CONCEPTUALISING WOMEN'S CAREERS IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY: EXPLORING THE CONTEXT OF MALAWI

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ILO: International Labour Organisation

WHO: World Health Organisation

SAPs: Structural Adjustment Programmes

MLFS: Malawi Labour Force Survey

IMF: International Monetary Fund

GOM: Government of Malawi

GABLE: Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy Education

IPTE: Initial Primary Teacher Education

MSCE: Malawi School Certificate of Education

JCE: Junior Certificate of Education

UCE: University Certificate of Education

ODL: Open Distance Learning

MOeST: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

DTED: Department of Teacher Education and Development

FPE: Free Primary Education

UNIMA: University of Malawi

CDSS: Community Day Secondary School
ABSTRACT

This thesis conceptualises the careers of women in the developing country context of Malawi. A range of ‘new’ career theories, namely boundaryless, protean, kaleidoscope have been developed in response to the limitations of using traditional theories for studying careers and women’s careers in particular. However, these theories have been mostly based on women with interrupted careers in western contexts due to child care reasons. These have also assumed that women have preferences in terms of whether to be career oriented or family oriented. Yet, women in developing and indeed some women in the developed countries have constrained choices and do not pursue interrupted careers. Despite having family responsibilities, they work continuously and mostly full-time. Therefore, there have been calls for more context-specific career studies, especially targeting developing countries. Based on this literature gap, this thesis adopted a qualitative approach to conceptualise the careers of women in Malawi, drawing on the experiences of women in the formal economy, specifically in education and finance and insurance industries.

The study finds that the careers of women in Malawi and indeed other women in similar contexts do not fit the existing career perspectives and the proposed “makeshift” career orientation better explains the studied women’s careers. This proposed career concept recognises that careers are a result of compromises that women make when faced with tensions emanating from both the employment and family contexts which simultaneously influence women’s careers. The research therefore provides the basis for broadening the existing career perspectives to more adequately reflect the experiences of women, particularly in the developing world.

Additionally, the study has adopted an intersectionally-sensitive approach to analysing the employment contexts in two very different sectors. The evidence presented in this thesis gives weight to the intersectional perspective as not only does it find that the actual form of inequality varies but also that the various practices that contribute to inequalities in the different sectors affect different groups of people differently by gender, class and in certain cases region. This contributes to the embryonic literature on intersectionality in terms of both its practice and theory, and understanding how gender and class issues in Malawi may be different from the way these are conceptualised in western contexts.
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my children; Awesome, Mayamiko, Madalitso and Akonda
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Chapter 1: Introduction and the research context

1.1 Introduction

Increasing recognition of the limitations of the traditional career theory (Mainiero and Gibson, 2017; Inkson, 2006; Cabrera, 2007; Briscoe and Hall, 2006) has led to growing research interest in ‘new’ career theories, such as boundaryless (Arthur, 1994; Defillippi and Arthur, 1994), protean (Hall, 1996) and kaleidoscope (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006b) careers. Various authors have looked at how applicable these contemporary career theories are in modern organisations, but although some attempts have been made to apply these new career conceptualisations to developing countries (Tlaiss, 2014; Tlaiss and Kauser, 2011; Xian and Woodhams, 2008; Okurame and Fabunmi, 2014), most of what is known about careers is based on Anglo-Saxon countries. This provides a basis for further studies aimed at assessing the extent to which these ‘new’ career concepts apply in different organisational and institutional contexts. This thesis therefore aims at broadening this literature base by conceptualising the careers of women in a developing African economy context: Malawi. This will offer an African perspective, which will also feed into theoretical perspectives on gender, employment and inequality.

Most studies on women’s employment behaviour and careers have focussed on women in societies with a developed formal employment sector (Crompton and Lyonette, 2006; Lewis, 2001a; Lewis, 1992; Lewis, 1997; Lewis, 2001b; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006b; Hall, 1996). In these societies, a majority of employed women work in formal employment and this more extensive employment sector provides them with better chances of finding alternative jobs in case of facing challenges within a particular workplace. Although some studies on women’s employment and careers have targeted Sub-Saharan Africa and other developing societies, (Lewis et al., 2007; Whitehead and Kotze, 2003; Tlaiss, 2013b; Tlaiss and Kauser, 2011; Tlaiss, 2013a; Ganrose, 2007; Mokomane, 2014), little is still known about the careers of the few women, who work in societies with underdeveloped formal employment sectors like Malawi.
Malawi is a country with a history of high women’s labour force participation rates, registering 88.4 percent in 1998 and 88.1 percent in 2013; close to the rates for men during the same period. In 2013, Malawian women had an employment rate\(^1\) of 74.3 percent, well above the European average rate, although below the male Malawian rate of 85.7 percent (GOM., 2014e) (see Appendix 1). However, informal employment is the dominant form of employment in Malawi, where 88.7 percent of the employed population, aged 15-64 (83.8 percent of men and 93.6 percent of women), “held jobs, where the relationship between the employer and the employee was not subject to national labour economy, income taxation or any social protection or employment benefits” (GOM.,2014d, p.9).

Moreover, some of the formal sector employment may also be described to be of low quality, evidenced by low pay and poor working conditions. Malawian women’s participation in formal employment is generally low, accounting for only 6.4 percent of women in employment. This is in part due to the low overall share in formal employment, at 11.3 percent, but this applied to 16.2 percent of men, that is around 2.5 times the share for women (GOM., 2014e) (see Appendix 1). Although women in formal employment in Malawi constitute only a small group, since this study is about careers, it makes sense to focus on women in formal as opposed to informal employment, as the concept of career cannot be easily applied to the latter. Moreover, since it is organisations that influence and shape people’s careers (Baruch, 2004a), the role of organisations in influencing careers is mainly visible within formal and not within informal employment, even in instances where informal employment is part of an organisation’s supply chain (Weng, 2015).

