the ladder through direct supervision to bump up their progress. Male employees at all levels were given a mentor early on in their careers, and followed up with one [program], without them having to ask.

⁵ Ibid, 39.

⁶ Pattenden, “Women in Mining,” 32.

It was confirmed that some received mentoring, yet all interviewees stated that managers often made no effort to provide ongoing mentoring, even if it was their responsibility to ensure all employees were able to benefit from this. The onus was on some of the women to find a mentor if they required it.

Having enough role models to follow can strongly influence an individual's choice to remain with their company. My interviews were not designed to explore this area in depth because this was not a primary question. However, it is worth discussing because it was identified by all interviewees as a problem. Some interviewees said that they would like to see more women in non-traditional roles, particularly in senior management and supervisory roles. Despite a push by companies to increase the number of women overall in non-traditional roles, some interviewees believed that having more female supervisors would encourage women to stay long term with their employer:

I'd definitely like [to see] more women in management or in higher supervisory roles and above levels ... because it's really all male dominated and that's from a site level. (Angela, health and safety adviser)

They also commented on the few women in higher levels. As Suzanna explained, the issue of women's underrepresentation is very evident in management roles in her company:

When I look around, I see a good representation of women in my department ... say up to a professional level. But I can see above me up to superintendent manager level that that is not a fair representation of the total population of people with that qualification. I think that we need to do more to get more high profile women exposed, revealing what their motivations are and what their road blocks are.

Suzanna was aware that women are overrepresented in higher positions, where there are normally high numbers of women, such as HR, geology and public relations. However, she does not believe capable women are given the opportunity to move

into areas where they are underrepresented. This highlights some women's minority status in many areas of the mining industry.

Pip believed that some women who are experienced and skilled enough to reach top management levels are aware that, if they apply for non-traditional roles, their chances of success will be limited:

Given there is a big push now for women to be in mining [from company initiatives], more women are needed in middle and top management. I mean, I don't want to be a hole blast driller all my life, but then you know if you had more girls around, you are more likely to receive promotions because at the moment, it is like, "She's the only girl we've got; why would she be leading hand?" I think more women in those higher roles [management and supervisory roles] would be helpful. (Pip, hole blast driller)

Pip believed that, because she occupied a minority status in her current role, her opportunities of being considered for senior duties were restricted.

Some Senior Staff and Workmates Foster and Maintain a Negative Work Culture to Which Women Learn to Adapt

While the interviewees stated that the work culture was not itself a deterrent to working in the mining industry, they felt that they needed to work exceptionally hard to "fit" within the established masculine work culture. For women in blue-collar roles, constructing a positive identity can be challenging because their broader social identities as women are juxtaposed against their masculine work environments. All interviewees highlighted the complications of their bringing feminine traits into a manly work culture:

It depends on what sort of female you are ... if you are "girlie" girl with a weakness or she doesn't fit in or she comes across as being too feminine and not being able to do her job properly, they will bully her until she quits. (Pip, hole blast driller)

Others explained that if they did display their femininity when undertaking their roles, they felt excluded and unwelcome because of how their male colleagues perceived their social identity. Most commented that they were seen as “women”, rather than individual people. Even though some were never directly told they did not fit because they were female, the common perception ingrained culturally was used to make them feel out of place. Most disturbingly, these opinions also came from managers, supervisors and superintendents onsite:

There is an attitude of “harden up princess”—that sort of feeling where you can be vulnerable ... I don’t think that anyone has said that to me directly, but it is kind of like an indirect statement. It’s a perception and attitude from those higher up. (Suzanna, geologist)

Going out into the field ... I don’t know if they look at you and think, “What do you think of her?” Also, being so young and a girl and being female and stuff ... that is also in my head as I am going out onsite. (Angela, health and safety adviser)

Another interesting observation came from Pip, who noted that her workmates also tend to perpetuate the culture that creates a work environment unsuitable for women:

Sometimes it’s the two-way banter stuff that can offend. For instance, we were on night shift once and someone got on the two-way [banter] and said, “Real drillers have penises”.

This perception is held by the dominant group (both numerically and authoritatively), who create an exclusive environment where minorities are marginalised.⁷ Most interviewees stated that they did not need to be told that they did not belong—the work environment made them feel like they were outsiders.

In order to be accepted in a masculine work environment, most resorted to using strategies to fit in. Most interviewees stated that they started to behave like the men to succeed in their current workplace. They highlighted how they needed to

⁷ Rutherford, *Women’s Work*, 23.

masquerade as being “one of the boys” to be more accepted, otherwise there were implications if one did not adapt to the culture:

You have to laugh at their jokes, you have to make them feel like they’re amazing … you just sort of feed their ego. I laugh at their jokes and just accept the two-way banter … [I]f you don’t, they will ostracise you if you get upset over little things … [A]lso if you don’t swear or drink, then they won’t make an effort to get along with you. In terms of the role, I’ve had to work really hard to make them respect me. (Pip, hole blast driller)

My personality has become much more direct, more gruff, more coarse … it is unbelievable how much I have had to mould my personality to fit in. The thing that keeps your longevity is being something different … which is the real struggle. (Pat, manager)

One of the main issues in working in such an environment is that these women constantly have to challenge their female identity if they are to be an accepted member of the dominant group. This involves using strategies such as concealing aspects of their femininity and constructing a more masculine identity to survive.

Companies and managers have a responsibility to ensure that a female-friendly work culture is established so that women feel accepted in the workplace. When asked whether the company had made an effort to promote a work culture that is accepting of all women, most believed that more of an effort could be made, even though their company had attempted to rectify the work culture. The interviewees stated that a common perception was held among some senior managers and companies that workplaces would operate better with an entirely male workforce onsite:

They [the company] try to be helpful, I mean like with this training program … getting us girls to be more involved is good … but then they only made the effort when I was going to quit. I’m not sure if our HR team or male managers are knocking girls back … [I]f they really wanted a more balanced workforce, they would make more of an effort. (Pip, hole blast driller)

Primarily, in some work roles, such as labouring, you will find only men. It depends on what site you work

on ... I think that it's still the "us and them" approach and some managers and companies think that they work better with men. (Suzanna, geologist)

This indicates some companies would rather operate primarily with an all-male work force, with such attitudes stemming from those individuals who make decisions in terms of who should be hired and recruited.

Women Are a Minority in Non-traditional Roles and Some Have Difficulty Progressing to Senior Positions—Discrimination Remains an Issue

Most of the interviewees stated that they were not deterred from entering the mining industry or working in non-traditional roles. Perhaps this indicates that company initiatives and strategies to allow more women into these roles are having some success. Several of the interviewees confirmed that on the whole, mining companies allow female employees to move into these areas only under particular circumstances such as in periods of labour shortage during a mining boom. Suzanna stated that, while her application was initially rejected several times, she was successful in gaining a job as a geologist during the mining boom, although she thought that her success was partly due to the shortage of geologists. She stated that the company would accept "practically any one at the time, who had a relevant qualification and if you were willing to do the work". In 2008, the Western Australian mining sector was experiencing one of the two more recent mining booms, which saw it attract many workers to diverse roles.⁸ At the time, there was a major push for women to be in the mining industry, with many companies stating that there was a skills shortage and that more labour was needed to rectify the negative effect it was having on productivity.⁹ Suzanna stated that while some companies were eager to increase the number of employees across all work areas, particularly in non-traditional areas of work, where there were very few female employees.

A positive effect of the mining boom was to attract a much younger demographic to the mining industry, particularly through the graduate program. Angela, who

⁸ Andrews, "Challenging Boundaries," 347.

⁹ PwC, "Mind the Gap," 6.

completed the two-year graduate program, stated that she did not find it difficult to find work as a health and safety adviser soon after completing her degree at university:

It wasn't too difficult. After uni[versity], I just applied for some jobs [with the] company I am with now. It wasn't like I had finished uni and was waiting, looking for work. I pretty much went from uni straight into the graduate [program]. It was exciting starting in the industry.

Some of the interviewees stated that there is an overall push from some mining companies to recruit more women, particularly in male-dominated areas. Pip, who had been in the mining industry for more than five years, stated that the labour shortage during one period meant it was not as difficult for women to gain entry into mining, particularly in male-dominated employment areas and that the company offered some opportunities for her to commence work with them: "It got offered to me ... three of the places were given to girls. It was me and two other girls who were shot firers and the other two were boys". Pip's example suggests that some companies are generally encouraging and supportive in offering opportunities for female employees to advance in their field, but only in particular circumstances. While it can be stated that women are not always deterred from entering male-dominated roles and that certain circumstances accommodate an increase in the number of women working in particular roles, finding such work in other circumstances is generally difficult. For example, Pat stated that she found it extremely difficult to find work as a manager and to progress within that role. It appears that women working in roles associated with men and male characteristics, find it most difficult to progress and perform in their careers. Interviewees Pat and Pip performed (respectively) a managerial and a hole drill blasting role, which are considered very "blokey", while Suzanna (a health and safety inspector) and Angela (an engineer) were in roles considered to be more "suitable" to women and thus had a better overall representation of women.

Despite not being deterred from working in such roles, they believed that traditional perceptions from senior managers have created overt and indirect forms of discrimination that have detrimental effects on their progression and promotion opportunities. As the interviewees noted, women are still a very small minority in

non-traditional areas, particularly in senior, supervisory and management roles. Most noted that the time that women entered the mining industry was during a particular labour shortage, and there was no indication from the interviewees that a major female intake was occurring at present. This was expressed through the opinions of the interviewees, who had personally experienced discrimination from middle management within their company.

These female employees were well aware that few women worked onsite. Most of the interviewees stated that, even though a reasonable number of women were working in different roles, they remained a minority in non-traditional areas of work. They also revealed that they were conscious that this phenomenon was not limited to their company, but occurred across the mining industry. According to Suzanna, who had been working in the industry for more than five years:

I don't see a lot of females within my profession. I'm unsure to say at the unskilled level. I worked with quite a lot of women at the professional level; [however] at the labouring level there were no women ... [or] maybe one or two at the most.

Pip commented:

I would like to see more females in the drill and blast industry ... [T]here are so few of us ... every second person seems to be a female dump driver. I don't think you would find [many] in crushing or those sorts of jobs.

Others observed that it was unusual to see women in other roles, particularly in areas where men are mostly the overwhelming majority. Angela commented on the scarcity of women in senior management:

I really don't see a lot of women in supervisor roles or above. They [the company] were trying to get more women here, though still not enough. [W]e had a lady in management, but then she left and was replaced by three new members ... all of whom were male. There are managers in Perth offices and onsite and only one superintendent that's female.

Since only one female was appointed to the role of senior manager in Angela's company, this suggests that some women are neither encouraged nor trained to apply for senior roles. The interviewees in this study believed that women's minority status was due to the prevalence of attitudes held by some managers and supervisors, and not those of the company, who were encouraging women to move into senior roles. This has resulted in few women in management and skilled trade roles. As one interviewee explained, some managers' outmoded views have dictated the kinds of roles women and men work in:

Some definitely have that perception [that women do not belong in the mining industry]. Some of them are in management positions. Those from the top [senior management] are encouraging, but those in middle management are so old school and [progress] is stopped there. (Suzanna, geologist)

She further elaborated, giving examples of the implications of women attaining the top positions in companies: "I don't see that many [female] supervisors. You see them on the lower ends of the scale [but] you will never see them in middle management or [being the] ones making the decisions". These perceptions suggest that outdated ideas still exist about who the "right" person for the job is, and which roles are "unsuitable" for women.

While EEO legislation of the mid-1980s was designed to remove aspects of discrimination and allow women to work in non-traditional roles, my findings indicate that the interviewees and other female employees were still exposed to different forms of discrimination in non-traditional areas of work. Pat stated that she was aware of the inequalities and barriers that some women face in her company, and believed that most attitudes came from some managers who are old-fashioned and hinder women's progress:

Twenty-five to 30 years ago, [there were] two leadership styles: there was either "my way" or "the highway". [T]here's a legacy issue that we still have to deal with today because a lot of middle management

and senior management have come through that and they come with these two skills in their toolbox.

In Pat's experience, such thinking has not changed—as employers have retained such perceptions in contemporary times. She was of the view that this has implications for how women best “fit” certain roles. Pat found that, once she reached supervisory level, she faced prejudice and was subject to disparaging comments from other managers about her capacity in a management role:

I am constantly fighting with the team, but I am fighting against their old perceptions ... [T]here are very few enlightened managers regarding women's place in mining. If I come in and work for two months and have the person saying, “She's hopeless, she's useless, she did this and she did that”, it takes me longer to build relationships than if I were a male ... [T]here are some people who will never accept a woman as a boss ... they will just not accept it. It's these behaviours and real fears such as, “She is going to take my job”, and, as a consequence, they bash you down. It is the woman that is the problem. Sometimes all I want to say is, “You idiot, just because I have tits doesn't mean I am not the boss”.

Pat states that such traditional perceptions have a negative effect in terms of more women participating in non-traditional roles. Pat stated that her company was considering whether she would be suited for the role of project manager, but her current direct line manager did not appreciate or consider women as managers. She believed that if she made mistakes in the role, he would state that it was because she was a woman.

This is not only problematic for women wishing to move into senior management roles. It was a shared perception among the interviewees that some senior managers are prejudiced regarding women's suitability to work in the mining industry. As Pip explained, she and many other women have been exposed to perceptions that she believes have limited their progress in the industry:

Some of them [managers] have been in the mining industry for 20 years. They do have a mindset that girls do not belong in the mining industry and shouldn't

undertake certain work. It is very hard to change people's ways. (Pip, hole blast driller)

Research evidence suggests that discrimination is one of the most pressing issues affecting some women in the mining sector. This was true for the female interviewees in this study, who revealed minor to more serious forms of discrimination. While the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* requires that companies act to remedy discrimination in companies, it is unclear whether companies intend these policies and strategies to be effective or merely cosmetic.¹⁰ The interviewees believed that most of the discrimination they were exposed to was based on their gender, and directed from managers. For example, Pip described how her direct supervisor would make disparaging comments while she was undertaking various duties in her workshop:

With the supervisor traineeship that I eventually got, he had not been put [through the traineeship yet], and I got put on the course before him. He would make comments and be quite nasty about it. He would see me sweeping the floor or whatever [and he'd say], "Oh it's good to see that ... it's teaching you and those like you something". Every time he would make a comment, it was based on me being a girl. The second time I was making coffee for someone, he pretty much said that I belong in the kitchen and not in the mining industry.

Pip also discussed the implications of this in terms of her future job prospects, as she did not secure the supervisor role she had hoped for. Given that her direct manager made comments related to her being female, this was also a reflection of how this manager viewed all women in the mining industry. This is indicative of some women being subjected to overt discrimination.

Despite the fact that anti-discrimination laws exist in company policies that emphasise that no discrimination will be tolerated, some women continue to be exposed to such treatment. It remains questionable whether some companies have successfully challenged an organisational culture that perpetuates such attitudes among managers and supervisors. Interviewees believed that some male employers

¹⁰ Equal Opportunity Commission, *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*, 1.

continue to view women as unfit for the mining industry based on their gender, which casts them as outsiders. Pat stated that her line manager stated publicly that women do not belong in mining:

In fact, only 12 months before, he was at a project managers' program. [They were] all men and they were talking about how to get more women in the mining industry and the benefits of it ... [and] apparently he got up and said, "Women in mining? They should be at home doing curtains". For the last 18 months, I have had this guy undermining me at every opportunity.

While she heard of this manager's attitude towards women in the mining industry second hand, Pat witnessed discrimination of other employees first hand. In one instance, she described how a disproportionate number of female to male workers were made redundant by some supervisors, apparently on the basis of their gender:

In August last year [2013], we first started thinking about winding down [reducing the number of employees] at [name of company withheld] and I'd been in the [managerial] role for a few months. I spoke to the two superintendents, as these guys are in charge of production, so they've got all the production employees, the operators, dump truck drivers, etc. So I said to the two, "It looks like we're going to have to make some people redundant. Can you give me a list? ... I need to make about 60 redundant". [When I saw the list] I said, "Guys, there's about 40 women on this list out of the 60 I've given you ... [W]hat was the criteria for you choosing this [dis]-proportionate [number] of women?" And they said, "Well, their partners are working onsite ... if we make the women redundant at least their partners will be bringing home the primary salary".

The action by the superintendent was discriminatory in making a large number of women redundant. There was no justification as to why women were chosen, instead of their partners and other male employees. This suggests that, if the supervisor had to choose which member of a couple who were both employed onsite should be made redundant, he regarded it more important for the man to continue to be the "breadwinner". This could relate to pay; however, if they are both paid the same amount, it should make no difference which person is made redundant. As discussed

in Chapter 1, in an earlier era, men were always paid more; however, in an age of equal pay, there is no logic in assuming that the family would suffer more because of the man losing his job.

Another interviewee stated that she did not apply for a job simply because she believed that being a woman would disadvantage her in applying for the role of leading hand on her crew, which is usually held by a man:

A month or so ago, a position came up for leading hand on my crew, but then I guess I did think ... “Oh, I’m probably not going to get it because I am a girl” ... I really think that if I applied for the job, they would think that I couldn’t do it, probably because I was a girl. So I didn’t apply for it. (Pip, hole blast driller)

These examples indicate that the interviewees felt that there were certain gender-based assumptions and criteria they needed to fulfil to perform a particular task traditionally reserved for men, even when they were capable and qualified to perform the work.

Suzanna mentioned more subtle forms of discrimination that occurred when some managers focused on advancing employees who exhibited certain traits, and excluded others:

If women are of a certain personality, they are less likely to progress ... but the ones that do progress are the alpha type—the outspoken, more aggressive ones, which women tend not to be. I have been told that if I wish to progress, I need to speak up. I don’t often speak my mind when it could be spoken.

Such comments undermine employees’ confidence in their ability to perform a role. From this, it can be gathered that they need to display traits that resemble a masculine personality if they wish to progress. This is an example of discrimination because it favours male over female employees, which does not reflect the equitable workplace practices of some companies that encourage women to apply for promotion to higher levels.

Despite the companies having policies to eliminate discrimination, interviewees expressed the belief that they and other women continue to be exposed to various forms of discrimination. Some interviewees admitted that they did not report a serious incident of discrimination out of fear because they felt that men at middle management of the hierarchy were less willing to deal with these cases because of their attitudes towards women. They described the implications of reporting serious incidences of discrimination:

[Y]ou don't want to go straight to the top with the worst of things because then you start to upset them [senior managers] I would have upset [my line manager] and then he'd just make life hard for you. It's just easier to nip it in the bud. But he never once came and spoke to me about it. (Pip, hole blast driller)

I have said absolutely nothing [about discrimination] because I know what happens to women who complain ... I've watched them get speared. (Pat, manager)

Clearly, some of the interviewees believed that some complaints were not followed up as effectively as they should be because their male managers held old-fashioned attitudes about women's abilities. This perception raises the question whether—irrespective of their stated intentions to promote a workplace that is gender neutral and discrimination free—some companies are proactive in assisting women, and whether they seek to eradicate discrimination.

Policies Are Not Enforced as Effectively as Required by Some Senior Managers at Middle-management or Company Level

As will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 6 by using examples of actual company policies, EEO policies are meant to allow women to progress. However, the respondents believe that policies that are designed to deal with discrimination appear to have not been enforced as effectively as required. Despite the company (senior management) having policies regarding EEO and gender diversity, interviewees were of the view that their company is not enforcing them as effectively as required. This suggests a lack of communication between senior and middle management. However, given how high some managers are in the company, it raises the question

of whether there is a lack of will by senior management to enforce these policies effectively as required. The first aspect examined in the interviews was whether policies were created in a way to eradicate discrimination. The interviewees said that some policies were written in a brief manner that merely outlined the main objectives and aims:

Our equal employment opportunity policy [is] pretty much a one-page document that says people [should] not be discriminated [against] on age, race, religion, sex ... it's pretty much five or six points of what our company aims to do. It doesn't really specify or scream out to women that they won't be discriminated against. It's not directed at trying to get women into [men's] jobs. (Pip, hole blast driller)

Pip stated that some of these policies do not use gender-neutral language; rather, they generically outline that her company is an equal opportunity employer. She stated that the way these policies are written does not necessarily mean that the company will help women move into areas where they are underrepresented. When asked whether policies are ineffective, some interviewees thought that they might be negatively influenced by the company culture, which is mirrored in policies. Pat believed that, because policies are written by male employers, the language used reflects that they are designed not to include women: "does it appeal to females? No, because it is written by blokes for a bloke environment". These views suggest that these policies appear to be written in a way that encourages and assists male employees, rather than achieving any institutional or cultural change.

When asked whether they believed that their companies enforced EEO practice as required by law, several of the women stated that, despite their company's positive intentions of promoting equal opportunity, this did not appear to occur in practice. For example, Pat's application for a promotion was unsuccessful, despite her skills. She claimed that those policies that promote equal opportunities are simply rhetoric and not implemented effectively to encourage women to participate. As Pat further states, policies are discriminatory in creating a preference for male employees:

I have some classic examples where I have applied for a job and [the company] stated that it is an equal

opportunity employer ... so I have actually gone and applied for the job. Within 24 hours, I received an email saying, "Sorry, we're not interested in you", and yet I had all the qualifications. I thought, "Okay, I would have got to maybe first round interviews" ... But I wondered if it was the female thing. [I] changed my resume around, reformatted it and put it in with a name [a male name] and got a "Can you please come to an interview?" within 24 hours.

Despite the fact that the company had indicated that it was an equal opportunity employer, it clearly preferred a male employee for that particular role. Pat was also aware of the attitudes that were behind the policy:

You can put all this stuff in words, but it is actually actions [that count]. The same with policies and [the idea that], "Oh, our values are this and our values are that". It really is about actions.

Pat was of the view that policies are only written because it is a legal obligation and it that this does not reflect that companies want to recruit more females to roles. As such, it remains questionable whether policies are put into practice as effectively as required (see Chapter 4 for an analysis of company policy).

Another interviewee believed that some companies only promote their EEO commitment as a way of saying that they adhere to formal procedures and rules by "encouraging" diversity and opportunity, which is partly the reason policies may not be properly enforced. As interviewees stated, this undisrupted culture is then reflected in practice when some managers do not offer such opportunities to women:

It's just arse covering ... they write these policies so that [if] someone does discriminate against someone else, they can say they followed policy and procedures ... this is not just my workplace, but the whole of mining. (Pip, hole blast driller)

Pip expressed that policies are only words on paper that ensure all companies are legally covered if discrimination cases arise. She stated that she believes this occurs not only within her company but also in the entire mining industry. Given that senior management creates policies, this suggests that the application of policy into practice

is ineffective—potentially because senior management does not enforce such policies as effectively as required. As a result, it appears that some women are able to access fewer opportunities because policies have not succeeded in creating a more equitable workforce.

The interviewees were also asked about whether the company had flexible working arrangement policies. These policies are designed to assist women in accessing quality flexible working arrangements to better manage their conflicting and demanding family and work obligations.¹¹ Most women said their current company did not have flexible working arrangements or family-friendly policies. Pip stated, “No, we don’t have one”. She said: “I have not worked with one company that has a policy on flexible working arrangements. Not one. How can I say that they are actually put in practice, [when it] doesn’t even exist?” While Pat negotiated with her employers for flexible working arrangements, the constant emphasis she received on being present at the workplace reinforced the attitude that caring responsibilities do not warrant recognition because they are deemed separate from production. Despite Pip not having any dependent children, she was aware that her company did not have a policy for women if they required such arrangements. Based on these views, it indicates that a masculine organisational culture (particularly for issues associated with care) has affected some companies’ implementation of effective flexibility and policies to enable women to balance care and work.

Flexible Work Arrangements Are Available but Do Not Reflect Some Managers' Ideas of Maintaining a “Presentee-ism” Culture

Some companies are willing to provide flexible working arrangements for women. In the case one of the interviewees with children, flexible working arrangements were individually negotiated with her manager, who agreed to provide arrangements that were the most suitable for their lifestyles. Pat, who has one dependent child, said that she had an arrangement with her employer that was suitable and allowed her to balance family care and work responsibilities: “I will only do an 8/6 [eight days on and six days off] roster … I don’t have to ask for it because that’s in my contract. It’s

¹¹ WIMnet, “AusIMM Workplace Gender Equality,” 5.

what works for our family". She explained that, while onsite flexibility was not that difficult to obtain, some managers held negative perceptions about workers who requested part-time work or greater flexibility. She stated that, even though she was content with the flexible roster she had, she felt restricted in taking a day off for family reasons because of her managers' ingrained perception that employees need to be present at work:

I've never asked for a day off if my son is sick or anything like that ... I have stayed back maybe only once when both my husband and son were sick ... the perception from that was, "Oh, these bloody women and their kids".

This signifies the "male" model of work that has no capacity for part-time or flexible working arrangements.¹² Pat stated that her manager held this view of women who have caring responsibilities. Conversely, "standard" work patterns involve long hours beyond the statutory hours, starting and finishing at irregular times that are disruptive of family life.¹³ As will be further discussed in Chapter 6, this "male" model creates a problem for women who must balance family and work responsibilities, while men's obligations to their employer are perceived (rightly or wrongly) as being uncomplicated by carers' duties. Some companies tend to emphasise a work culture of "presentee-ism", with male employers preferring a culture where employees are present at work. Pat stated that these attitudes are prevalent in her company:

I might not come in the morning until 6.30 am because I've been at work until 8.30 pm last night, and I've got my boss going, "You're erratic, you're erratic attendance", and I'm like, "I'm doing 14 hours a day, mate. What else do you want?" [He says] "I want you here from 5.45 am to 5.45 pm". Just this perception around time—you must be on time, time, time. You must be present. My boss is really old school and therefore [he says], "You need to start work at 6.00 am so that everyone sees you at work".

¹² Marianne Coleman, *Women at the Top: Challenges, Choice and Change* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 99.

¹³ Ibid.

Pat's experience indicates that by not commencing work at a certain time and not being present when required, she was considered an incompetent and unreliable worker. Other interviewees observed that the FIFO lifestyle makes it particularly hard for women to be at work when required, especially those with young families: "It is hard to retain women in the FIFO lifestyle, especially women with small children. You really can't do both, not with FIFO" (Pip, hole blast driller).

Even though three of the interviewees did not have children, they were aware that some managers do not offer the support women need if they cannot be present at work. Interviewees expressed that for some women who undertake fewer hours, such as part-time work or flexible working arrangements, they are often viewed as being less productive in output, particularly in large mining companies.¹⁴ The interviewees also mentioned the lack of support for those women who had taken maternity leave and wished to return to the workplace. They stated that there was no program to assist workers to re-engage with the workforce. Angela said that some women who left the workforce to have children were not guaranteed any programs to enable them to re-integrate into the workforce after a career hiatus.

Another major issue facing women in the mining industry is the lack of readily available childcare arrangements, particularly for women working in a FIFO style arrangement, and spending more than 12 hours onsite. All interviewees confirmed that were no policies in their companies that reflected either flexible working arrangement options or childcare options. As Pat explained, most women needed to arrange their own childcare arrangements at their own expense: "No mining company that I have ever seen or worked for has ever done anything about childcare arrangements. It is something the employee has to work out, not the company". Pat believed that her company had no intention of establishing childcare arrangements for women who work long hours and have unpredictable roster shifts. As a result, some women with caring responsibilities may never rely on their company or managers to arrange this.

¹⁴ White, Cox and Cooper, *Career Development*, 191.

Summary

This chapter has analysed the interviewees' responses, which revealed that barriers inhibit their progression and significantly affect women workers' access to EEO. The interviewee's responses indicate that progression and discrimination issues are still prevalent in some companies. The analysis of the surveys revealed that managers' attitudes played a significant role in maintaining discriminatory behaviours, despite the existence of EEO policies. The interviews were also indicative of the poor advancement opportunities available to women, and revealed instances of individuals being denied career development and promotions.

The interviewees stated that while some companies have attempted to implement strategies and initiatives by increasing women's employment opportunities, it appears that middle managers restrict the enforcement of these initiatives. The interviewees described overt forms of discrimination that were not resolved or followed up by middle management. This had a negative effect on all interviewees, with all of them stating that policies have not been implemented effectively by people in senior roles, namely, their direct managers. The following chapter will discuss the possible reasons for this discrimination, and the apparent inefficacy of existing policies.

Chapter 6: Analysis

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the reasons behind the disproportionately small number of women in the mining industry. To achieve this, this thesis first analysed the undertaken surveys by applying a theoretical framework. This assisted in establishing the factors that accounted for the continued barriers to EEO, while testing the results of the survey against the previous literature, such as company reports and sociological theory. Based on the responses from the surveys and interviews, the findings indicate the continued discrimination that some women face, which creates barriers to their long-term employment.

It appears that companies have not taken responsibility for disrupting a patriarchal culture that has permitted recruitment decisions to privilege a certain type of male worker. Consequently, the residual values from an established organisational culture have stymied opportunities for women to advance beyond a certain level. Some middle managers' continued operation in gendered institutional structures that sustain discriminatory practices indicates a failure for some companies to overcome outdated perceptions. Thus, it remains questionable whether companies have truly sought to exercise responsibility in enforcing policies and reviewing their inefficacy to prohibit the discriminatory behaviours held by those in middle management. This finding also raises the question of whether a lack of will or resistance by some companies exists to enforce anti-discrimination policies effectively at an organisational level to enable women to move into non-traditional roles and hold supervisory and senior roles. In some companies, the culture that situates women and men in "appropriate" roles that preserve the gender order continues to maintain inequity.

Discussion

This section analyses the main findings from the interviews, which were identified in Chapter 5, through a theoretical lens. The finding that there are ongoing issues still facing female workers in their current employment in the industry will be examined to determine the hindrances preventing women from remaining and progressing in the mining sector. Where findings from the survey and interviews relate to the same

issue, they will be discussed together. Gaps in the theory and previous studies were identified and noted in my observations.

Finding 1: Some Managers Prefer Male Workers to Capable Female Employees

This finding was evidenced by the limited career development and promotional opportunities for women. In the survey, 44 per cent of participants strongly agreed that, in their workplace, men were promoted in preference to female employees with the same skill sets. As the participants indicated, men were more likely to be promoted, despite some women being equally skilled and experienced. In the open-ended questions, most respondents stated that, despite being capable and at times outperforming men, they never felt that they were recognised for their ability, and were always slower to be promoted. This suggests that some managers only advanced males, who were viewed as being more capable than their female counterparts.

In order to understand why some women are still overlooked for promotion, this study applied the social construction of the gender roles that shape the work that men and women perform. Gender roles stem from the socialisation process, where men and women learn the most “appropriate” roles according to their sex.¹ The process of socialisation occurs when men and women have been allocated “suitable” gender roles and internalised this. Gender roles have many implications, one being that they create inequalities between men and women because of the types of roles regarded socially appropriate.² Once roles are internalised, people are held accountable to them, and expected to perform their appropriately masculine and feminine roles.³

The allocation of roles at a societal level is also institutionalised in some organisations. Men who are at the top of the social hierarchy may use “gender-neutrality to select the individuals they wish to employ and whom to advance

¹ Ridgeway, *Framed by Gender*, 3.

² Wharton, *Sociology of Gender*, 31.

³ Ibid.

through promotional opportunities".⁴ This is a way of disguising their intentions to employ those who they believe are "better" to be selected and promoted. The experiences of respondents in this study reflect Holter's theory that some male managers prefer employees who fit a particular stereotype, and this stereotype seems to exclude women. Perceptions shape decisions to recruit the "best" person, and these decisions are not based on merit; rather, male employees may be preferred because they "fit" the stereotypical mould that managers desire. Consequently, as the interviewees noted, they are frequently overlooked for promotions, despite some companies attempting to help women be promoted. Whelan's argument is similar to Ridgeway's assertion that individuals' perceptions and how they view other people can lead to a phenomenon known as the "stereotype threat". As Whelan states, when we become "aware of others' stereotypes about us we are more likely to conform to them and behave in accordance with others' experiences".⁵ Given that people tend to prefer others to match stereotypical expectations, people are more likely to evaluate others more positively if they match stereotypical expectations. Given that the prevailing organisational stereotype of women is that they are less competent as leaders, the performance of female leaders is likely to be impaired.⁶ Whelan argues that this is damaging to women because they internalise such appraisals, viewing themselves as less capable and less deserving when considering leadership. This was the case for some of the interviewees. For example, Suzanna stated that, if she was to be promoted, she would need to "speak up" more because she did not speak her mind as often as she should. This suggests that her managers favoured workers who were more outgoing, aggressive types, and that female employees struggled to fit this specific type of ideal. Angela provided several examples of colleagues and other female employees who were overlooked for promotion to senior level, despite holding the same qualifications and experience as other male employees. Pip also thought that she would never be promoted to the position of senior manager in her area of work simply because of her gender, despite her capability to take on such a role.