Additionally, the existing career literature’s focus has been on non-linear or interrupted careers and mostly part-time work, due to family responsibilities (Tomlinson, 2004 ; Gangl and Ziefle, 2009; Cabrera, 2009). Less attention has been given to careers of women in contexts where they work mostly full-time and continuously, despite having family responsibilities, exemplified in developing countries. This is due to limited options for part-time jobs or reduced-hours positions and limited possibilities of taking such jobs, due to family income needs (Bóo et al., 2009). Consequently, although the ‘new’ career models have been used

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\(^1\) Defined as percentage of the population (labour force) aged 15 – 65 years who, during the reference period of one week, were employed to the total working population
to study women’s careers (Cabrera, 2009; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005; Powell and Mainiero, 1992; Sullivan et al., 2007), there is still limited knowledge about the careers of women who work continuously and mostly full-time.

Furthermore, the existing careers’ literature focuses on traditional, boundaryless, protean, and kaleidoscope careers, none of which may provide an adequate conceptualisation of careers in the Malawian context. The traditional career model focuses on a male ideal worker with no family responsibilities to derail him from his full-time, continuous working pattern (Cook et al., 2002; Worthington et al., 2005; Sullivan and Baruch, 2009; Powell and Mainiero, 1992). Yet, in contexts like Malawi, women pursue both: a continuous career and a family. The boundaryless career concept has been developed in recognition of lower job security in advanced countries. However, not only is the term conceptually misleading, as there will always be boundaries within which individuals enact their careers determined by their occupations, qualifications, industries or their location, amongst other bounding factors (Inkson, 2006), but the same tendencies of moving across organisational boundaries may be limited in a developing country context, due to limited job opportunities and especially among those who pursued an occupation-specific training.

There are also problems in applying the protean and the kaleidoscope career theories to Malawi. These focus on the individual’s orientations and preferences. However, this focus on choices, whether to opt in or out of work in the protean case or to follow changing interests and priorities over the life course in the kaleidoscope case, may not fit with a society where material needs dominate employment choices. These criticisms may have applicability outside of a developing context, as not all women in developed economies follow patterns of interrupted or flexible careers.

Considering the fact that the “content of career is inseparable from its underlying cultural contexts” (Xian and Woodhams, 2008, p. 410) and appreciating the importance of social structures such as unique national contexts or gender issues in a particular context (Acker, 2012), various career authors have been interrogating the limits associated with transferring and generalising career theories from western to non-western countries and thereby making the case for context-based career studies.
(Ganrose, 2007; Sullivan, 1999; Sullivan and Arthur, 2006; Sullivan and Baruch, 2009; Tlaiss, 2014). In this respect, Sullivan and Baruch (2009, p.1562) specifically recommended for:

“...greater research on potential differences in career enactment due [to] cultural and national differences... [and that] studies of workers in non-western countries that recognize the economic and societal influences on careers are especially important because most of what we know about careers is based on studies conducted in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia, making western models the de facto “standard” against which careers in other countries are compared.”

Despite these calls, there is little attention given to the contextualization of careers of women in developing contexts (Xian and Woodhams, 2008; Tlaiss, 2014) including Sub-Saharan Africa (Okurame and Fabunmi, 2014). In response to these scholarly calls, based on the limitations of the existing theories and in an effort to broaden the career literature base, the purpose of this thesis is to conceptualise the careers of women in Malawi and similar contexts, where women do both paid and unpaid work simultaneously, by proposing an alternative career concept: “makeshift career.” In this case, the basis is that since both the family and employment contexts operate in the lives of women simultaneously, with limited options for prioritising family roles over work roles or vice versa, they therefore simultaneously contribute to how their careers are shaped. Therefore, guided by Pfau-Effinger’s (1998) gender culture, I explore how Malawi’s family context factors contribute to the proposed “makeshift” careers. Similarly, by adopting an “intersectionally-sensitive” approach (McBride et al., 2015,p.7) to analysing inequality regimes (Acker, 2006b), I explore how the employment context factors contribute to the “makeshift” career conceptualisation.

1.2 Research questions

To achieve the stated overall objective, the following key research questions were considered. The first two sets of research questions explore the context for women’s careers from first the family and household side and second the employment context, while the third set of questions explore how Malawian women make sense of and shape their careers under the influence of both family and employment expectations.
1. a. To what extent are women contingent or permanent members of the labour force in Malawi and what contribution do they make to family income and resources?

b. What are the expectations placed upon women with respect to the family roles they are expected to fulfil and what resources and support are available to them with respect to child care and other family responsibilities?

c. To what extent are women supported or hindered, by employment practices, in fulfilling their dual roles in work and the family and is the support they receive provided through formal or informal practices?

2. How do different employment contexts support or hinder careers of women in formal employment in Malawi?

3. a. How do individual women in formal employment make sense of the tensions emanating from the employment and family context factors and how does this sense-making shape their careers?

b. What is the role played by women’s individual agency in constructing their careers as they respond to organisational, institutional and family factors?