⁴ Ostein Gullvag Holter, "Social Theories for Researching Men and Masculinities: Direct Gender Hierarchy and Structural Inequality," in *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff R. Hearn and Robert W. Connell (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2004), 18.

⁵ Jennifer Whelan, Committee for Economic Development in Australia (CEDA). "The Barriers to Equal Opportunity in the Workforce: The Role of Unconscious Bias, 62, June 2013, accessed June 13, 2014. <http://www.ceda.com.au/media/310731/cedawiljune%202013final.pdf>.

⁶ Ibid.

Most interviewees observed that, regarding promotion, they were always sidelined and needed to work twice as hard to even be considered for promotion. They stated that the decisions their managers made were always based on gender. They explained that some managers never considered promoting women, with women constantly needing to prove they were worthy of promotion. Pip and Pat both confirmed that they had experienced this type of discrimination. To explain this, Kanter uses a structural explanation that operates in institutions to allow discrimination based on who should and should not be promoted. This structural explanation suggests that institutional sites, such as workplaces and corporations, in which gendering (gender-differentiation and inequalities) occurs is a reflection of the wider realms of society.⁷ Kanter points to structure, rather than the actor or culture, as being vital to progressing. Kanter asserts that women's position in the organisation is limited because certain attitudes and values ingrained in organisations tend to favour certain people (men) who are able to move up the organisational hierarchy.⁸ This suggests that women are "late" entries, whereas male values prevail, thus making it harder for women to progress. The male-dominated power structures and desire to maintain "homosociability" in the workplace exclude women, who are not perceived as colleagues and equals. As Pip and Pat pointed out, some women who have been working for their companies for more than five years have failed to be promoted or advance in their roles. This is an example of gender affecting some women's opportunities for career progression.

My findings reflect those of a 2013 study that found that gender was a defining factor in the inability to progress. Previous studies acknowledge the lack of promotion opportunities for women; however, they do not provide sufficient reasons for why women were denied advancement. For example, Barrera, Gardner and Horstman state that women have had difficulty accessing EEO and suggest that companies are to blame for establishing a negative culture. In their study, participants expressed the opinion that women "are denied access to further promotion ... [T]hey simply pretend that we are not there".⁹ The 2012 report *Mind the Gap: Solving the Skills*

⁷ Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, 198.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Barrera, Gardner and Horstman, "Women's Experiences," 7.

Shortage is one of the few studies to identify male managers as responsible for limiting women's advancement. This report states that one of the biggest challenges for companies is to "overcome the thinking and attitudes male managers have towards women".¹⁰ One company manager explained that there is still a "biased perception that managers have in regards to 'differences' between men and women that affects promotion opportunities".¹¹ This explanation states that managers' beliefs are shaped by the wider gender order that is ingrained and perpetuated in gendered institutions. This aligns with respondents' views that some male managers' perceptions are outdated and have not been altered to allow women to progress in their careers.

Career development opportunities have similar issues to limited promotion opportunities. With less than half of the respondents agreeing that their employer offered career development opportunities, it is clear that some women have difficulty accessing quality career development opportunities to enhance their existing knowledge and skills. My findings also show a direct correlation between such difficulties and work sites, where male employees are privileged in opportunities to obtain in-depth career development. For example, in her interview, Pat spoke of the difficulties she had securing career development opportunities that only focused on male employees, despite supposedly being gender neutral. Further, Angela, who was a graduate, said that, during her first 12 months with her company, she had only one career development discussion with her manager. She stated that her company did not have any formal career development programs or training to support the progression of employees. Rather, career development programs and training were tailored to meet the needs of "particular" individuals.

In seeking an explanation for the lack of female employees' career development, I tested my findings against Ridgeway's theory. Ridgeway focuses on how organisations rely on the gender system to maintain inequality.¹² As this may not be challenged at an institutional level, this order can filter through organisations and

¹⁰ PwC, "Mind the Gap," 6.

¹¹ Liz Richie, "Women in Leadership: Understanding the Gender Gap," June 2013, accessed June 13, 2014, 21, <https://www.ceda.com.au/media/310731/cedawiljune%202013final.pdf>.

¹² Ridgeway, *Framed by Gender*, 3.

influences decisions regarding the roles men and women should undertake. The gender system reinforces that gender roles are a “social construct and are societal expectations of men and women existing within the wider realms of society”.¹³ Ridgeway states that the gender system shapes the way we establish views, and “attitudes about different people [are] influenced by the cultural statuses and beliefs and stereotypes”.¹⁴ Further, Ridgeway argues that much of this commences at an organisational level, that may be produced and reproduced. Interviewees such as Pip and Suzanna explained that men are always given much more attention to develop their talents and skills, such as when some managers select employees to be sent on courses. This shows that certain outdated attitudes may have contributed to men progressing, with some women being overlooked for important career development opportunities. The participants in both the surveys and interviews stated that men were prioritised. Through attitudes embedded in some companies, the participants noted that they were perceived as not being as ready for career development as their male counterparts, despite having equivalent skills, capabilities and qualifications.

The interviewees identified that, even though their company attempted to implement initiatives, career development and training were not adequately encouraged or provided by their managers. Most also stated that their direct line managers rarely offered one-on-one discussion on career development, despite this being among their responsibilities. However, while some individual managers present major barriers to women’s career progression, companies are equally responsible because they have not challenged such attitudes that stem from organisational culture—they have allowed such discrimination to occur. While previous studies acknowledge progression issues, none give adequate reasons for why there are such difficulties in obtaining this.¹⁵ As discussed in Chapter 4, my findings reflect previous research that acknowledges problems some women have experienced in advancing in their careers. These gendered assumptions create issues for some women in terms of how employers perceive their suitability for particular roles. These have been identified in certain reports published on gender inequality.

¹³ Ibid, 3–4.

¹⁴ Ibid, 11.

¹⁵ See Chapter 4 for further details on EEO difficulties.

The Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA), in their 2013 paper, *Women in Leadership: Understanding the Gender Gap*, identified issues relating to gender and gender roles, particularly stereotypes.¹⁶ One of the first issues identified was that stereotypes are usually an over-simplification that “pigeonholes” people (usually women).¹⁷ In order to remain homogenous, the group marginalises members who are perceived different. When stereotypes are unchallenged, they remain part of the ingrained unconscious knowledge—they are neither updated nor examined (at an organisational level) and they “cause individuals to make ill-informed judgements about others”.¹⁸ As is evident from my findings, some women continue being overlooked or are offered minimal career development opportunities.

Finding 2: Mentoring Systems Exist, Yet Some Line Managers Do Not Follow-up

It remains the responsibility of individual women to find their own mentors, with 55 per cent of the survey respondents noting that their current workplace lacked an effective mentoring system. Previous studies reveal that mentoring (when implemented) tends to create problematic power relations between male mentors and female mentees.¹⁹ However, if employees are provided with a suitable mentor, who has similar qualifications and skills to the mentee, it can prove a crucial factor in the development of an individual’s career and sense of satisfaction with their career choice.²⁰

In this study, the interviewees stated that their senior managers decided how much mentoring each employee should receive. For example, Suzanna and Angela made similar comments that, while they reaped benefits from the knowledge they had gained from mentors, their managers did not offer alternatives if the mentors left the company. Rather, the interviewees said that they had to make the effort to arrange to find another one. Pip also stated that, while the entire organisation encouraged

¹⁶ Richie, “Women in Leadership”, 21.

¹⁷ Ibid, 59.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Pattenden, “Women in Mining,” 32.

²⁰ Recently, WIMnet developed a Western Australian Women in Mining Mentoring Program to help women access mentoring systems that will benefit them in terms of gaining knowledge and experience. Women in Mining and Resources WA, “Women in Mining WA Mentoring Program 2015,” accessed August 7, 2015, 1,<http://womeninmining.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/WIMWA-Mentoring-Program-2015-flyer.pdf>.

implementing an effective mentoring system, the program ran for only six months, with no opportunities offered thereafter. Most interviewees acknowledged that extended mentoring would have been beneficial to their learning and development.

Some managers' resistance to providing suitable alternatives for female employees aligns with Ridgeway's theory that social interaction influences the way people are "categorised based on assumptions held about one group by another. This is constantly played out within organisations".²¹ In this case, the respondents' managers did not provide mentoring programs that were inclusive of female employees. While two previous studies reflect the lack of overall mentoring, they provide no specific findings regarding why women are offered less mentoring and fewer follow ups than men. For example, AusIMM states that mining companies "do not give women the opportunity to follow-up with another mentor if that mentor leaves the company".²² A 2007 study, *Unearthing New Resources*, revealed that women still have little access to appropriate mentors. Participants in both my surveys and interviews indicated that mentoring remains difficult to attain.

Finding 3: Overt and Indirect Discrimination Exists Due to Outdated Perceptions That Affect Recruitment Decisions and Progression Opportunities

The surveys and interviews confirmed that discrimination remains a problem in some mining companies. In particular, the interviewees elaborated in detail and spoke of discrimination at their workplaces that they had experienced personally or had seen others experience. While the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* obliges companies to eradicate discrimination, all interviewees commented that they were exposed to discrimination based on their gender. For example, Pat gave an example from her workplace about women being made redundant without a legitimate reason, with her manager providing no adequate explanation for including more women than men on the redundancy list. In a theoretical framework, such discrimination can be examined through the way organisations shape this inequality. Cockburn asserts that, in some organisations, there exist "long-lived structuring practices that disadvantage women

²¹ Ridgeway, *Framed by Gender*, 3.

²² AusIMM, "WIMnet: Women in Mining Network Mentoring Initiatives," accessed November 12, 2014, http://www.ausimm.com.au/content/docs/societies/20140910_WIMnet_MineGeology_2014.pdf.

and patterns of relationships that are difficult to alter".²³ Cockburn further explains that male power is systematic, "whilst patriarchy solidifies the system of domination that disadvantages women".²⁴ These structures referred to by Cockburn suggests that men maintain unequal power relations by limiting the numbers of women in non-traditional roles overall. As the interviewees expressed, making some women redundant has resulted in the overall number of female employees remaining disproportionately small, thereby further reiterating that women do not "fit" the certain type of worker that some companies seek.

Organisations are comprised of and reproduced by the actions of individuals, while individuals' understanding and actions are shaped by their experiences in organisations. Organisations are said to be gendered because gender and "gender relations are present in all types of institutions—also organisations".²⁵ The meanings, ideas, values and beliefs are shared by collective people who create and maintain gender inequalities.²⁶ The structure of gender relations emphasises that genders are already embedded in a given process or structure in organisations. This wider culture (often reflected from a social aspect ingrained in organisations) can perpetuate attitudes that produce traditional and discriminatory attitudes towards others. For example, Pat stated that those traditional perceptions still exist with some managers who are unwilling to change their views about women being managers. She identified a struggle with those in high positions of authority and said: "I am fighting against their old perceptions ... [T]here are very few enlightened managers regarding women's place in mining". She also stated that some of her managers had been working in mining for nearly 20 years and noted that they had the "mindset that girls do not belong in the mining industry". While policies are meant to eliminate such attitudes, given that policies reflect this, it indicates that some companies have allowed a masculinist culture to pervade.

Despite policies existing in mining companies and legal requirements that all company employers are obligated to follow, it indicates that discrimination for some

²³ Cockburn, *In the Way of Women*, 220.

²⁴ Ibid, 65.

²⁵ Acker, "Gendered Organizations," 216.

²⁶ Ibid.

is evident in both overt and indirect ways. This is reflected in some senior managers who will not make an effort to resolve issues of discrimination. Such perceptions are part of a culture that is ingrained in some organisations. Based on the survey responses and interviews, rectifying discrimination has been unsuccessful. Suzanna revealed that, despite believing she was capable of performing higher duties after several years with her employer, she felt that she needed to fit the “alpha” type personality—that is, she needed to have more dominant and aggressive traits—to achieve a promotion. Pip added that, despite the seriousness of a complaint she made against a male employee, her line manager showed no urgency to resolve the problem. As Bacchi theorises, when women complain about discrimination, they are cast as a problem, rather than as the aggrieved party. Since men and women are constructed as binary opposites, these differences may advantage one group and disadvantage the other.²⁷ It can be theorised that when some women ask for discrimination cases to be resolved, they are cast as “needy” and requiring “preferential treatment” in order to succeed.²⁸ In the examples provided by the interviewees, it suggested that this casts them as a minority group, which reinforces them as easy targets to be discriminated against, which enables some managers to minimise serious discrimination cases, with many remaining unresolved. Much of the feminist movement’s effort focused on gender inequality and demanded that women have access to all areas of work, irrespective of gender. While the interviewees were not deterred from entering non-traditional roles, they identified that promotion and progression opportunities are limited.

My findings confirm other literature on women’s experiences in mining. In a 1988 study in a Western Australian context, Eveline found that women’s experiences were evidence that equal opportunity policies against discrimination were “not helpful and perhaps exaggerate or even create discrimination without even resolving it, since they were initiated and put forward by men in power”.²⁹ For example, “90% of the female employees stated that discrimination is an issue”, with respondents suggesting that, “to have more sessions and information on the issue of discrimination would

²⁷ Bacchi, *Analysing Policy*, 82.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Eveline, Booth and Chadwick, *Tiger by the Tail*, 24.

have been beneficial”.³⁰ Despite another 25 years of EEO legislation being implemented since Eveline’s study was written, the responses collected in my study suggest that some women are still exposed to discrimination.

My findings confirm reports that male employees are favoured and encouraged in certain roles in mining. The Sex Discrimination Commissioner was reported in 2013 as stating that introducing special and temporary measures to increase female board numbers would have “consequences, as women are still considered a minority who would be treated differently since senior roles are typically associated with the norm, being men”.³¹ Non-traditional roles carry certain expectations about the types of workers that are deemed most “appropriate” for them. Despite some women not being deterred from entering this type of work, they expressed that have had difficulty breaking this stereotypical mould because they are deemed to lack the characteristics that managers traditionally associate with the role. As the interviewees indicated, in a work environment where masculinity is associated with particular forms of work—particularly management—women have difficulty progressing in certain roles, irrespective of their capabilities or experience. My findings also confirm that other studies I have reviewed indicate issues with discrimination,³² with all previous studies indicating that some women’s status has not changed, and the evidence from my survey and interview findings reflecting this as well.

Finding 4: EEO Policies Are Available but Are Not Enforced Effectively as Required by Some Senior Managers in Companies

Fifty-five per cent of the survey respondents stated that they had access to EEO policies. However, while such policies exist, the respondents were of the view that they are not put into practice by their companies as effectively as required. One aim of the interviews was to determine whether policies are written to conform with anti-

³⁰ Ibid, 10.

³¹ Alex Heber, “Positive Discrimination Won’t Help: Rio,” *Australian Mining*, May 24, 2013. Accessed March 21, 2014, <http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/news/positive-discrimination-won-t-help-women-rio>.

³² See ibid; Sonti, “Discrimination Still ‘Rife’”; and Trembath, “Australian Mines and Metals”. Studies that do not explain the reasons why discrimination continues include the Australian Human Rights Commission’s *Women in Male Dominated Industries: A Toolkit of Strategies* (2012). This study compares women’s experiences in mining in an international context to determine how they fare in a global comparison. In one section, the report explains that, “discrimination can result in the culture of the company that inhibits progression”.

discrimination laws and deal effectively with discriminatory behaviour. According to the interviewees, policies are not written in a way that is inclusive of female employees. Pip stated that her company's policy was a one-page document that did not "really specify or scream out to women that they won't be discriminated against". Angela stated that, in her workplace, EEO policies were fairly generic and referred to the term "employees" in order to imply (rather than assert) that they are inclusive of all workers. Using the term "employees" to appear inclusive does not reflect a practice of including more women in areas where they are underrepresented. This also suggests that this may disguise the outdated attitudes of those who have compiled the policy, so that it appears that all employees are valued, when women actually still represent only a small portion of the entire workforce in male-dominated areas.

Bagilhole's theory suggests that equal opportunity policies and procedures are "meant to assist women in being channelled into areas where they are underrepresented and to ensure that there are measures put in place that allow women to be treated as equally as men".³³ However, such policies often use gender-neutral language (rather than women-specific language) to disguise the intentions of some companies that do not actually treat all employees as equal. This may be the case with company policies that use gender-neutral terms such as "all employees" and "our people" to present their supposed commitment to gender diversity and providing equal opportunity to all. Unfortunately, interviewees believed that this commitment is not applied in practice—as confirmed by the interviewees in this study—and it remains questionable whether companies' true intention is to create gender diversity. For example, the 2011 *FMG Diversity Policy* states that the company "may recruit the right people for the right job regardless of race, gender and age".³⁴ It indicates that the use of the word "may" does not reassure employees that the company is inclined to assist women to progress.