To contextualise this research, the rest of this introduction outlines the policy challenges and policy initiatives with respect to gender equality in Malawi. Chapter 2 reviews key theoretical areas of research and debates surrounding welfare, family, gender and employment regimes, considering the Malawian context. Chapter 3 provides a critical analysis of the four major career models in order to determine the extent to which they explain women’s careers and proposes how a “makeshift career” conceptualisation may be a better concept for analysing the careers of women who work continuously despite having family responsibilities. Chapter 4 outlines the study’s methodology, while Chapters 5 to 7 present empirical findings. Chapter 5 focuses on the family factors that may influence the respondents’ careers and answers the first group of research questions. Chapter 6 addresses the second research question through a presentation and analysis of the employment context factors and the resulting gender, region/ethnic and class inequalities.
Chapter 7, addresses the third group of research questions, namely how women make sense of the family and employment context factors and the agency they use to enact their careers. Chapter 8, discusses the study’s major findings and their implications in line with existing literature, while Chapter 9 concludes by discussing the theoretical and practical contributions of the study and based on the study’s limitations, suggests directions for future research.

1.3 The gender equality policy context in Malawi

The political context in which women in Malawi are forging their careers is that of a democracy with commitments to gender equality, despite sluggish progress (Amundsen and Kayuni, 2016b). Malawi became a democracy following the 1993 referendum where Malawians chose to abandon the one party dictatorial rule in favour of multiparty rule. Following this transition, there have been more significant efforts to introduce into domestic law, the international and regional protocols and declarations about gender equality than was the case during the one party regime (Semu, 2002), which failed to take the implementation seriously. This is evident in the adopted democratic constitution which promotes gender equality (s.13a) and contains a Bill of Rights (s.15) which prohibits any form of discrimination (GOM., 1994).

In 2000, a National Gender Policy was launched “to mainstream gender in the national development process in order to enhance participation of women and men, girls and boys for attainment of sustainable and equitable development” (GOM., 2011,p.iv). The previous five year overarching development plan for Malawi, Malawi Development Strategy II, which expired in 2016, had gender as a cross cutting issue, focusing on reducing gender inequalities and promoting participation of men and women in development (GOM., 2012b). The current development plan, for the next five years, emphasizes the need for different sectors to work together in mainstreaming gender issues (GOM., 2017b).

Additionally, Malawi has a national gender machinery, which exists to coordinate government interventions aimed at promoting gender equality. At the helm of this machinery is the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare which is mandated to promote gender equality. There is also a women’s parliamentary
caucus, which is conducive to women’s substantive (acting for) representation (Chiweza et al., 2016). As Archenti and Johnson (2006) argued, women’s parliamentary caucuses may create space for women members of parliament to unite and work together in promoting issues of interest to women.

Nevertheless, women continue to have low representation in the public spheres in employment and politics in Malawi. The major outstanding achievement on the gender equality front, during the democratic period, has been a strengthened discussion regarding women’s participation in public life, including in politics (Amundsen and Kayuni, 2016b) and in employment. Over the years after democracy, commitment to gender equality at a political level, despite being low at the beginning, has been slowly building up. This has led to some important efforts to overcome women’s disadvantaged position in Malawi, as indicated by their poor performance in education, which is key to women’s participation in the public sphere, including formal employment. Malawian women have been trailing men at all levels in terms of educational attainment. In 2011, 65 percent of the population, aged 15 years and above, was literate, but this included 74.4 percent of men compared to 57.2 percent of women (GOM., 2012a).

Poor performance of women in education needs to be understood from the cultural context within which girls’ education takes place. Sankhulani’s (2007) study revealed that Malawian girls do more household chores compared to boys due to the traditional preferential treatment of boys by their parents and that boys refuse to do household chores, because they believe it is the women’s and girls’ responsibility. Some girls go to school late because they have first to undertake household chores. They may also be engaged in household activities after school and therefore have no time to study or do assignments. Others would even be absent from school because parents require them to do certain tasks during school hours or due to lack of access to adequate sanitation in schools (Kadewere, 2015; Kalinga, 2012). As a result, their performance at school becomes affected. Consequently, only 45 percent of girls reach higher secondary school compared to 53 percent for boys (Williams, 2012). Also, only 40 percent of those who passed their Malawi School Certificate of
Education\(^2\) (MSCE) in 2015\(^3\) were girls. Additionally, only about 33 percent\(^4\) of those who sat for the University of Malawi (UNIMA) Entrance Exams in 2014 were female. To improve women’s position in education participation, various policies have been developed. These relate to banning of child brides, reducing costs of educating girls and the “50:50” gender selection policy.

Malawi has a history of child brides and in 2013, was ranked in the top 20 countries with highest rate of child marriages (Nyasa Times Reporter, 2013). In 2014, at least 46.3 percent of women in the age category of 20-24 got married before the age of 18 compared to only 6.4 percent of men in the same age category (GOM., 2015a). Thus while laws and the constitution prohibit child marriage, the practice is still common in Malawi (Population Institute, 2015). Child marriage occurs more frequently among girls who are the least educated, poorest and living in rural areas as presented in Table 1.1.

\(^2\) Malawi School Certificate of Education is an award to students who pass the national exams written at the end of four years of secondary education
\(^3\) Own computation based on MANEB MSCE results
\(^4\) Own computation based on UNIMA list
Table 1.1: Early marriage for women in 2014 in Malawi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Women aged 15-49</th>
<th>Women aged 20-49</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage married before age 15</td>
<td>Percentage married before age 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wealth Index</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorest</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** GOM. (2015a)

In 2015, Malawi passed a law to concretise the constitutional provision banning child marriage, stipulating the minimum age to be 18 when anyone can marry without parental consent (GOM., 1994; GOM., 2015b). Before the passing of the law, girls were allowed to marry between the ages of 15 and 18 only with consent from their parents or guardians, as stipulated in the constitution (GOM., 1994). But as Table 1.1 above shows, at least one in every 10 women married before the age of 15 as at 2014. There are mixed feelings regarding whether the setting of the minimum marriage age at 18 will address the issue at hand, as child marriage is also
closely linked to poverty in a country where almost half of the population lived in poverty in 2011 (GOM., 2012a), although this had reduced to 39 percent in 2013 (GOM., 2014c).