The introduction of FMG's 2011 *Diversity Policy* outlines the diversity strategies the company has implemented. The policy claims that employees are all employed on

³³ Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations*, 134.

³⁴ FMG, "Diversity Policy," 1.

the basis of “recognising and appreciating the diverse skills and knowledge whilst decisions on recruitment are solely based on merit”.³⁵ However, evidence of the policy’s inefficacy exists in FMG’s annual reports, which indicate a significant loss of female labour over a few years. In 2012, the report stated that there were 914 females and 3,054 males.³⁶ In 2013, the total workforce population was 750 females and 3,001 males.³⁷ In 2014, the workforce totalled 4,500 males and 650 females.³⁸ Thus, within three years, FMG’s female workforce had declined by almost one third, while its male workforce had increased by 50 per cent. These figures suggest that EEO policies may not have been implemented, or are having no effect.³⁹

Further, the interviewees believed that these policies are not written in a way that deals with discrimination as effectively as required. As Pat stated, EEO policies never work because they are written by men for a male environment. As Bacchi suggests, policies “exclude women from areas where they are a minority such as non-traditional areas of work”.⁴⁰ The interviewees stated that their companies’ policies did not use language that was inclusive of all employees; rather, it was selective, with particular employees deemed a better fit than others. As discussed in the previous chapter, Pat provided an example of how gender discrimination prevented her being considered for a position. Similarly, Pip felt that she would be rejected if she applied for a more senior position, based on her gender. These experiences and perceptions indicate that existing policies do not encourage some women to seek promotion in non-traditional areas.

The *Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act 1986* was passed as a series of programs and policies to achieve outcomes that should have initiated changes.⁴¹ The interviewees were asked whether their companies actually enforced EEO policies, or whether these were only words with no effect. Pat confirmed that the values that companies promote are ineffective if they are not translated into practice. All interviewees expressed that, despite companies aiming to

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ FMG, “Annual Report 2012,” 31.

³⁷ FMG, “Annual Report 2013,” 43.

³⁸ FMG, “Annual Report 2014,” 36.

³⁹ FMG, “Annual Report 2011,” 17.

⁴⁰ Bacchi, *Analysing Policy*, 184.

⁴¹ Australian Commonwealth, *Affirmative Action Act 1986*, 2.

promote EEO workplaces, this was not reflected in practice. As a result, some senior managers continue to evade their responsibility to foster equal opportunity and work to eliminate cases of discrimination in the workplace. Thus, the interviewees believed they access fewer opportunities because of policies not being implemented by mining companies. Suzanna and Pat's comments confirmed that, when they applied for senior roles, they were turned down almost immediately, with no evidence that it was their skills and qualifications that did not get them the job. It appears that policies aimed to eradicate discrimination may not have been successful in creating a more diverse workforce.

Despite policies promoting gender neutrality, there is little evidence of gender-neutral outcomes. All interviewees stated that policies that reiterate equal opportunities are simply rhetoric, and are not enforced to encourage women to move into areas in which they are underrepresented. Pip believed that companies only promote their EEO commitment as a "way of saying that they followed formal procedures and rules that encouraged diversity and opportunity". However, there is evidence that some mining companies wish to increase their numbers of women, as shown on their recruitment websites. For example, BHP Billiton's recruitment site includes images of women in hardhats, giving the perception that diversity is encouraged and supported. These companies are obviously marketing to young women, as well as people of Indigenous and ethnic backgrounds.⁴² FMG's website also includes images of women in uniform, which indicates that they are serious about increasing the participation of women in areas that have been traditionally the preserve of male workers. However, if companies are aiming marketing at women to increase numbers, it remains unclear why they have not implemented policies effectively as required to achieve this.⁴³

Gottfried theorises why policies may not be enforced effectively in male-dominated work cultures. Given that EEO policies do not challenge the structure of

⁴² BHP Billiton, "People and Careers: Graduates and Students," accessed November 10, 2014, <http://www.bhpbilliton.com/home/people/graduates/Pages/default.aspx>.

⁴³ Robyn Mayes and Barbara Pini discuss the way industries represent the ideal mining woman, and the way previous studies have discussed this. Robyn Mayes and Barbara Pini, "The Australian Mining Industry and the Ideal Mining Woman: Mobilizing a Public Business Case for Gender Equality," *Journal of Industrial Relations* 56 (2014): 527–546.

organisations or the ingrained gender order, they are deemed ineffective.⁴⁴ Further, EEO policies may not be effective as required because they treat women as “different”, which lessens their efficacy. Due to the mistaken belief that women and men are “naturally” different, it is difficult to address the concealed aspects of discrimination, with women seemingly cast negatively “different” to the majority group.⁴⁵ Further, anti-discrimination laws construct a “classification of identities”, and categorise the subjects (namely, women) as less than the unstated norm.⁴⁶ As interviewees such as Pip expressed, policies are written so that some companies appear to follow stringent rules by allowing women opportunities to move and progress into different roles.

In examining the relationship between organisational culture and the inefficacy of policies, Alvesson and Billing argue that employers (or employees) may reproduce gender segregation through outdated attitudes.⁴⁷ EEO policies may “claim gender-neutrality but they may also be making various types of jobs available or unavailable for different sexes”.⁴⁸ As a result, cultural attitudes determine the shape of EEO policies, which can be undermined when ability and merit are masked in terms of seeking the “right” applicant for the job. As interviewees Suzanna, Pip and Pat affirm, there may be evidence of resistance by companies (and middle managers) against female workers joining “their” team. Employers may act as gatekeepers, reproducing gender segregation through the very policies that claim to allow EEO to all employees.⁴⁹ In maintaining the male-dominated power structure and tendencies for homosocial reproduction, management may perpetuate the gendered division of labour, thereby rendering EEO policies as merely cosmetic.

My findings further reflect this theory because the respondents believed that policies were unsuccessful in resolving women’s exposure to discrimination. To further prove that EEO is a direct reflection of male attitudes and unequal power relations, the respondents’ answers can be tested against actual company policies. For example,

⁴⁴ Gottfried, *Gender, Work and Economy*, 58.

⁴⁵ Bacchi, *Politics of Affirmative Action*, 19.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 20.

⁴⁷ Alvesson and Billing, *Understanding Gender*, 61.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 62.

Atlas Iron Ore Ltd's diversity policy states that the company is an EEO employer. One section of the policy explains that "employment and career development progression *may* [emphasis added] be determined by personal merit, competency, skills and qualification, made from a diverse pool of qualified candidates".⁵⁰ Suzanna, Pip and Angela's responses stated that, while EEO policies exist, companies disguise their intent on this issue by being seemingly inclusive of "all" workers. As evidence from the interviews shows, some male managers seem to maintain the status quo by perpetuating attitudes that perceive women as "different" to male employees. Thus, EEO policies appear to be the "product of male attitudes as men are able to make decisions that disadvantages women".⁵¹ Based on their personal experiences, the interviewees expressed that they believe policies are not implemented to deal with discrimination as effectively as required.

Rio Tinto's 2011 *Diversity and Inclusion Policy* discusses some ways the company is aiming to ensure that a diverse workforce is a priority.⁵² In a section on "Corporate Governance", the policy states that diversity is important and that Rio Tinto "*may* [emphasis added] strive to create an inclusive culture in, which difference is recognised and valued".⁵³ While the policy states that it will value differences, this may have a negative connotation for certain groups, such as women. Exaggerating that women are "different" creates an area of "binary opposition such as masculine/feminine where women and men are perceived as being different in relation to each other".⁵⁴ This is proven by the overall decreasing number of women in the workforce. In addition, Rio Tinto's *Annual Report 2013* outlines diverse strategies that the company has implemented to ensure that its aims are met. In 2011, women represented 35% of the intake,⁵⁵ followed by "30% in 2012"⁵⁶ and 23% in 2013".⁵⁷ The reasons for this declining intake of women were reflected in my interviewees' responses. As Angela stated, since some men make decisions about hiring and recruiting, they have direct input as to whether the policy is enforced.

⁵⁰ Atlas Iron Ore, "Equal Employment Opportunity," 2.

⁵¹ Gottfried, *Gender, Work and Economy*, 58.

⁵² Rio Tinto, "Diversity and Inclusion Policy," 1.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Bacchi, *Analysing Policy*, 185.

⁵⁵ Rio Tinto, "Annual Report 2011," 73.

⁵⁶ Rio Tinto, "Annual Report 2012," 81.

⁵⁷ Rio Tinto, "Annual Report 2013," 65.

Similarly, Suzanna commented that the lack of implemented policies are a “direct reflection of the attitudes managers still have, which have affected participation in areas such as geology”. This shows that men’s attitudes are ultimately blocking the enforcement of policies, which enables discriminatory behaviour against women to continue. Thus, based on the experiences of the survey respondents and interviewees, policies are not enforced as effectively as required, and, despite nearly 25 years of anti-discrimination legislation, some women are still exposed to both overt and indirect forms of discrimination.

Finding 5: Some Senior Staff and Workmates Maintain a Negative Work Culture to Which Women Learn to Adapt

While the survey respondents in my study indicated that they were not deterred by the masculine culture, evidence from the findings suggests that women feel that they do not belong and are a misfit. Women refer to the dominant group as the “boys club”, which emphasises a culture that favours only men. Past research also confirms that this has been and remains the case in mining.⁵⁸ This can be applied to help understand the exclusion of women in a strong male-centred culture, which is currently ingrained in the mining industry. One explanation of why the male work culture casts women as “misfits” is because they are a minority in a large homogenous community, and are thus undervalued and marginalised.⁵⁹ As argued by Whittock, women are a smaller group and are generally referred to as a “token” group, who are a representative of their own sex category. Therefore, they cannot be accepted as another member because they are “different” to the numerically dominant group.⁶⁰ The responses to the open-ended questions in my survey reflect Whittock’s theory that this “tokenism” contributes to some women’s continuing marginalisation.

⁵⁸ See Chapter 4 for studies that have demonstrated that discrimination remains prevalent in Western Australia and other parts of Australia.

⁵⁹ Mandi Santic, “At the Coalface: Females Increasingly Hitting Paydirt in the Mines,” *Crikey*, February 27, 2013, accessed July 2, 2013, http://www.crikey.com.au/2013/02/27/at-the-coalface-how-women-are-increasingly-working-in-the-resources-sector/?wpmp_switcher=mobile.

⁶⁰ Whittock, *Feminising the Masculine?*, 177.

Some interviewees explained that, while some women were never directly told they did not “fit” because they were female, it was a common perception that females were out of place in the male-dominated work environment. As Rutherford theorises, “perceptions are held by the dominant group that create areas of exclusion where minorities are marginalised”.⁶¹ Comments from interviewees such as Pip and Pat align with such studies and theoretical lenses because, since men’s masculine identity is seen as more positive in the mining industry, it indicates that women’s exclusion is based on being stereotyped and regarded as different to the dominant group. Further, Cockburn states that men tend to create a work environment so “women do not flourish” and are often marginalised and treated as outsiders.⁶² This allows men to establish a cultural resistance in which they “generate a masculine culture in and around their work … this can make women feel without being told in many words ‘you are out of place’”.⁶³ My findings suggest that some companies may not have challenged the culture that perpetuates the attitudes that individual men hold—particularly men in managerial roles. Interviewees express that they believe that their companies are responsible for creating a culture in which some women must challenge their own identity to be accepted.

This theory can be applied to the interviewees’ further comments regarding why they believed they were perceived as different. Most believed it was related to their minority status. All interviewees confirmed that the lack of women in male-dominated roles heightened their difference to the majority (senior staff and workmates). Kanter discusses the difficulties women have fitting into an environment where they are a minority. Kanter uses the terms “polarisation” or “exaggeration of differences” between the “tokens” (those who are representative of their social category) and the “domain group”. Since women (such as those in my study) are cast as outsiders, the bond that men have formed in their group exaggerates their commonality and the tokens’ differences. Interviewees Suzanna and Angela identified their “token” status and felt vulnerable and scrutinised, and had pre-determined feelings about how others—such as senior staff and male

⁶¹ Rutherford, *Women’s Work*, 23.

⁶² Cockburn, *In the Way of Women*, 65.

⁶³ Ibid.

workmates—perceived them. Suzanna highlighted the notion of “insider and outsider”, where she felt she did not belong in an area reserved for men.

The interview findings revealed that some senior staff (such as supervisors and managers) and workmates held antiquated perceptions of women. The interviewees stated that they felt the need to work exceptionally hard to fit within the established masculine work, and sometimes even challenged aspects of their femininity so they could be more like the men. In many blue-collar work cultures, women are cast as a misfit because the established masculine culture leaves little space for femininity. It is also a culture that “values physical strength more than any other attributes”.⁶⁴ Most male blue-collar workers identify with the traditional notions of masculinity, which give workers a sense of meaning and positive social identity.⁶⁵ All interviewees in this study highlighted the complications of women bringing feminine traits into the mining work culture. Angela explained that, if they displayed their femininity in the workplace, they felt excluded and unwelcomed because of how others perceived their social identity as women.

To adapt to a masculine work environment and feel as though they belonged to the group, most interviewees used particular strategies to fit in. They stated that they had to challenge their femininity and adapt to the wider set culture. This reflects Bagilhole’s assertion that women develop different strategies and adapt to an environment to overcome obstacles to be more accepted in the work culture. She states that “the environment that they have joined, which is that of men and power, threatens to repel them if they do not adopt or assimilate to the present culture”.⁶⁶ Most interviewees in my study stated that they started to behave like the men to succeed in their organisations. Pip explained that she needed to masquerade as “one of the boys” to be more accepted because there were implications if she did not learn to adapt. In this way, she had to challenge her identity to become an accepted member of the dominant group. Other interviewees, such as Pat and Suzanna, had to work extraordinarily hard to conceal aspects of their femininity to construct a more masculine identity if they wished to survive in some organisations.

⁶⁴ Lucas and Steimel, “Creating and Responding,” 322.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Bagilhole, *Women in Non-traditional Occupations*, 101.

Companies have a responsibility to ensure that a female-friendly work culture is established to enable women to feel accepted in the workplace. When asked whether their companies had made an effort to promote a work culture that was accepting of all women, some interviewees were hesitant to agree. They held similar beliefs that individual managers were unwilling to create a more balanced workforce, and preferred a homogenous work culture. The interviewees confirmed that some managers believed that the workplace operated more efficiently with an all-male workforce, which suggests that female workers were viewed as problematic.

All interviewees also confirmed that their company was very masculine oriented and did not endeavour to challenge the culture to make it more accommodating for women, despite the emphasis on gender diversity. Historically, men have always significantly outnumbered women on the mines, with women typically cast as troublemakers and “generally excluded from participating in particular activities such as labouring, mining and skilled trades”.⁶⁷ Moreover, the mining industry has always promoted a particular form of masculinity.⁶⁸ This is viewed as hegemonic masculinity, which is a “social construction and an institutionalised system of power that privileges … a certain definition of masculinity and marginalises other competing forms”.⁶⁹ In the mining sector, men’s physical strength and perceived ability to survive harsh conditions positions them as the ideal choice to work in this industry.⁷⁰ In contrast, women are viewed as lacking the mental and physical strength to cope with more difficult work.⁷¹ This suggests that some organisations create environments that favour men and exclude women. Eveline’s study on the Argyle diamond mines discusses how a culture was created that excluded women. Eveline found that an element of patriarchy led to the establishment of workplaces that made women feel excluded because companies deliberately created a work environment that was unwelcoming for women.⁷² In this study, men in higher positions held perceptions about who should belong in the mining industry. As a result, this

⁶⁷ “Demand for Labour Steady,” 1.

⁶⁸ Resources Safety Division, “Roadshow Report Toughness,” 6.

⁶⁹ Mumby, “Organizing Men,” 165.

⁷⁰ Resources Safety Division, “Roadshow Report Toughness,” 6.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Eveline and Booth, “Gender and Sexuality,” 560.

suggests that some male employers were more likely to enforce and encourage hostile attitudes towards women. Evidence of these attitudes is also found in my study.