The second policy area relates to reducing costs of educating girls. The Malawian government recognized that families tended to choose to educate boys over girls when they had to meet child education costs, resulting in early marriages for girls. The government then implemented the Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) project in early 1990s. The policy reforms under GABLE were aimed at reducing the direct costs associated with educating girls among other things. Girls were exempted from paying school fees in primary schools (Chimombo et al., 2000).

Following democratic elections in 1994, Malawi embarked on Free Primary Education (FPE) as a response to the popular demand for education by the newly elected government, because during the 1980s, less than 50 percent of Malawian children in the primary school-age category were in school (Kadzamira and Rose, 2001). The FPE policy, adopted in October 1994, targeted both girls and boys and involved removing all fees and uniforms (Inoue and Oketch, 2008; Kanyumbu, 2014). This was aimed at promoting “equity and equality of opportunity” (Inoue and Oketch, 2008 p.42) among people, regardless of sex, their economic status, etc. As a consequence of the FPE policy, primary enrolments in Malawi increased by nearly 50 percent in 1994/5 (Swainson et al., 1998). However, girls are particularly “vulnerable to changing conditions in the health and economic well-being of other household members, since they are expected to provide a variety of domestic services” (Stromquist, 1989, p.28) which may still affect their educational attainment. Therefore, although Malawi has generally accomplished universal access to education, the country still experiences school drop outs in the last year of primary school (Standard 8), which in 2012/2013 were slightly higher for girls at 27.6 percent compared to that of boys at 19.5 percent (GOM., 2014b). This means that

5The reduction in proportion of people in poverty from 50.7 % in 2011 to 39 percent in 2013 is so unrealistically drastic that I cite the reduction in poverty levels cautiously.
slightly more girls than boys did not proceed to secondary school in the 2012/2013 academic year.

Considering that for a long time few females had been joining secondary and higher learning institutions, a positive selection policy, namely the 50:50 selection policy, was adopted in 2009 in order to select an equal number of men and women in accessing education and undergoing training in public institutions (Msukwa and Msukwa, 2013). Although this policy may be argued to violate the merit principle, it aimed at offsetting the embedded gender disadvantages, which saw the selection process reproducing the status quo, where men have dominated tertiary education.

This chapter has introduced the thesis’ overall goal, which is to conceptualise careers of women in Malawi, prompted by a critical review of existing literature on women’s employment and careers as applied to the situation of women in a developing country such as Malawi. The context in which Malawian women are forging their careers has been presented as one in which, since the change to democracy, there is both a political commitment coupled with a range of policy initiatives to improve women’s position. However these policy initiatives are aimed at changing women’s position from a very low base, with girls being underrepresented at all levels in education, and still at risk of becoming child brides. The next chapter provides a critical review of the key theoretical areas of research and debates surrounding welfare, family, gender and employment regimes, taking into account the Malawian context.
Chapter 2: Welfare, family, gender and employment regimes

2.1 Introduction

This research aims at conceptualising the careers of women in developing economies, within the context of Malawi. To achieve this, there is the need to understand the context shaping Malawian women’s employment. This requires an understanding of its welfare, family, gender and employment regimes and their relationship to extant literature on variations in such systems or regimes. The chapter is structured as follows: firstly, literature relating to welfare regimes is reviewed and is used to consider the extent to which Malawi’s context can be explained by existing welfare regime typologies. Secondly, it critically discusses the family and gender regimes literature, highlighting the characteristics of family and gender regimes in Malawi. The third section discusses the employment regime literature and the distinctiveness of the Malawi’s employment regime. The chapter concludes by summarising the major gaps in the existing literature and how the study was designed to extend the existing literature and to increase its applicability to developing countries such as Malawi.

2.2 Welfare regimes

2.2.1 Esping-Andersen’s discussion of welfare states

The welfare regimes’ conceptualisation is based on three elements: firstly, it applies to capitalist societies that have been transformed into welfare states. Secondly, it denotes a degree of de-commodification through state action defined as “a measure of protection against total dependence on market forces” (Gough et al., 2004, p.4). Lastly, it indicates the ways in which states, markets and households work together to meet people’s welfare needs in order to produce and reproduce stratification outcomes (Esping-Andersen, 1999). In line with the second and third elements, Esping-Andersen (1990) distinguishes three welfare state regimes among 18 Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) welfare states namely liberal, conservative and social democratic.
Although the typology was not initially aimed at analysing women’s employment, it has been used as a starting point in cross national comparisons of women’s employment in different welfare states (Lewis, 1992; Lewis, 1997) that have identified welfare state policies’ role in shaping women’s employment behaviour (Rubery et al., 1999a). Liberal welfare states are associated with countries like the United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and other Anglo-Saxon countries (Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999). Benefits are given to a group of low income workers and those that depend on the state for well-being. Liberal states take a minimalist approach to public work-family policies and leave the responsibility for meeting the child care needs of working mothers often to individual mothers (Crompton and Harris, 1999; Esping-Andersen, 1999). Additionally, state involvement and national regulations are limited and the development of work arrangements is left to market forces (Crompton, 1999).