Previous studies claim that the industry's image is a major barrier to its attraction and retention of women, with women feeling like "misfits" in the predominantly masculine work culture.⁷³ My research findings reflect previous studies' findings that discrimination against women remains a problem in the Western Australian mining sector, and indicate that women are being marginalised in the masculine-dominated environment.⁷⁴ The findings suggest that the work culture is a manifestation of discriminatory attitudes that are still held against women and that some women intend to leave the industry for this reason. While my surveys and interviews show that discrimination against women remains unchanged, previous studies do not acknowledge the effects of the culture and attitudes on women's progression. *Mining Weekly* commented in 2013 that women's minority status and loneliness create obstacles that led to women leaving the industry altogether. In addition, *ABC AM* reported that the AMMA hoped to increase the number of female workers by "25% by the year 2020 to produce a more balanced workforce".⁷⁵ However, the findings in Rio Tinto's annual report suggest that overall, the annual numbers of women in their employment may be decreasing because of unchallenged attitudes.⁷⁶

Finding 6: Some Women Have Difficulty Advancing to More Senior Roles in Non-traditional Occupations and Are Viewed as a Minority

While women are now able to work in non-traditional areas in different industries, such as mining, historically, men were associated with this kind of work, with women remaining a minority. My study respondents were not deterred and did not have difficulty in finding work in non-traditional roles at least partly to the mining boom and its accompanying labour shortage. However, despite the shortage of

⁷³ Australian Human Rights Commission, "Women in Male Dominated Industries," 35.

⁷⁴ For example, see *Paydirt's "Hire More Women"*, and the findings from PwC, "Mind the Gap" and Reflective Practice, "Attraction and Retention of Women".

⁷⁵ Alex Heber, "Women to Make Up 25% of Mining Workforce by 2020," *Australian Mining*, February 26, 2013, accessed February 24, 2014, <http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/features/women-to-make-up-25-of-mining-workforce-by-2020>.

⁷⁶ Rio Tinto, "Annual Report 2011," 73

skilled labour at the time these women were first employed, respondents such as Pip reported that it was still considerably difficult for women to access non-traditional jobs, particularly senior and middle management roles. When asked why there were so few women in mining, all interviewees believed that it was because of the long-established work culture that restricts women from participating in such roles. Suzanna, who had been working in the industry for more than five years, stated that that there were still not enough women working in geology—not only in her company, but also in the other mining companies for which she had worked. In addition, Pip stated that there were not enough women working in the areas of drilling and blasting in the industry.

However, it seems that, while blue-collar work is difficult for women to enter in large numbers, upper-level white-collar work (such as management roles) is the most challenging. Women's difficulty in breaking through and entering non-traditional roles is exemplified by Pat's comment that management is still viewed as one of the most difficult areas for women to enter because they are considered "not competent enough". Pat stated that her company was considering whether she would be selected for the role of manager, and stated that one of the male project managers did not appreciate women as managers. She believed that if she made any mistakes in the role, it would be made clear that it was the "woman's fault". She stated that her company was not ready to see a woman in charge: "some can never accept a woman as a boss ... I have to fight these perceptions constantly". These views that are held by organisations, and more so by managers, can be discussed through Ridgeway's argument that the social category of sex works as a primary frame for social relations because it carries common knowledge beliefs about women and men. This cultural belief about the distinguishing characteristics and behaviours that are typical of males and females is essentially taken for granted.⁷⁷ Ridgeway proposes that, while cultural beliefs about men and women are viewed as stereotypes, and that shared gender stereotypes are cultural instructions or rules for enacting gender within society.⁷⁸ For example, if one examines status beliefs in terms of work occupations, gender stereotypes grant each sex specialised skills and competencies.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Ridgeway, *Framed by Gender*, 56.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 61.

Organisations usually have many levels with defined differences in authority, seniority and salary.⁸⁰ They are also gendered, with the top levels usually occupied by men, while women are clustered at the bottom of the hierarchy in the powerless and subordinate positions.⁸¹ As Connell theorises, these many gender issues concern patterns of interaction and relationships.⁸² Through the experiences of the interviewees, such attitudes have continued that seems to have affected the progress for some women.

Even though some women in the mining industry occupy managerial roles that have normally been performed by men, they are regarded as not having the same level of authority as men because these roles carry certain assumptions about the “ideal” type of worker. This is evident in Pip and Suzanna’s comments that occupational segregation reflects male employers’ views on the appropriate roles that men and women should be undertaking, and that they should be encouraged towards certain roles. This may explain the few female employees in non-traditional occupations in the mining industry.

According to Ridgeway, in most organisations, male employers seem to have a particular view of who they would like to hire, which is preferably someone similar to them in terms of thinking, gender and authority.⁸³ This has implications for how men and women relate to one another that is reproduced in organisations. This then leads to issues relating to unconscious bias. As individuals, we internalise stereotypes that contain inaccurate information, are part of our unconscious knowledge, and are not updated or examined regularly.⁸⁴ Unconscious biases can be problematic when they influence decisions on selection, promotion and professional development. One of the most common manifestations of unconscious gender stereotypes in workplaces is the notion of “think manager, think male”, which associates men with managerial roles. Such roles stereotypically require what are deemed to be “masculine traits”; which means that women, consciously or unconsciously are considered “misfits”

⁸⁰ Connell, “Glass Ceilings,” 842.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid, 838.

⁸³ Ridgeway, *Framed by Gender*, 61.

⁸⁴ Whelen, “Barriers to Equal Opportunity”, 59.

in such roles.⁸⁵ Traits such as ambition, strength and decisiveness are more readily associated with men. The interviewees in my study provided examples of ways they believed they were viewed as incompetent to perform certain roles, for example, driving, forklifting and trade roles, as well as high-level administrative roles such as management roles and board-director roles, in which they would have authority over male employees. Angela's company had two female managers; however, within months of them first being employed, these were replaced by three senior male managers. This suggests that a female manager making decisions for others to follow is not standard or accepted as the "norm" in that company, with male decision makers holding certain assumptions about women's perceived capacity to perform particular areas of work. This transforms the relational framing device of gender into a frame of inequality and "difference".⁸⁶ Connell further states that, in contemporary society, gender regimes in particular organisations seem to be reflective of the wider patterns of the established gender order of society.⁸⁷ The gender arrangements (which are the gender regimes of institutions or gender order of whole society) "produce social relations in how certain groups and organisations produce and reproduce gender relations on a daily basis".⁸⁸ This is evident in Pat and Angela's examples of direct discrimination experienced at management level, and the struggle for women to enter more senior roles. However, it should be noted that some women's struggle to enter senior roles is not just restricted to the mining industry. Of course, highly gendered workplaces are not exclusive to the mining industry. In banking and directorship roles, it seems women are also restricted from performing roles that are traditionally associated with men.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Ibid, 60.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Connell, *Gender*, 73.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ See literature regarding barriers for women in senior management in other industries: Fiona Wilson, "May the Best Man Win: Understanding the Lack of Meritocracy of Women in Banking", *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 4 (2014): 361–371,

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/doi/full/10.1108/EDI-11-2013-0095>;

Helen Kang, Mandy Cheng and Sidney Gray, "Corporate Governance and Board Composition: Diversity and Independence of Australia Boards," *Corporate Governance: An International Review*, 2 (2007): 194–207.

Anon, 2013, Women in Finance: Breaking Down Barriers and Stereotypes, *Money Management*, April 8, 2013,

accessed April 5, 2016, <http://www.moneymanagement.com.au/expert-analysis/editorial/women-finance-breaking-down-barriers-and-stereotypes>; Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, "Women in

Fire and Emergency Leadership Roles How Can we Improve the Gender Balance?", 2016, accessed March 30,

2016, http://delwp.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/320933/FINAL-Vol-2-20160216.pdf; Zhuge, Ying, Joyce Kaufman, Diane M. Simeone, Herbert Chen, and Omaida C. Velazquez, "Is There Still a Glass Ceiling for Women in Academic Surgery?" *Annals of Surgery* 4 (2011): 637, accessed March 30, 2016,

http://journals.lww.com/annalsofsurgery/Abstract/2011/04000/Is_There_Still_a_Glass_Ceiling_for_Women_in.1.aspx.

Women are perceived to lack certain traits and qualities that organisations seek. Organisational and occupational structures, processes and practices may be viewed as culturally masculine and less associated with the feminine.⁹⁰ The concept, gendered organisations, usually means paying attention to how organisational structures and processes are dominated by culture.⁹¹ “Masculinity” is a vague concept; however, it can be defined as the values, experiences and meanings that are culturally interpreted as being “accepted” as more ascribed to men. As Pip, Angela and Suzanna stated, there are a very low number of women in management because they do not have the “manly” qualities that managers seek. Further, some managers’ residual attitudes appear to have been shaped by the wider gender order at institutional level continue to be dominant in organisations.⁹² As Bagilhole posits, there is a common belief that women’s “nature” makes them inherently unsuitable for particular work—notably, leadership or leadership roles. As respondents noted, their feminine traits do not reflect the expected “norm” that some mining companies appear to prefer, which is the “alpha male”, resulting in some women experiencing discrimination.

The interviewees were also asked about the reasons they thought few women were currently working in non-traditional roles. All interviewees stated that women were overrepresented in female traditional roles, such as HR; however, there were very few women in roles of management, engineering and geology, which have been traditionally occupied by men. Pip stated that the areas of trades and unskilled labour were also overwhelmingly dominated by male managers, who still perceived male employees to be a better “fit” in these roles. This can be further explained through Acker’s theory. As most respondents stated in both the surveys and interviews, organisations seem to favour men to work in areas that have been traditionally reserved for men. Gender may enter organisations through roles that “carry images as to who are the most ideal workers to perform a certain type of role”.⁹³ Acker theorises that “organizational thinking assumes a disembodied and universal worker.

⁹⁰ Alvesson and Billing, *Understanding Gender*, 72.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Acker, “Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies,” 143.

The worker is actually a man ... images of men's bodies and masculinity pervade organizational processes, marginalising women and contributing to the maintenance of gender segregation in organizations".⁹⁴ Jobs are a gendered concept, even though organisational logic may make them seem as though they are gender neutral; in fact, certain jobs appear to be reserved for particular individuals (namely, men). As in the case of the interviewees and survey respondents, some women do not represent the ideal worker that some companies seek—apparently, that ideal is the male worker, despite organisations claiming that they are gender neutral.

From a historical standpoint, while women worked in various roles in mining communities, they were excluded from roles requiring manual labour or trade skills. As discussed in Chapter 1, women were employed in “gendered” work in the mining community, such as barmaids, housekeepers and nurses, who were expected to provide services for diggers, such as board and lodging. While these roles are not as rigid as they once were, there remains an unequal power relationship in which particular types of work are regarded as more appropriate for each gender. Women were never considered the right people to undertake roles that were normally regarded as men’s work. Until the 1970s, most advertised vacant positions were gender segregated and labelled as “male” jobs for men and “female” jobs for women. Even after positions were no longer advertised as male or female, attitudes persisted and roles appeared gendered and segregated. As shown in Chapter 1, in the goldfields in the 1850s, there were three times as many jobs for men as there were for women, and these were strongly gender segregated.⁹⁵ Women continued to undertake “female” roles, such as nursing, typing, office clerical work and domestic service, which were in high demand.⁹⁶ While times have certainly changed and more than 25 years have passed since the first EEO Act became law, the interviewees believed that issues of discrimination still prevail.

My findings align with previous literature on women experiencing significant obstacles to progressing in non-traditional roles. For example, *The West Australian* commented that there were a few women in trade, technical and supervisor roles,

⁹⁴ Ibid, 139.

⁹⁵ Alford, *Gilt-Edged Women*, 37.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

despite women having the “same level of experience and qualifications as their male counterparts”.⁹⁷ In addition, according to a 2013 report, “32.7% of men and only 9.7% of women working in the mining industry were employed as technicians and trade workers, a slight increase from 30.7% and 8.6%, respectively”.⁹⁸ Similarly, other studies show the difficulties women have faced when entering non-traditional roles.⁹⁹ While these studies suggest that women have encountered difficulty entering these roles, my findings go further by suggesting that one possible reason why there may be so few women in mining is because they are not considered for promotion to more senior roles.

Finding 7: Flexible Work Arrangements Are Provided by Some Companies but Women’s Caring Responsibilities Do Not Reflect Some Managers’ Ideals of a “Presentee-ism” Culture

Fifty-five per cent of the survey respondents stated that working hours and leave arrangements allowed women to fulfil work obligations and family responsibilities, while 44 per cent disagreed that they were able to have flexible arrangements that suited their family commitments. In contrast, all respondents in the surveys and interviews (with and without children) commented that flexible working arrangements did exist and had been designed to allow women to balance their work and care roles. This finding contradicts some previous studies reviewed in this thesis, which state that some women do not have access to satisfactory flexible arrangements.¹⁰⁰

However, one third of the survey respondents strongly agreed that having primary family responsibilities created issues for some women in undertaking certain work practices and roles. Despite shifts in contemporary society that have resulted in an

⁹⁷ “Women Favoured for Jobs,” 1.

⁹⁸ Duffy, “Still Not Enough Women,” 1.

⁹⁹ See Reflective Practice, “Attraction and Retention of Women,” 37–38 (for strategies that companies have devised to improve the long-term retention of women); Pirotta, “An Exploration”, 37–38 (for an explanation of the FIFO experience); Bevege, “Women in the Mining Sector,” 1; Trembath, “Australian Mines and Metals”; Smail, “Resource Industry,” 1; CMEWA, “A Note from the Chief Executive,” 6 (for a description of ways to keep women in mining in the long term, and a recent report on this issue).

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter 4 of Barrera, Gardner and Horstman, “Women’s Experiences,” 2; CMEWA, “A Note from the Chief Executive,” 2; WGEA, “2014–13 Public Report Form,” 30 (for a specific look at a particular mining company). Based on the findings of my study, it remains questionable whether this has been achieved in the short term.

increasing number of men having caring responsibilities, some women are still the main employees requesting flexible working arrangements to balance their family and work roles. The interviewees all stated that work practices required long hours and unpredictable work rosters. Pat observed that flexible working arrangements were provided by being written into their contracts when negotiated with their managers. However, although she was content with the flexible roster, she felt restricted and uncomfortable taking a day off for family reasons because of the ingrained culture—perpetuated by male managers—that emphasised the need to always be present at work, and to start and finish at the designated times. As Pat had care responsibilities, the irregular hours she worked constructed her as an unreliable worker. For women in leadership positions, family responsibility can significantly disrupt or stall their progress. It can be theorised that men and women are viewed differently when undertaking leadership roles because men's life circumstances rarely seem to present barriers to work but women's careers are more likely to be affected because of having to move out the workforce to raise children.¹⁰¹ This relates to the phenomenon known as “glass cliff positions”. As Caprino states, because women have more to “prove that men in terms of their being reliable and efficient workers, they are viewed as more likely to fail as their life circumstances (such as care responsibilities) prevent them from fulfilling more senior roles”.¹⁰² This was shown in the responses that Pat and other interviewees gave in relation to women who combine work and care.

Pip and Suzanna also commented that female employees were frustrated that they had to commence and finish work at set hours to be seen as productive workers. Both stated that such attitudes cause women to leave a particular company, only to find that this occurs in all mining companies. The interviewees' comments confirm Coleman's theory of how individual perceptions affect gender relations between women and men.¹⁰³ Coleman theorises that, while there is an expectation that women be present at work, some managers know that family obligations sometimes prevent

¹⁰¹ Kathy Caprino, “The ‘Glass Cliff Phenomenon’ that Senior Female Leaders Face Today and How to Avoid It”, *Forbes*, October 20, 2015, accessed December 20, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kathycaprino/2015/10/20/the-glass-cliff-phenomenon-that-senior-female-leaders-face-today-and-how-to-avoid-it/#2c58a78e80d5>.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Coleman, *Women at the Top*, 99.

them from working the set hours. However, employers tend to emphasise a work culture based on “presentee-ism” with minimal disruptions.¹⁰⁴ All my interviewees (including those who observed other female employees with caring roles) stated that women could not always be present when required, which constructed them as unreliable and undedicated workers in the minds of their managers. This ideal places value on the preferred male work model by managers who have no toleration for part-time or flexible working arrangements, as this typically involves irregular working hours.¹⁰⁵ Some managers generally prefer those who can work beyond the statutory hours, and start and finish at the set times.¹⁰⁶ Historically, men’s careers have centred on their primary roles as “breadwinners and full-time workers, as emphasised in the current mining companies”.¹⁰⁷

Historically, men have been classed as reliable and dedicated workers, who can work very long hours and not be disrupted by family life. These perceptions seem to remain embedded in the mining industry, despite changes to both men’s and women’s roles in contemporary society. My interviewees noted that, even though it is expected that women be present at work, the FIFO rosters that normally comprise 13-hour shifts make it difficult for women with family care responsibilities to work the set hours. My findings reflect Acker’s theory about the way care roles are kept separate from work. Acker notes that organisations prefer that family (reproduction) be kept separate from paid work (production) because “this separation highlights the gender division of labour that sees men have less association with family responsibilities”.¹⁰⁸ My findings indicate that in the mining industry in Western Australia, men are more likely than women to conform to the notion of the “ideal worker” because they generally have limited caring responsibilities.

My findings also confirm theories about how some organisations keep the roles of family and paid work as two separate institutions. Connell’s argument is based on the gender order, which she argues constructs different power relations between women and men that are located in the wider realms of society. Women are allocated roles

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Acker, “Gendered Organizations,” 567.

that reflect their femininity, such as being caring and nurturing.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, Pocock's theory of the care/work regime parallels Connell's theories, in that certain values at a societal level are fixed in institutionalised gender regimes, which see women identified as the "proper" carers.¹¹⁰ While gender roles are the reason women are assigned the bulk of caring roles—an ideal that organisations perpetuate—the respondents from my surveys and interviews revealed that organisations devalue flexibility and do not offer alternatives because this is not the "ideal". As a result, some women can leave the industry altogether. As it was beyond the scope of this study, none of the interviewees discussed whether male employees were encouraged to undertake flexible working arrangements, which may alleviate current perceptions around flexible working arrangements. Further, no interviewees said that flexibility was a major barrier to their career progression.

A 2009 study on the experiences of women who undertook FIFO work arrangements in Western Australia highlighted that balancing work and unpredictable roster shifts is a significant barrier to working in the mining sector because managers have "created a stigma around flexible working arrangements where women felt pressured to be available when required.¹¹¹ Companies should offer men the opportunity to undertake working arrangements to benefit both women and men". As already indicated, men are not encouraged to access flexible arrangements; however, once this begins to occur, it may assist with decreasing the stigma around flexibility.

Another major issue facing women in the industry is the lack of readily available childcare arrangements onsite, particularly for women working with a FIFO arrangement or working 12-hour shifts. Among the survey respondents, 77 per cent were not happy with childcare arrangements. In the interviews, it was confirmed that most women needed to make their own arrangements at their own expense. It is evident from these responses that some mining companies still do not feel obliged to provide support for women seeking suitable childcare arrangements because they may regard it as the responsibility of the individual employee. The interviewees believed that it relates to companies' perceptions of the notion of care. The evidence

¹⁰⁹ Millet, *Sexual Politics*, 26.

¹¹⁰ Pocock, *Work/Life Collision*, 177.

¹¹¹ Pirotta, "An Exploration," 37–38.

indicates that some managers hold outdated traditional views regarding who should be responsible for care. As interviewees expressed, if companies were serious about engaging more women, they would make a greater effort to provide childcare facilities. These ideals are ingrained at an organisational level and appear to not have been challenged. Carers roles are deemed only for women because they entail characteristics that do not align with the traits a “proper” worker should have.¹¹² My interviewees’ comments were similar to the findings of various reports conducted on the lack of childcare arrangements, such as the 2013 report, *Cancer of the Bush or Salvation for Our Cities: FIFO and DIDO Work Practices in Regional Australia*, which found that a “lack of quality childcare facilities stood as a significant barrier for women wanting to work in the resources sector”.¹¹³

A more complex issue is that many companies are unwilling to run childcare facilities because of FTBs, where companies are charged at a higher rate if they maintain childcare centres onsite.¹¹⁴ They may also have no inclination to do so because the demand for such facilities does not justify the additional expense.¹¹⁵ This is an important issue that the government needs to address. AusIMM recommends that, in order to increase women’s participation in the workforce, the government should extend the FTB to all employers. While previous governments, such as that under Kevin Rudd, “have put forward policies to support child care training, more needs to be done to focus on support for group care that takes place away from the child’s home”.¹¹⁶ Most childcare centres “operate normal and traditional hours; however, it can pose problems for women who work 13 hour shifts”.¹¹⁷ For FIFO employees in larger mining towns, access to childcare is difficult because traditional 12-hour mining shifts and unpredictable rosters do not align with childcare operating hours.¹¹⁸ If employers, such as mining companies, have the option of implementing FTB legislation, it would greatly assist workers, and benefit both men and women. However, to date, it appears that no company has made that decision regarding FTB,

¹¹² Pocock, *Work/Life Collision*, 177.

¹¹³ House of Representatives, “Cancer of the Bush,” 19.

¹¹⁴ WIMnet, “AusIMM Workplace Gender Equality,” 2.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ AusIMM, “Submission to the Review of Australia’s Future Tax System: Personal Tax and Transfers,” May 2009, accessed March 12, 2014, 2, <http://www.ausimm.com.au/>.

¹¹⁷ AusIMM, “Submission to the Review,” 2.

¹¹⁸ AusIMM, “AusIMM Pre-Budget,” 2.

which suggests that companies may be “resistant in offering such initiatives as it would antagonise male employees (who are deemed workers not associated with care) and it would also associate the mining company with care and family”.¹¹⁹ As FTB legislation has not been implemented, access to childcare remains the responsibility of the individual employee. This problem could be partly alleviated by mining companies providing adequate childcare facilities. Most of my study respondents commented that affordable and reliable childcare arrangements and additional school facilities are necessary if some companies are to retain a higher female workforce because this could further women’s ability to balance their work and care obligations.

Finding 8: Some Companies Provide Flexible Work Arrangements and Childcare Policies, Yet Some Senior Managers Are Unwilling to Enforce Them as Effectively as Required

More than half of the respondents stated that their current company did not have policies that addressed flexible working options for female employees. The interviewees and survey respondents were asked about family-friendly and flexible working arrangement policies. These policies are designed to help women access flexible working arrangements to better manage their conflicting and demanding family and work obligations.¹²⁰ Fifty-five per cent of respondents stated that their company did have policies; however, 44 per cent stated that such policies did not exist. All interviewees (both those with and without family obligations) stated that their current company did not enforce flexible working arrangements or family-friendly policies effectively.

Most respondents stated that the refusal to enforce policies effectively was a direct indication of outdated beliefs about how women are not suitable employees for the mining industry because of their family duties.¹²¹ This can be explained through Acker’s theory. She argues that the “divide between production and reproduction

¹¹⁹ Inquiry into Balancing Work and Childcare, “Tax Relief for Childcare: Salary Sacrifice,” accessed November 12, 2014, 233, www.aph.gov.au/.

¹²⁰ Work and Family Researchers, “Definition of Family-Friendly Policies,” 1.

¹²¹ Acker, “From Sex Roles,” 567.

constitutes the gendered under-structure of society's institutions ... this is perpetuated in institutional processes that are organised so that responsibility for reproduction is located elsewhere".¹²² Hence, some mining companies may not be inclined to implement policies that associate these organisations with the notion of care because mining industries are built on elements that embody masculinity.

This study initially sought to ask participants whether there was a relationship between limited flexible working arrangements and the ability to be promoted. However, this was beyond the scope of this thesis, and was not determined. My findings reflect Barrera, Gardner and Horstman's 2010 findings that, because the requirement for flexibility may involve working less than the preferred shift hours, senior managers do not feel obliged to adopt policies permitting flexible working hours. While Pip did not have any dependent children, she was aware that her company did not have such policies. In her opinion, this was a way of indicating that women with children could not participate in certain practices. Angela commented that her company regarded women who sought time away from work to fulfil family responsibilities as being less dedicated. This aligns with Bacchi's theory that very few employers provide family-friendly policies because they may wish to separate the private and public spheres.

Since policies are not intended to assist women, they merely facilitate women balancing domestic and paid work responsibilities, without challenging the role of the responsibility of care.¹²³ Thus, childcare and maternity leave become "add-ons" for women and reinforce the perception that women are primarily responsible for caring. As mining companies prefer to keep care and work as two separate institutions, flexible working arrangements are stigmatised.¹²⁴ Caring responsibilities are associated with femininity and nurturing—something with which organisations may not associate. Since this involves women, women's caring roles are not welcomed with institutions. Previous studies also confirm the absence of company policies, as reflected in my respondents' comments.¹²⁵

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Bacchi, *Politics of Affirmative Action*, 84.

¹²⁴ AusIMM, "Increasing the Diversity."

¹²⁵ A WGEA survey asked whether FMG had policies implemented. The results from the survey showed they only had a "working strategy", and no actual policy. However, FMG's responses in the survey noted that they had

As discussed in Chapter 4, other studies reflect my findings regarding companies not implementing the policies that are a legal requirement. However, while previous studies acknowledge that flexibility is an ongoing issue, none pinpoint issues regarding flexibility and the perpetuation of the “presentee-sim” culture. For example, a 2008 CMEWA report—*Attraction and Retention of Women in the Western Australian Resources Sector*—states that companies are unwilling to implement policies.¹²⁶ Given that some mining companies appear to not have challenged the organisational culture, this encourages some managers to continue to hold discriminatory views against women.

Summary

My findings indicate that, while the participants in this study were able to obtain employment in all areas of the mining industry (which certain circumstances allowed), it is difficult for most to progress beyond a certain level. Their progress is often blocked by managers who prefer male workers because they either regard men as more reliable and willing to work long shifts, or they hold outdated perceptions about the appropriate roles for women and men. This is particularly the case for the women in this study who wish to obtain positions of seniority over male workers.

My findings posit according to the views expressed by the participants, there exists substantial difficulty for some women to enter and progress in certain non-traditional roles such as managerial and labouring. This may be indicative of the persistent discrimination that is ingrained in the mining work culture, which presents barriers to women’s advancement. Further, I have tested my findings against existing studies, and found a correlation between my study and past research, which suggests that opportunities for some women in the mining industry in Western Australia have not appreciably improved.

flexible working arrangements for both women and men, with men accessing 2.5% of such arrangements and women accessing 76.8%. WGEA, “2014–13 Public Report,” 1.

¹²⁶ Reflective Practice, “Attraction and Retention of Women,” 32.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This research sought to explore why so few women are employed in the iron ore Pilbara mining region of Western Australia, and to ascertain what barriers prevent them from progressing in non-traditional roles. Previous research shows that, although women's participation has improved during the last 10 years, female employees still represent only a small percentage of the total mining workforce in Western Australia. To date, previous studies have not discussed whether strategies and initiatives adopted by mining companies have assisted in retaining women in the workforce over a long-term period. In contrast, my study reveals that, while there is effort by companies to enable women access to EEO, the participants believe that discrimination persists. The personal experiences of the interviewees suggest that senior management has not challenged the patriarchal organisational culture that sanctions the discriminatory practices that persist at the middle-management and organisational level. My findings indicate that some companies are unwilling to change their work culture to create a fairer and more equitable workplace that presents women with more opportunities. While EEO policies exist, the participants in this study expressed that they believe such policies are not as effectively enforced as they should be by senior management, resulted in women's limited career progression and promotion to more supervisory and senior roles. This is particularly true in the context of management roles, which, according to the findings of this study, have proven the most difficult for women to attain.

This study initially posed the question: if mining companies are implementing numerous strategies to encourage more women to participate in mining, and are actively recruiting women through promotional and company brochures and recruitment websites, why are there still such small numbers of women in the mining workforce, particularly in non-traditional roles? While initiatives have been implemented to assist women to advance their careers, these appear to have little effect as yet. My study showed that reports such as that by CMEWA in 2008 do not address ways training could be aimed to benefit all women to move into areas in

which they are underrepresented.¹ My study indicates that, in practice, these strategies appear to be merely cosmetic.

As a result, it appears that most of the company reports' aims (such as those discussed by CMEWA and PwC in this study have not been achieved. The statements of the respondents indicate that middle management is not enforcing the initiatives and advancement opportunities that senior management are presenting, which creates barriers for women. PwC's 2012 report was a way forward for mining companies to tackle the issues of gender imbalance by closing the gender gap and enabling employers to improve the female workforce ratio. However, while PwC's report identifies work culture as problematic, the issues it outlines do not appear to have been addressed. As demonstrated in my findings, the work culture continues to perpetuate discriminatory behaviours, which limits access to EEO for female workers. Thus, efforts to provide gender balance in the work environment have not increased the number of women participating in mining. Such initiatives appear to be ineffective as long as there remains an organisational culture that continues to maintain the inequalities identified by the respondents in this study.

Previous studies have identified that a skills shortage has had a negative effect on Australia's competitiveness and productivity.² In Western Australia, the most significant shortages have been in traditionally male-dominated areas, including among engineers, geologists, electricians, fitters, and construction and heavy automotive tradespeople.³ Despite strategies to proactively change the gender workforce composition, gender inequity remains. As of October 2014, only 18.5 per cent of female employees were employed in the mining industry in Western Australia.⁴ In order to ascertain why this is the case, my study applied theories of gender and power relationships in organisations, particularly Kanter's assertion that women who undertake professional work by stepping outside the traditional female stereotypes or gaining employment in male-dominated professions remain "tokens"

¹ Reflective Practice, "Attraction and Retention of Women," 41.

² PwC, "Mind the Gap," 6.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Sadie Davidson, "Women in Mining Figures Declining," 12, *Australia's Mining Monthly*, October 2014.

in most sectors, emphasising their difference from the dominant group.⁵ It appears that this issue remains prevalent in the contemporary mining industry.

My study's radical feminist lens proved an ideal way to conceptualise this research. This theory helped explain why policy and practice appear to diverge, and how inequality can be maintained and reproduced. For example, Connell's theory on gender order and gender regimes assisted in explaining women's lack of participation in traditional roles in the mining sector. This helped explain reasons for some managers' outdated behaviours through the gender order, which describes the wider social relations that construct different power relationships between women and men in mining. According to Connell, this order tends to shape behaviour (in this case, the behaviour of senior and middle managers) in companies, and the orderliness of gender relations is institutionalised in gender regimes.⁶ This theory helped at least determine that some companies may be perpetuating discrimination by not interrupting the gender order that continues to influence managers' recruitment decisions, and reinforces the authority and power status quo by undermining women's progress. As a result, most of the participants have had considerable difficulty entering non-traditional roles (such as management roles) that have usually been associated with men.

While companies have introduced initiatives and strategies to create an equitable workforce, the extent to which companies are willing to rectify this pattern of inequality is debatable. While company initiatives and strategies to increase opportunities for women have been put in place to increase work opportunities and progress women based on merit, this may not be the case for some women. Most participants stated that they had experienced direct discrimination without it being resolved by the company or manager. Acker's argument on hierachal organisations emphasises the pervasiveness of male dominance and assumes that organisations are not gender neutral.⁷ This helped me to draw some conclusions because it demonstrated that perceptions continue to shape the work culture of the mining industry, creating implications for some female employees. Further literature on

⁵ Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, 197.

⁶ Connell, *Gender and Power*, 99.

⁷ Acker, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies," 139.

gender and organisations was consulted from Ridgeway⁸ and Cockburn's⁹ theory, which gave insight to the relationship between and prevalence of the continued issues of gender and power in the workplace. When I tested the evidence that was provided by the survey respondents and the interviewees against gender theory, I found that the deliberate recruitment decisions made by some managers enable these managers to exclude women from non-traditional work roles.¹⁰ This appears to affect women's access to EEOs.

This study also traced the historical progress of the women's movement, which resulted in mandatory EEO legislation in the 1980s. With programs, legislation and policies established, the aim was to promote the status of women, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, which was a requirement in all organisations.¹¹ Legislation was passed to allow women to be equal to men and for gender diversity to be taken into account. However, the efficacy of legislation and policies that are meant to remedy discrimination remains disputable because companies may have abandoned their obligation to rectify a patriarchal culture. The survey participants in my study stated that policies are written to appeal to men in the male-dominated environment, but are disguised behind gender-neutral phrases and terms. This can render them unsuccessful in practice, as they may not be applied effectively. Thus, some companies' obligations to adhere strictly to legislative requirements by eradicating all forms of discrimination have apparently not been fulfilled at the middle-management level, thus enabling discriminatory practices to continue.

The Study's Overall Themes

It is evident from the survey and interview findings that discrimination by managers (and participants' questioning of the intent of companies) is a reflection of policies not being put into practice. The overall themes that were identified from the surveys and interviews overlapped; however, new findings emerged, which was an important achievement for this study. First, this study found that some managers prefer hiring

⁸ Ridgeway, *Framed by Gender*, 7–8.

⁹ Cockburn, *In the Way of Women*, 62–63.

¹⁰ Wearing, *Gender*, 14.