Corporatist or conservative type is associated with countries such as Austria, France, Germany and Italy. Here, differences within societies are reproduced, as enjoyment of rights is associated with individuals’ class and status (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Consequently, the state’s impact on income redistribution policies is minimal (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Bambra, 2007). Familialism is maintained in conservative regimes and the traditional family-hood is upheld (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999). Thus the principle of subsidiarity which means “that the state will only interfere when the family’s capacity to service its members is exhausted” is paramount (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Therefore, family benefits discourage women’s employment participation and day care and similar family services are underdeveloped (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Lastly, the social-democratic regime applies to countries like Sweden, Demark, Norway and Finland, which ensure equality in accessing the services and benefits regardless of people’s status and class (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Contrary to the corporatist regime type, in social democratic regimes, the idea is not to wait until the family fails, but to ensure that the family has what it needs. They also aim at making combining work and family life manageable through provision of both publicly funded childcare and long leaves, consequently enabling women to engage in paid work (Esping Andersen, 1990).
Private welfare provision is almost non-existent (den Dulk and van Doorne-Huiskes, 2007). Through the public sector, the state also plays an important role as a women’s employer. The typology has been used to predict high levels of female employment in social democratic countries like the Nordic and lower levels of female employment in corporate-conservative countries in the Southern European countries of Spain, Greece and Italy, except Portugal (Tavora, 2012). Although Germany had a lower level of female employment in 1990, it has since increased its female employment rate due to largely the expansion of part-time jobs.

The typology has however attracted criticisms. Firstly, it does not consider the implications of the division of labour which is gendered (Lewis, 1997; Crompton, 1999; Gough, 2004b). By focusing on the link between paid work and welfare, the typology did not consider the value of unpaid work to families and how women have been instrumental in that regard (Crompton, 1999; Lewis, 1997). The family, (through women) has been the major provider of welfare and its relevance has not been dwindling (Lewis, 1999). Although there has been an increase in number of women joining the labour market, this has not been associated with major changes in division of unpaid work (Lewis, 1997). Therefore, to get the fuller picture, the critical relationship should be between paid work, unpaid work on one hand and welfare on the other hand (Taylor-Gooby, 1991).

Secondly, as Lewis (1997), Hobson (1994), Langan and Ostner (1991) noted, Esping-Andersen’s (1999) de-commodification concept is gendered. The worker that Esping-Andersen had in mind is male whose success may depend on women doing unpaid household work. For women, de-commodification may increase their participation in unpaid care work (Lewis, 1997) but for men, de-commodification may help them improve their labour market skills for example through taking educational leave (Hobson, 1994). As such, ignoring gendered implications of any part of a typology limits its power in providing a fuller picture about men and women’s employment. Similarly, although commodification may have helped women to be financially independent by participating in paid work, their emancipation may be overstated as more women continue to work part-time and face discrimination (Hobson, 1994). Additionally, diverse reasons explain differences in women’s employment rates across countries (Lewis, 1997). For instance, the high
employment rates for lone mothers in liberal welfare regimes like the United States is due to inadequate state support which then make them work to support their families. In social democratic regimes like Sweden, high state support with child care and parental leaves makes it easier for Swedish lone mothers to participate in paid employment.

Thirdly, the categorization of the welfare regimes into only three types has been contested, arguing that the typology only explains North West Europe’s employment patterns, resulting in a strong case for other models (Arts and Gelissen, 2002; Blossfed and Drobnic, 2001; Trifiletti, 1999). For example, Arts and Gelissen (2002) argue that antipodean countries namely Australia and New Zealand are not liberal. Similarly, Trifiletti (1999) proposed a separate Southern European model which includes the Mediterranean welfare states (Italy, Greece and Spain). This is because in Mediterranean countries, “the family is still centre stage, but in the sense that only certain social risks are covered largely by the welfare state, those against which the family cannot protect itself” (Trifiletti, 1999, p. 49). The state does not support families’ day to day functioning as family provisioning has been key to the welfare system in Mediterranean countries (Taylor-Gooby, 2001).

Furthermore, dominant labour market segmentation and familialism inter alia, differentiates these countries from other European countries and justifies a separate Southern European social model (Karamessini, 2008a; Ferrera, 1996) or employment model (Karamessini, 2008b) representing Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Blossfed and Drobnic (2001) also proposed two more regime types: Mediterranean regimes (like Trifiletti, 1999) and the (former) state socialist regimes represented by Hungary, Poland and China. Tavora (2012a) has highlighted how Portugal is different from other Southern European countries, characterized by high female employment rates despite exhibiting familialistic elements in the way child and elderly care is organized as well as the continued support for traditional roles and division of labour at home.

Lastly, Esping-Andersen’s (1990) typology focuses on welfare states which are mostly a domain of the OECD world, limiting its suitability for understanding social
policies as well as women’s employment experiences in the developing countries. Additionally, the typology’s critiques like Lewis (1992), Lewis (1997), Lewis (2001a), den Dulk and van Doorne-Huiskes (2007) and Crompton et al. (2007) based their arguments on the evidence drawn from western societies. Although developing countries have some welfare provisions like universal free primary education and health and cash transfers, they barely fit the description of welfare states. Therefore, there have been attempts to take the welfare regime research to the developing world, with one notable effort being that of Gough et al, (2004). Gough et al.’s (2004) typology of welfare regimes is discussed in the next section with an attempt to locate Malawi there in.

2.2.2 Extending welfare regimes beyond developed countries

Gough (2004b) starts by differentiating welfare state regimes and welfare regimes as follows:

“welfare state regimes refer to the family of social arrangements and welfare outcomes found in the OECD world of welfare states [while] welfare regime is a more generic term, referring to the entire set of institutional arrangements, policies and practices affecting welfare outcomes and stratification effects in diverse social and cultural contexts.” (Gough, 2004b, p.26).