¹¹ Lake, *Getting Equal*, 253.

male employees over capable women. Second, the entrenched masculine culture forces women to work harder to fit into the work environment. The respondents confirmed that this has caused some women to leave the industry. Third, entering the mining industry was considered difficult, but certain types of work were considered more difficult than others to enter. For example, the participants stated that the roles that had stronger masculine characteristics such as management and hole blast drilling seemed to be the most difficult areas in which to find work. As a result, women's advancement and promotion opportunities were limited in these non-traditional roles. Fourth, mentoring systems exist, yet some line managers do not provide follow-up. Fifth, policies are perceived as not being enforced effectively by some senior managers, which permits discrimination to continue. Finally, although flexible working arrangements are provided, women with caring responsibilities who access these arrangements may find that they no longer reflect the desired "presentee-ism" culture that some managers perpetuate. While my study found that policies for childcare and flexible working arrangements exist in some companies, it indicates they are not always enforced effectively. This finding aligns with existing studies from the last few years. Both the surveys and interviews suggest that EEO policies offer little more than rhetoric, and are not applied effectively. Although it is now three decades since EEO legislation was enacted in Western Australia, companies apparently still find ways to avoid their obligations by not implementing equal opportunities for women.

Areas for Future Research

For future studies on the issue of why so few women are participating in the Western Australian iron ore industry (and Australia overall), I propose four areas of further research. First, there needs to be further investigation of how the lack of role models affects women in the mining sector. While this study indicated that a lack of role models could be a barrier to women's progress in the industry, there is scope for further research. Second, given that mining companies are actively recruiting graduates into their workforce, it would be worth investigating how this might create new opportunities for young women. Third, more research is needed to help middle managers find ways to implement initiatives effectively, and dismantle old-fashioned behaviours towards female employees. Interviewing middle managers and senior

managers to attain their opinions on why women experience limited EEO and progression opportunities may assist in better understanding how and why discriminatory behaviours continue, and how these can be rectified. This was beyond the scope of my study because permission restrictions and limited access to mine sites did not allow this. Fourth, more research is needed on men who are primary carers (or who share caring equally with their partners) in mining, and whether requesting flexible working arrangements affects their careers.

Recommendations to Improve Women's Access to EEOs

This study also suggests some recommendations to improve women's access to EEOs. First, each company has a responsibility to educate individual managers (senior and above) to abandon sexist behaviours, and compulsory programs should be implemented to challenge their existing perceptions. As was discussed in Chapter 2, managers may hold unconscious biases towards women through their actions by evaluating and forming judgements about who is more capable, who "fits" a certain role better and who is more "hireable". Such biases contribute to the organisational culture and dynamics. A critical aspect of any strategy to improve women's employment and promotion opportunities would be to challenge the unconscious biases driving the behaviours that affect such opportunities. One method to combat these biases is to create tools that assess the prevalence and dynamics of unconscious gender stereotypes.¹² This would enable organisations to encourage individual managers to recognise unconscious bias, using strategies to identify triggers for bias, and thus to interrupt the unconscious thinking processes that produce such bias.¹³ For example, changing notions around flexible working arrangements so that men and women have equal access to such initiatives would remove the stigma associated with these arrangements. Programs could also assist organisations to examine their systems, processes and cultural norms to eradicate or prevent behaviours that lead to unconscious bias.

¹² Whelan, "Barriers to Equal Opportunity", 63.

¹³ Ibid.

Companies should provide comprehensive strategies and endeavour to adhere to strict procedures to review policies' efficacy and ensure HR policies are enforced more effectively as required at middle-management level. As a result, strategies and initiatives to promote female staff would be based on merit, rather than gender. It is important to consider how the next generation of managers can be educated so that they do not reflect traditional discriminatory behaviours towards women. This is a significant challenge that companies are required to address, and indicates that companies must be proactive in putting policies into practice at a company level by enforcing them more effectively.

Second, the government should work more closely with mining industries to help develop strategies to improve the retention of women, thereby creating a more balanced workforce. Government interventions—such as focusing on showcasing female talent—should give priority to increasing the number of women, particularly in non-traditional roles. Third, senior management should do more to shift middle managers' behaviours by creating programs to educate them about gender equality. Such changes should filter throughout the entire organisation, although it will take time to alter an organisational culture and traditional discourse that has been established historically. Fourth, companies should implement greater strategies to encourage and allow more women to attain senior level positions. This would rectify gender inequity at an organisational level, and dismantle the persisting gender order that is ingrained in these gendered institutions. Finally, companies—from the director downwards—must be committed to challenging the discriminatory work culture by implementing policies at all levels of the organisation to enable women greater access to EEO and progression to more senior roles. They must be willing to abandon outdated behaviours and focus on establishing and maintaining an equitable workforce.

This study incorporated a radical feminist approach in attempting to understand gender discrimination in the wider culture and ways in which women's exclusion from the labour workforce is highly associated with the unequal burden of reproductive labour. The recommendations discussed in this chapter are informed by a liberal feminist approach as it discusses ways of educating individuals to alter their behaviours and remove prejudices to allow women access to EEO. Focusing on

individual behaviour allows the reformation of internal structures and ultimately produces change. However, these recommendations have their limitations. As was discussed in Chapter 2, radical feminism foregrounds the discussion of continuing gender inequities in gendered organisations that are not a product of only individual ignorance but are an example of continued power asymmetries that marginalise women. Despite introducing equal opportunity policies, to date, it appears that some mining companies continue to base their recruitment strategies on an outdated perception of the model of “ideal” workers, whom, it is assumed, are more likely to be male, given male disassociation with reproductive work.

While educating individuals is one avenue for improving women’s work opportunities, using “merit” as a gender-neutral management tool is not sufficient. Organisations will continue to hold gendered constructs that encode masculine traits and present difficulties for women to progress in their careers, and thus the gender order will continue to be produced and maintained within gendered regimes. As individual behaviour is influenced by individuals’ experiences in gendered organisations, organisations themselves need to be altered to challenge individual behaviour. While it is not possible to conclude decisively whether EEO policies are effectively implemented as required, the participants in this study expressed their belief that their difficulties in progressing (and the difficulties of other women) are because of companies’ perceptions. Such perceptions begin at the senior level and filter their way down throughout the organisation, affecting managers’ perceptions and the organisation as a whole. The established power relations may thus restrict companies in effectively enforcing policies in practice.

Summary

Although there have been improvements for women in mining, it is evident that female employees continue to experience discrimination in Western Australia, which poses significant challenges for both current and future employees. Theorists have questioned how individual organisations can successfully “degender” when the gender order is embedded in gender regimes. Hurst and Usher argue that “breaking

free of traditional gender ideologies means being able to see men nurture people and women be more competitive and powerful".¹⁴ They state that institutions will be able to remove institutionalised gender bias only when the performance expectations that are placed on employees are not based on the "ideal worker".¹⁵ Gender relations are based on equality when gender is not central, and the focus is instead placed on employees' capabilities in the organisation.

In the current mining context, while the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* contains the "requirement that companies act to remedy discrimination in all workplaces", translating policy into practice is difficult.¹⁶ This study indicates that while companies comply with the Act by having EEO policies, such policies do not necessarily rectify ongoing discrimination because they appear not to be enforced effectively. In ascertaining why there are still so few women in the mining industry, this study found that some companies do not seem to have challenged the patriarchal culture to allow EEO access, which has possibly limited their commitment to creating a diverse workforce. This finding is further underlined by recent comments by Rio Tinto's CEO that:

One of the biggest challenges [for women] is that you can throw a job opportunity at a bloke and he says, "I can do that, I've got all the background" ... You throw the same opportunity at a woman [and they say], "I've never done that before" ... Women need to be more confident in [their] own ability to adapt ... and [be] responsive to a new challenge ... no man would ever do that.¹⁷

This illustrates the negative behaviours that remain ingrained in companies, seemingly preventing the effective implementation of policies.

While it cannot be concluded with certainty the extent to which company policies are ineffective because they are not effectively enforced, this study provides some

¹⁴ Jensen Nexo Hanne, "Gendered Theories of Organizations," in *Gender and Organizations—Changing Perspectives*, ed. Jeanne de Bruijn and Eva Cyba (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), 59.

¹⁵ Hanne, "Gendered Theories," 59.

¹⁶ Equal Opportunity Commission, *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*, 1.

¹⁷ Belinda Tasker, "Rio Tinto Boss Says Women Need More Confidence," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 2, 2015, accessed July 4, 2015, <http://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace-relations/rio-tinto-boss-sam-walsh-says-women-need-more-confidence-20150702-gi3m3u.html>.

evidence of women who continue to experience discrimination. It appears that, while companies have endeavoured to increase the number of women in their employ, the unchallenged culture that has resulted in deliberately selecting the “ideal” worker (namely, men) raises questions regarding whether there is a genuine will to enforce policies efficiently to eradicate discrimination at middle-management and higher levels. This apparent ingrained discrimination has resulted in some women not being promoted to senior and supervisory roles, and it is unacceptable that such behaviours are allowed to prevail in the contemporary workforce, despite anti-discrimination legislation.

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Appendix A: Cover Letter

My name is Bobana Kljajevic and I am studying a Master of Philosophy by Research (Social Sciences) at Curtin University. Research evidence suggests that there are only 22 per cent of women participating in the Western Australian mining industry. My research aims to determine why only a small number of women are currently employed in the Western Australian iron ore industry. It also contributes to the development of an industry agenda to significantly increase the retention of women in the minerals industry across all work roles, and to build on previous research of this nature. This requires me to access the first-hand opinions of women currently employed by mining companies.

I am seeking your assistance in answering some short questions. As this survey is completely anonymous, please *do not* put your name on the survey because each will be numbered for identification purposes. Even if the findings of the survey are published, none of the information you provide will be linked back to you as an individual.

This survey is intended for research purposes only. Its aim is to collect responses from female workers currently employed in the iron ore mining industry. If you have any friends or family currently employed in this industry, please encourage them to participate in this research.

If, after reading the information above, you agree to participate in this survey, please read the attached instructions for completing the survey. The survey should take no longer than 35 minutes.

If you would like more information before you decide whether or not to participate, please email me at bobana.kljajevic@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.

This study has been approved under Curtin University's process for lower-risk studies (approval number MCCA-20-13). This process complies with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (Chapters 5.1.7 and 5.1.18 to 5.1.21). For further information on this study, please contact the researchers named above or the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee: c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth 6845, or by telephoning (08) 9266 9223 or emailing hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Appendix B: Information Sheet

An exploration into the factors affecting women's participation in the iron ore mining industry of Western Australia

Dear participant,

I invite you to participate in a research study that aims to explore the reasons why only a small percentage of women are currently working in the iron ore industry in Western Australia. This study is part of my Master Degree in Philosophy, supervised by Associate Professor Bobbie Oliver and Dr Scott Fitzgerald at Curtin University.

Nature and Aims of the Study

While research has been conducted into women's experiences in mining and its emotional and psychological effects on families, there is limited research on the reasons that only a small percentage of women are working in mining in Western Australia during the current mining boom. This study will investigate whether particular barriers exist in certain areas—such as equal employment opportunities—that cause women's limited attraction and retention in the mining sector.

What the Study Will Involve

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete a survey that asks about your experiences working in the mining sector. There will be some multiple-choice and some open-ended questions.
- Indicate whether you are willing to be interviewed for this study. I will be selecting approximately 10 per cent of participants to interview. You do not have to participate in the interview to complete the survey.

It is estimated that the survey should take no longer than 35 minutes. Interviews should take around 45 minutes to one hour. The interviews will be organised at a mutually convenient location and time.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal from the Study

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without any prejudice. All information is treated as confidential and no names

(unless permission has been granted) or other details that might identify you will be used in any publication arising from the research. If you decide to withdraw, no coercion will be used and the information you have provided will be returned to you. Further, your consent will be clearly established before the collection of any data.

Privacy

Your privacy is very important. If you elect to be a part of this study, the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. This project has been approved by Curtin University's Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number MCCA-20-13) on the understanding that no participants will be identified. Initially, this research is for private study and examination. However, should any part of the study be published subsequent to examination, no members of the public or your employers will be able to identify you as an individual because the research will be presented as coded, aggregated data. The data supplied by you will be stored in a safe and secure location in my supervisor's office, only accessible by me and my supervisors. These data will only be accessible through the use of a secure password. During the analysis phase, data will be re-identifiable only by me and my supervisors to ensure that the linkage is accurate. Once the linkage has been completed, identifiers will be removed from the data.

Benefits of the Study

First, this study aims to contribute to developing an industry agenda to significantly increase the retention of women in the minerals industry across all work roles. Second, this research aims to increase the community's understanding of employment opportunities in Western Australian mining regions, and improve women's access to these opportunities. Third, this study aims to identify issues that limit women's access to equal opportunities, and contribute to dismantling barriers that prevent women from remaining with their employer in the long term. It is possible that there may be no direct benefit to you if you elect to be a part of the study. While there is no guarantee that you will benefit from this study, it is anticipated that the knowledge gained by your participation may contribute to shaping future initiatives and strategies to broaden the participation of women in the mining industry.

Possible Risks

There are no specific risks anticipated in this study because the questions are not of a private or invasive nature; however, it is possible that, in expressing opinions about the statements in the survey, you may recall distressing personal circumstances. Although specific comments are requested, you are at liberty to merely tick the boxes without adding details, if you prefer to do so. The absence of personal comments will not invalidate the survey.

If you have questions about this study, please feel free to contact me on 0406 102 622 or by email at bobana.kljajevic@postgrad.curtin.edu.au. I am more than happy to discuss with you any concerns you may have about this study.

If you are willing to consent to participation in this study, please complete the consent form and return to me via email.

Thank you for your time and assistance with this research project.

Sincerely,

Bobana Kljajevic

This study has been approved under Curtin University's process for lower-risk studies (approval number MCCA-20-13). This process complies with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (Chapters 5.1.7 and 5.1.18 to 5.1.21). For further information on this study, contact the researchers named above or the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee: c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth 6845, or by telephoning (08) 9266 9223 or emailing hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Appendix C: Consent Form

An exploration into the factors affecting women's participation in the iron ore industry in Western Australia

- 1.** I agree voluntarily to take part in this study:
 - a) by completing the survey
 - b) I am willing to be interviewed Yes No
- 2.** I have read the information sheet provided and have been given a full explanation of the purpose of this study, the procedure involved and what is expected of me.
- 3.** I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and the researcher has explained the possible problems that may arise out of the participation in this study.
- 4.** I understand I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice and without needing to give any reason.
- 5.** I understand that my name and identity will be stored separately from the data, and these are accessible *only* to the researcher. All data provided by me will be analysed anonymously using code numbers.

Name of participant:

Signature of participant:

Date:

Appendix D: Survey Questions

Please complete *all questions*.
Even if you feel unsure, please have a go!
Do NOT put your name on the survey.
For ease of completion, just click on the most suitable answer.

RETURNING THE SURVEY

By Email

If the survey has been **emailed** to you, return via email to me at my Curtin email address (see below). All emails will be treated confidentially and any potentially identifying information (such as email addresses and names) will be removed. Please ensure that the consent form is signed and dated by sending a scanned copy via email along with the survey.

Return Date

Please return the survey by **4 April 2014**.

Any Questions?

Please feel free to contact the researcher, Bobana Kljajevic, on the following if you require assistance in completing the survey or have additional questions:

Curtin University
Master of Philosophy (Social Sciences) Candidate
Mobile: 0406 102 622
Email: bobana.kljajevic@postgrad.curtin.edu.au

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Your age is:
- Less than 20 years 35–40
 20–24 41–44
 25–29 45–49
 30–34 50+
2. How long have you been working in the **mining industry**? *(Please tick one)*
- Less than 12 months
 1–5 years
 5–10 years
 11 years or more
3. **How many** mining operations have you worked at? *(Please tick one)*
- Only this operation
 1 other operation
 2 other operations
 3 or more operations
4. Which best describes your current **employment arrangements**? *(Please tick one)*
- Company employee
 Employee of a principal contractor
 Employee of a sub-contractor
 Other (*please specify below*)
- Click here to enter text.
5. Which best describes your **travelling arrangements**? Do you: *(Please tick one)*
- Commute to work daily from your home for each shift
 Live at/near the mine site during your working week and drive to your home for leave periods (DIDO)
 FIFO from Perth
 FIFO from elsewhere in Western Australia
 FIFO from interstate
 FIFO from overseas
 Other (*please specify below*)
- Click here to enter text.

6. How long have you been working for **this company**? Less than 12 months
 1–5 years

5–10 years

11 years or more

7. Where do you **currently work?** Operating mine

(*Please tick one*) Processing facility/port operation

Regional office

Head office

Other (*please specify below*)

Click here to enter text.