Therefore, welfare state regimes constitute only one form of welfare regimes together with informal security regimes and insecurity regimes (Gough et al., 2004 ). The welfare state regime has nine fundamental elements which distinguishes it from other welfare regimes (Gough and Wood, 2004). I discuss these elements in describing Malawi’s welfare regime. I consider Malawi as an informal security welfare regime as opposed to welfare state or insecurity regimes. As such, I specifically focus on the differences between welfare state regimes and informal security regimes with a brief description of insecurity regimes at the end.

Firstly, in welfare states, the dominant mode of production is capitalist. There is a clear division of labour characterized by private ownership of the means of production in form of capital. In informal security regime, the division of labour is not solely determined by a capitalist mode of production but other forms of production co-exist and interact with capitalism (Gough, 2004b). These include the direct production of food, increased employment in informal labour markets that
reduces over dependence of formal labour market employment, highlights the productive role of community resources, kin connections, among others. This is evidenced in Malawi where in 2013 despite having a high employment rate, the formal employment rate was low at 11.3 percent and a majority of people engage in subsistence agriculture (GOM., 2014d).

Secondly, in welfare state regimes, class based differences do exist between the owners of capital and the working class which may result in exploitation of the working class by the owners of capital as they search for more profit (Gough, 2004b). In fact, class differences are becoming more complex in modern western societies, with class differences existing even among workers. In informal security regimes, just like in the welfare state regime, exploitation and differences between the rich and the poor exists. However these differences between the rich and the poor are “qualitatively more important in the South” (Gough 2004b, p.29) where for instance in Malawi the gap between the richest minority and the poorest majority is widening (Mussa and Masanjala, 2015).

Income inequalities also persist in Malawi between the small middle class/elite, who owns big estates and participate in politics (Kwengwere, 2011), and the poorest who are mostly peasant farmers. Economic inequalities (measured by consumption) have also persisted since 1964 due to different policies that have benefitted the local elite at the expense of the majority (Kwengwere, 2011). This has worsened in recent years despite Malawi’s robust economic growth between 2004 and 2011. As Mussa and Masanjala (2015) observed, in 2004, the richest 10 percent of Malawians spent 22 times more than what the poorest 10 percent spent. This increased by 2011 when the richest 10 percent spent 34 times more than the poorest 10 percent (Mussa and Masanjala, 2015). Education and health inequalities also persist, with more people in the better off category having higher educational qualifications and accessing good health facilities than the poorest (Mussa and Masanjala, 2015).

Thirdly, the dominant means of earning a livelihood in welfare states is through a formal employment wage. In informal security regimes, individuals and families use diverse strategies to make a living: working in informal labour markets, producing own food and selling any surpluses, migration for labour, vending, etc. (Gough,
This typifies Malawi where firstly the formal labour market is underdeveloped. Secondly, labour migration is common with estimates for the 1998–2008 period indicating that the percentage of emigrants from Malawi to other SADC countries was above 90 percent of all emigrants. As a result, remittances from Malawians in diaspora captured officially has been noted to increase by over six times between 1994 and 2012 (Ndegwa, 2015).

Fourth, in welfare states, political mobilisation by the owners of labour and capital is class based and these class based differences shape political settlement (Gough, 2004b). However, in informal security systems, ethnicity, regionalism and other interpersonal links can be used to identify groups and mobilise support. This is a characteristic of Malawian politics where for instance political party support is mostly based on regional and tribal or ethnic lines as evidenced in the voting patterns of the referendum of 1993 and the elections of 1994, 1999, and 2004 (Chijere Chirwa, 2014) and recently in the 2014 elections.

Fifth, in welfare states, “there is a relatively autonomous state bounded by the structural power of capital but open to class mobilisation and voice and able to take initiatives on its own behalf” (Gough, 2004, p.28). Informal security regimes however have a weak state where private interests take over at the expense of public interests (Gough, 2004b). At the same time, informal institutions guide state operations. Patron-client relationships do exist in Malawi (Chikapa, 2012), which tend to influence recruitment and appointment decisions in the public sector for instance (Dzimbiri, 2016).

Sixth, in welfare states, the state actors work together with the market and the family to meet the welfare needs of the people and these together form a “welfare mix” (Gough, 2004,p.28). In informal security regimes, non-state actors like communities, and NGOs work together with the state, the market and the family to enable people meet their livelihoods. As highlighted earlier on, remittances also become an important source of fulfilling welfare needs. Malawi’s institutional landscape of the welfare mix exemplifies this with for instance the community based organisations and the NGOs playing a role in providing support in taking care of the chronically ill (Kanyongolo, 2011).
Seventh, the welfare mix provides room for reducing the dependency of people on the labour market for meeting their welfare needs in welfare states. In the context of non-welfare state regimes, where already people do not solely depend on the market for sustenance, the notion of de-commodification does not even arise (Gough, 2004b). As highlighted earlier on, like in the context of Malawi, where formal employment opportunities are limited, individuals and families engage in different activities to earn a living which may include producing own food and petty trading (Gough 2004b, GOM., 2014d).

Eighth, in welfare states, the welfare mix and the welfare outcomes shape the distribution of power and resources and these tend to reproduce the welfare regime characteristics over time (Gough, 2004b). These are mostly guided by formal institutions. In other regimes, various aspects, including informal institutions contribute to the sustenance of the welfare regimes. For instance, in informal security regimes like Malawi, informal institutions like patron-client relations are relevant in the distribution of power and benefits and the sustenance of such systems over time (Chikapa, 2012).

Last, in welfare states, social policy process is deliberately aimed at promoting people’s welfare and the focus is on achieving longer-term collective needs. In contrast, in informal security regimes, the public policy process reinforces “privilege, private short gain, exclusion or domination” (Gough 2004b, p.32). This is exemplified in Malawi where, the focus is on achieving short term goals whose achievement will be associated with a particular political regime to enable remaining in power. This leads to inconsistent and discontinued efforts on certain public projects when the initiator leaves office. This is mostly done at the expense of sticking to the established public policy structures that ensures achievement of long term collective goals regardless of who is in government.

Bevan (2004) in Gough et al.’s (2004) book, identified a third type: an insecurity regime. This depicts “a harsh world of predatory capitalism, variegated forms of oppression including the sporadic destruction of lives and communities, inadequate, insecure livelihoods, shadow, collapsed and/or criminal states, diffuse and fluid
forms of political mobilisation generating adverse incorporation, exclusion, and political fluidity if not outright chaos, and extreme forms of suffering” (Gough, 2004, p.32). Bevan (2004), categorises Malawi alongside other African states as a “generalised insecurity regime” (Gough, 2004, p.9). Although Malawi remains one of the world’s poorest countries globally exhibiting low HDI of 0.476 (UNDP., 2016b) and largely dependent on foreign aid, with donor budget support of about 30% in 2009/2010 financial year (GOM., 2012b) (but mostly has 40% of the national budget coming from donors) (The guardian, 2014; Chinsinga, 2014), Malawi does not fit the description of insecurity regime.

Based on the features of the social system in Malawi, it appears most consistent with the informal security welfare regime than the insecure regime. This provides a better characterisation of the Malawian social system for the purpose of contextualising Malawian women’s employment and careers than using the lens of welfare state typologies, which apply limitedly to developing countries.

Gough et al.’s (2004) typology includes gender by considering the “cultural significance of gender in structuring labour markets and household level subsistence activity” (Wood, 2004, p.61). Following Gough et al.’s (2004) work, other studies have further attempted to confirm the differences among Gough et al.’s (2004) regime types (Sharkh and Gough, 2010; Whitvliet et al., 2011). However, debates continue regarding whether Gough et al.’s (2004) analysis incorporated gender. The literature base with respect to the gender dimensions and implications of the framework is still narrow, especially in respect of its use to explain women’s employment patterns. The current research therefore contributes to this limited body of knowledge by focusing on how women’s careers are shaped in an informal security welfare regime.

2.3 Family and Gender regimes

This section discusses literature on family and gender regimes. It starts by discussing the role of Malawian women in economic activities.
2.3.1 Female Economic Activity in Malawi

In many economies, the early stages of development are characterized by domestic mode of production (Tilly and Scott, 1978; Parente et al., 2000). This means that production and consumption of goods and services are done at the household level for the benefit of the household members (Oxford Reference, 2018). It is also associated with a family economy “dependent upon the efforts of each individual member and one in which the role of both partners was equally crucial” (Hufton, 1975). Family economy in this case is a term referring to goods and services which are mostly produced at the household level by the family members themselves (Pfau-Effinger, 1998).

Malawi is still in the early stages of development characterised by subsistence agriculture and low human development, positioned at number 170 out of 188 countries in 2016 (UNDP., 2016b). The agricultural sector is the backbone of Malawi’s economic growth and development. Malawi has a dualistic agricultural economy divided in two sub sectors namely the estate sector and the small holder sector (Green and Baden, 1994a; GOM., 2010a). The 2010 National Agriculture and Livestock (NACAL) survey estimated that almost 85 percent of Malawians engage in subsistence farming through small holder farming. These subsistence farmers depend on agricultural output either directly (through consumption of produce) or indirectly (selling of farm produce) for their livelihood. Over 90 percent of export earnings and 33 percent of Gross Domestic Product in Malawi come from agricultural output. Most of this is produced by small holder farmers (GOM., 2010a). Agriculture sector also employs a majority of people (GOM., 2014d).

Table 2.1 below shows the distribution of the employed population by industry in Malawi based on the 2013 Malawi Labour Force Survey (MLFS) in a selection of top ten industries. It shows that primary production (agriculture, forestry and fishing) has the highest share of employed people with at least 64 percent indicating that they were working in agriculture, forestry and fishing industry (GOM., 2014d). Out of all women in employment in Malawi, 69.9 percent reported working in this industry. Only about 16 percent of all those employed were working in wholesale and retail followed by those who worked in manufacturing (4 percent). Thus the domestic
mode of production as opposed to the industrial mode of production (Tilly and Scott, 1978) still dominates the production system in Malawi.

Table 2.1: Employment by Industry and sex in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment category</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>69.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale, retail, trade and repair of motor vehicles</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, storage &amp; communication</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration and defence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other service</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human health and social work</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities of households &amp; employers</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Table 4.5 of the Malawi Labour Force Survey of 2013

The table above also shows that a majority (70.4 percent) of those who worked in Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry lived in rural areas. Most people (85 percent) in Malawi live in rural areas (GOM, 2008b; GOM., 2012a), with no major gender differences between men and women (GOM, 2008b). In 2011, about 56 percent of the rural dwellers were poor (GOM., 2012a).
Gender differences are found in both total time spent in agricultural work and in types of work undertaken. One study showed that women’s total labour time (including social reproduction, market and subsistence agriculture activities) was two times or more that of men in both subsistence and commercial farming systems. However, men make greater inputs into cash crop production than food production (whether marketed or not) while women tend to be disproportionally involved in subsistence agriculture (Green and Baden, 1994a).