8. How long have you been working at **this location?** Less than 12 months
 1–5 years

5–10 years

10 years or more

9. Which of these best describes your **current area** of work? Mining

Processing

Maintenance

Administration

Support (e.g. community relations, human resources, environment, supply, etc.)

Other (*please specify below*)

Click here to enter text.

10. Whish of these best describes the **type of work** you do? Management

Machinery operators and drivers

Professional (*Please specify*)

Click here to enter text.

Clerical and administration

Mining operator

Labourer

Technicians and trades

Other (*please specify below*)

Click here to enter text.

- 11.** Do you work:
- Full-time
 Part-time/flexible hours
- 12.** Are you employed as:
- Permanent
 Casual
 Temporary/contract
- 13.** Do you regularly work nights?
- Yes
 No
- 14.** What is your usual work pattern?
- Monday–Friday (5 days on/2 days off)
 4 weeks on/2 weeks off
 4 weeks on/4 weeks off
 2 weeks on/2 weeks off
 Other (*please specify below*)

Click here to enter text.
- 15.** Average length of workday...
- Less than 8 hours 11 hours
 8 hours 12 hours
 9 hours 13 hours
 10 hours
- 16.** Is your direct supervisor or manager:
- Male
 Female
- 17.** Is the department or section where you work:
- Mostly male
 Mostly female
 A balance of male and female
- 18.** Are you currently:
- Single
 Partnered or married
- 19.** Do you have any dependent children?
- Yes (*go to next question*)
 No (**go to Part 2**)
- 20.** What is the age of your youngest child?

Click here to enter text. years old

PART 2: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Please rank each of the following factors, where 1 is “not at all important/not relevant” and 5 is “extremely important”. For ease of completion, please tick one box per statement/question.

21. What factors attracted you to your *current job*?

	Not at all important/ not relevant	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Extremely important
	1	2	3	4	5
The pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The work was challenging/interesting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The job itself (i.e. I had the skills required to do the job)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female-friendly work culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender-diverse work environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working time arrangements (e.g. the roster pattern, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leave arrangements (e.g. maternity leave, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The reputation of the operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The reputation of the company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The attraction of the lifestyle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The opportunity to acquire new skills and experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexible work practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The level of training provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The work fitted with my family situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The opportunity to work in the mining industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22. Were there other factors not listed above that were important to you when you took up the position? *Please specify.*

Click here to enter text.

23. For your *current workplace*, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat agree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
This is a friendly and inclusive workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female employees are provided with training, career development and opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities and support are provided for females to move into areas in which they are underrepresented	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discrimination is an issue at this workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At this workplace, men and women are treated the same	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working hours and leave arrangements allow male and female employees to fulfil work obligations and family responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At this workplace, men are promoted in preference to female employees who are just as capable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. Focusing on what you know about the *mining industry in general*, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Somewhat agree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
Women have got to “toughen up” in the mining industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The mining industry provides good career opportunities for women if they want to pursue them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women seem to have to work harder than men to get ahead in the mining industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are enough female role models in the mining industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There needs to be a higher proportion of women in work teams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caring responsibilities seem to constrain women from participating in certain work practices (e.g. FIFO, shift work)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

25. Are the following provided to *female employees* in your current workplace?

	Yes	No	For some employees only
Parental leave arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family-friendly policies and conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access and arrangements to suitable childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequate support is provided for women returning to work if they take time out to have children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A mentoring system that involves women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internal women’s network	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policies addressing flexible work options for female employees in respect to rostering, working hours, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female employees have access to company policies, such as EEO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

26a. In the next two (2) years, it is most likely that you will:

- 1. Stay working at the current workplace
- 2. Leave the current workplace to get a job elsewhere in the mining industry
- 3. Leave the mining industry altogether

26b. Please provide reasons for your answer in the above question.

Click here to enter text.

27. In your opinion, what factors would encourage women to stay in the mining industry in the long term?

Click here to enter text.

28. What improvements would you like to see in the mining industry specifically aimed at attracting more women?

Click here to enter text.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY

Appendix E: Interview Questions

Opening Questions

- 1.** Why did you decide to work in the mining industry?
- 2.** Can you please outline your educational qualifications?

Non-traditional Roles

- 3.** How difficult was it for you to find employment in a traditionally male-dominated role?
- 4.** Are there many opportunities in the area of work you are currently doing? If not, why not?
- 5.** Do you think your company encourages you to take on roles in male-dominated areas? Why/why not?

Masculine Industry/Roles Image

- 6.** Has working in a masculine work environment affected your decision to remain long term with your employer?
- 7.** As a female employee, do you feel the need to work hard to “fit” into the work culture?
- 8.** Does the company make a particular effort to promote a work environment where female employees feel included?
- 9.** Do you believe that there are enough female role models in the sector for women to follow?
- 10.** Can you think of any examples in your current workplace of female employees experiencing discrimination?

Career Development and Promotion

- 11.** To what extent has your company provided you with career development opportunities and training for you to advance in your field?
- 12.** Do you think that your work or promotion opportunities have been limited because you are female?
- 13.** Has your company provided a mentoring system that supports your progression?
- 14.** Do you think women are underrepresented in the Western Australian mining sector? Why/why not?

Flexible Working Arrangements

- 15.** Are you satisfied with the working arrangements that your company has provided you with?
- 16.** Are they flexible enough when you require them to be?
- 17.** Have you requested flexible working hours from your company so that you can fulfil both your work and family responsibilities?
- 18.** If you answered “yes” to Question 17, what was the result of your request for flexible working hours and leave arrangements?
- 19.** Did accessing flexible working arrangements affect your career advancement?
- 20.** Do you require access to childcare arrangements on a regular basis?
- 21.** If you answered “yes” to Question 20:
 - a.** Is childcare provided by the company?
 - b.** Are you happy with the current childcare arrangements that you have been given?

Policies and Practices

- 22.** Do female employees have equal access with male employees to flexible working options and rostering?
- 23.** Have you been advised of the company's policies regarding maternity leave?
- 24.** In which ways do the company's policies assist employees in managing their family responsibilities?
- 25.** Have the company's policies helped you manage family responsibilities?
- 26.** Do female employees have access to EEO policies that use inclusive language that appeals to women?
- 27.** Do company policies include ways to develop and maintain a balanced and diverse workforce?

General

- 28.** Can you explain your travel arrangements in commuting to and from work?
- 29.** What are your long-term career goals, and your ambitions in the near future?
- 30.** What do you think would improve working conditions for women and make the site a more attractive employment environment?

Appendix F: Part of Interview Transcript

Interviewee: “Pat”

Q = Interviewer

A = Interviewee

Q: What are some of your educational qualifications that made you eligible to work in the mine industry?

A: I have an engineering degree. It's a little hard having a civil background engineering degree to get into mining. I was very specific when I graduated to go work in quarries. I had two offers from the same company, which was Pioneer Concrete at the time, and they had an offer for me to go and work in a concrete division, or an offer for me to go and work in a quarries division, and I took the offer for the quarries division because that's what I wanted to do. I actually worked full time and studied part time, and they changed the course halfway through and [I was forced] back in first year after about three years of study. [This was] one of the problems, unfortunately, when they completely revised the course and bringing in computers, which is probably laughable to yourself nowadays, but there was a time when we didn't have computers at Curtin Uni[versity]. So when they brought them in, they changed the course completely. So, for example, if you'd already done hand drafting and passed that, you had to go back and do CAD [computer-aided drafting], and it was a lot of that sort of stuff, and that's hence why I had to go back. So it took me nine years to do that engineering degree. And I worked for [name of organisation removed] on a trainee, as a trainee engineer, and had a lot of field time work as well. So that really worked, and it was only five minutes from Bentley Campus. So I was able to run backwards and forwards to uni because, in those days, and certainly probably now, engineering's not a part-time course—it's very difficult to do it part time. So it's very fortunate in that sense. So I've always been an outdoor sort of person.

The other thing I did, once I got into mining, within the first three years, I got what we call the “quarry manager's ticket”. So I'd done a lot of ... operational type stuff—working on crushers, shovelling, basically blowing stuff up—a whole bunch of other stuff around there. So I actually got a lot of field experience in that first couple of years out, and, in order to get your quarry manager's ticket, in those days, you needed an engineering degree, and you needed to use experience in the pit, as well as a minimum of three months on the shop crew. So I had all that, and very quickly, and you have to do an exam and other bits and pieces. [It is] slightly changed now, which is sometimes a good thing and sometimes a bad thing—some of the quality of the people coming through, probably their level of critical thinking is not very good, but they have really good experience in operating. So I'm very fortunate about that. So the quarry manager's ticket gives me an ability, I don't know—do you know what a quarry manager's ticket is?

Q: You can perhaps explain it.

A: Sure. So in the mining industry, we have—we come under the *Mine Safety Inspection Act*. Under the *Mine Safety Inspection Act*, you actually cannot run a mine unless you have a quarry manager there. If you do not have a quarry manager onsite,

you cannot run the mine—you have to actually stop. So there are two different types of statutory type roles. Well, there's several—there's ventilation officer and other bits and pieces, but, in the general, there's a registered manager and a quarry manager. The registered manager can really be anybody; the quarry manager must be certified. So there was the engineering degree, then the quarry manager's ticket. And then much more of what I've been doing in the last 10 years is about leadership, which is why I went and did the Master of Business Leadership. I find in the mining industry that having an engineering degree in general, for the people that you work with in contracting, is a challenge for them—they find it quite difficult to deal with, mainly because of a lot of the engineers that they've dealt with have not been very practical in that sense, and a masters degree tends to be very much—I think it actually challenges them a fair bit and there's that “well, you're too smart for us” type attitude. So there are some organisations—like you [company name removed] and [company name removed] and those sorts of things—see a Master in Business Leadership (MBL) and go “great, we'll capitalise on that”. Other people go, “she's a brain box—we don't want to talk to her because she's got an engineering and masters degree”, and that's a lot of that legacy in mining.

[I'm] very glad I did the MBL though—helped me enormously to be able to deal with people a lot better. I always like to probably substantiate it—saying that most engineers are slightly autistic, and so we struggle sometimes with dealing with the softer skills, and doing the MBL actually helped me to understand that a lot better. So I'm a much better leader than I used to be because of it. And also because of coming through the mining industry 29 to 25 years ago, there were two types of leadership styles—there was my way and the highway or “purple circles” [outdated, discriminatory attitudes of managers]. Now they're a legacy issue that we still have to deal with today because a lot of middle management and high management have come through that, and still have only those two skills in their tool box. Neither of them work well with managing diversity. So, as a consequence, a lot of the issues that I deal with—with my colleagues and above—are all to do with around stepping away or trying to help them understand there's other ways to do these things rather than my way. And that's one of the huge issues that women have in mining is because, if the informal network is so damn important with the purple circle, then we really struggle to be able to break into that, and so that's really difficult. So it's just one of the elements of it—it's highly complex and it's very dynamic. It's not—you can't just paint one thing and say, “well, it's black and white and it's definitely this, or definitely that”. It's a whole bunch of things that all unfortunately work together.

Q: So the first area that I want to talk to you about is the non-traditional areas of work. I mean strategies and initiatives have been put forward by most companies and government reports and ways, and they've identified there are a very low number of women in the mining industry—not just overall, but in particular areas—you've got your trades, you've got your labourers, your senior management, etc. So, coming from the area you've just told me about, how you got to be a manager—how difficult was it for you to find work in a male-dominated area?

A: It is extremely difficult, it is extremely difficult, and the higher you go up, the harder it gets. I would like to say that that's because—look, I'd like to say that's because they're uneducated. My real observation of all different levels is the fact that you've got some very, very few enlightened male managers that really get it. And

then there's a whole bunch of other people out there who—and some of those are women, sadly—who don't actually get that it's really hard.

Q: What do you mean by they “get it”?

A: They get the fact that, if I come into a role and I have 500 people working for me, I'm in the role for two months and they have a person come and say, “she's just hopeless, she's just useless, she did this and she did that, and she didn't do this, and she didn't do that”, some of the managers—and this is just my personal experience—if I have a manager that says, “hang on, she's just told you to do that—that's what her job is. You're not doing it are you? Go away. Have you spoken to her about this?” So if I actually have a manager that actually backs me, I'm really rapidly successful. But if I have a manager that goes, “yeah, I was really worried about putting a woman in that position, oh, yeah, it just doesn't look like it's going to work out”, I'm still successful—it just takes a lot longer. And I have to overcome a lot more momentum and friction pushing against me. I find that it takes me 10 times longer to build relationships of trust and … can actually get a high performing team, than what I could do if I was male, and a lot of that comes down to … I think it's because everybody comes with their own attitudes and, as a consequence, most of my time is spent, not being—I can't polish a whole group at one time, I have to polish one person at a time. And so it takes a lot longer to establish those relationships of trust. It's not impossible to do—it just takes a lot longer.

There are some people who, through legacy issues of their family origin, will never ever accept a woman as a boss—they will just not accept it. Very rare—probably about one in 80 nowadays—but I don't know whether Mummy kept them in a cupboard under the stairs or something like that, but I really do have to deal with those people. When they're subordinates, it's not too much of an issue—terminate them pretty quickly, just go through the process obviously, making sure that we follow natural justice and due process. But when they're above me, that's when it's really difficult. And I've got one at the moment that I'm dealing with—he's my direct boss. So I've been working for this company for about 18 months now, and they put me into this role with this man as my boss, and, prior to me being there, in fact only about 12 months before, he was at a project managers forum, all men, and they were talking about getting more women into the industry and what the benefits of that would be, and apparently he got up and said women in mining—they should be home doing curtains. So they've now got their very first female project manager and they've put me under him, which, if you're talking about smart strategy, to be able to get that to succeed—[it's] just really bad news. So I've spent the last 18 months with this guy just totally undermining me at every opportunity, and misinforming people. But, worse than that, his bosses—instead of coming and seeing me and saying, “look, had these allegations made—what do you think? What's really going on here?”, [there's] dead silence, absolutely dead silence. [They] won't even come and talk to you to see whether the stuff is factual and what was the circumstances that surround that. So there's a real issue around we're experimenting and there's no real—and it comes down to it's the woman that's the problem, it's the woman that's a problem, not the organisation [that] hasn't been prepared and the managers themselves [who] haven't been educated.

Q: So do you think that your company encourages you at least to move into areas where women are underrepresented?

A: No. The company that I currently work for—my employment has been an experiment for the operations manager. See, the operations, I report to the ... project manager. I'm the alternate project manager, and he reports to the operations manager. The operations manager has heard—and I picked this up when I was being interviewed by him—has heard that women are really good at communicating and building teams. So he's actually gone to do this experiment—bring this chick in and we'll check out how this all works. And, interestingly enough, even though it's doing exactly what he actually desires it to do, [he says], "Oh, the problems I've had with her". It's actually been the project manager whining and complaining about me to him, and I haven't done anything bad to either of these guys. But last November, we actually had to make 179 people redundant because we've got two sites and we closed down one of the sites. During that process, I basically came back from annual leave and terminated 179 people on the day I came back—and, during November, we had to de mode the site. Now, this project manager, he's been there for the six years, has a very, very deep dark purple circle—so purple it's black. So I'm fighting against a team that wants to—and I say fighting against, [but] I'm not fighting with the team, but I'm fighting against their perceptions and attitude because they understand that the real power is held by him, that he's not—he's working in autonomy. So I don't know whether you know much about the ... model, but there's a real difference between team and group. This guy's running a group and thinking it's the team—not actually understanding what team work really is. So there's a lot of having to step on eggshells and I have been for the last six months, and [I have to] be absolutely perfect so that they don't have a reason to do anything to me.

Appendix G: Interview Consent Form

An exploration into the factors that affect women's participation in the iron ore mining industry in Western Australia

I have read the participant information sheet, which explains the nature of the research and the possible risks. The information has been explained to me and all my questions have been satisfactorily answered. I have been given a copy of the information sheet to keep.

I am happy to be interviewed and for the interview to be audio recorded as part of this research. I understand that I do not have to answer particular questions if I do not want to and that I can withdraw at any time without needing to give a reason and without consequences to myself.

I agree that research data from the results of the study will be published, which may identify me. When the study becomes published, I agree to *one* of the following:

- I agree for my first name to be used
- I agree to a pseudonym (another name) to be used
- I wish to remain anonymous

I have also been informed that I may not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study. I understand that all information provided by me is treated as strictly confidential.

Name of participant:	
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Signature of participant:	Date:
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