Unemployment rates based on ILO’s broad definition of unemployment are higher for women nationally in Malawi (Table 2.2). Despite people being available to work, there are no jobs due to the underdeveloped labour market. Unemployment is also high among those who live in urban areas especially for women where 39.2 percent (compared to 18 percent men) were not employed. This can be attributed to women who move to urban areas in search of non-agricultural employment finding it more difficult than men to enter employment. However the gender gap for those with tertiary educational qualification is much smaller and the overall levels of unemployment are lower for women than for those with primary and secondary qualifications, although there is a small difference for men by educational group. In terms of region, those based in the Southern region were most likely to be unemployed and those in the Northern region least likely due to a more educated population.

---

6 Percentage of the labour force aged 15-64 years which was unemployed (without work and available to work) during the reference period of four weeks (GOM., 2014, p. xviii).

7 Under the ILO broad definition, the unemployed is a person: a) without working during the reference period, b) currently available for work during the reference period. The reference period used in the survey was four weeks.
Table 2.2: Unemployment rate by residence, region and sex in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Education level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from Table 5.1 of the Malawi Labour Force survey report (GOM., 2014d)

Women also have higher risks of being in precarious work; that is they “do not have a decent job... a decent wage, a secure future, social protection and access to rights” (ILO., 2010, p.3). Own account workers and contributing family workers are mostly categorised as precarious or vulnerable workers in Malawi. Table 2.3 below shows that 60 percent of total employed population were precarious workers constituting 54 percent of men and 67 percent of women.

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8 In this table, some differences are observed between the average percentages and the individual percentages for Male and Female. These figures have been copied the way they were presented in the Labour Force report. As such, the discrepancies in these figures are not my own making.
Table 2.3: Precarious Workers by Residence, Sex and Region in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background characteristics</th>
<th>Malawi</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>66.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>83.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>66.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Copied from Table 4.7 in the Malawi Labour Force Survey Report (GOM., 2014d)

Table 2.4 below also shows that males are more likely to be paid employees (43.8 percent versus 32.1 percent) or employers (1.5 percent versus 0.8 percent) than females.
As already pointed out, more women than men are working as own account and family workers, that is more are engaged in unpaid work to assist the “family head by providing unpaid family labour” (Pott-Buter, 1993, p.6) which is critical for sustaining the family and the family economy. Just as was for example the case with married women in pre-industrial societies of England and France (Tilly and Scott, 1978), women in Malawi continue to be the pillar of the family economy to date through provision of unpaid but critical services for family sustenance like food provision through subsistence agriculture, child care etc.

The figures for own account workers and family workers in Table 2.4 are different from the figures representing precarious workers in Table 2.3(which is supposed to be an addition of own account workers and family workers). Also, these have been directly quoted from the Malawi Labour Force Survey as such, I am not responsible for the discrepancy in the figures.
The above tables therefore show that although women’s participation in formal employment is low at 6.4 percent and that they are mostly precarious workers, they play a critical role in maintaining their families through informal employment and unpaid family work. The share of subsistence food producers\textsuperscript{10} in total employment is 13.2 percent of the working age population, (14.6 percent of women and 11.5 percent of men) (GOM., 2014d). However between 1983 and 1990 (Green and Baden (1994b) women constituted on average only 12.2 percent of workers in paid employment in non-agricultural activities. In 1990 their share was 11 percent rising to 15 percent in 2008 (van Klaveren et al., 2009) and to 28.9\% in 2013 (GOM., 2014e).

Through informal employment, or working as own account workers or as subsistence food producers, (despite not being entirely good for women) women are able to combine housework and other responsibilities that enable them contribute towards family’s livelihood. Indeed most of the children under five not in nursery in Malawi are integrated into the routines and work of their mothers, thereby making it possible for these women to manage their household or care for children whilst earning a living. The state plays a limited role in the care of dependent people. Although Malawi in principle provides free primary health care, healthcare provision for most people is limited. Malawi is a global health workforce crisis country: there are only 0.2 doctors and 3.4 nurses and midwives per 10,000 people (WHO, 2014), that is 1 doctor for 55,000 patients (Malawi Data Portal, 2014). The nursing ratio is one-third of the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) recommended ratios leaving Malawian health facilities with a 65\% vacancy rate for nurses and nurse-midwives. Limited professional health care services means that the care burden is intensified for households in general and women in particular (Hoffman et al., 2012) with involvement of village communities, non-governmental organisations and charities and churches.

\textsuperscript{10} a group of people that are involved in production of food stuff for their own consumption, they do not produce for the market and only qualify to be described as employed if they are working the required hours in the reference week. Food stuff producers are not considered employed (GOM,2014c)
The elderly are also mostly cared for by children and/or grandchildren on the basis of “inter-generational reciprocity” (Parker et al., 2017, p.246) and although there are examples such as Papua New Guinea (Parker et al., 2017) where such caring is shared between the sexes, in Malawi, this work is still gendered, with women taking the responsibility. There is also limited social or welfare provision with no unemployment benefits or social assistance, although there is a mandatory contributory pension scheme for every employee working for an employer with five or more employees in both public and private sector through the Pensions Act of 2011. There is also a social cash transfer programme targeting the ultra-poors and households with labour challenges. By December 2015, the cash transfer programme had benefitted nearly 163,000 households (Abdoulayi et al., 2016).

The above discussion shows that Malawian women’s work is a cornerstone of the family economy, in a way that is different from women’s role in developed economies where the state may subsidise care costs or support rights to alternative work arrangements for those with problems with the regular work arrangements. The next sub section reviews the gender regime frameworks that have been used for cross national comparisons in women’s employment patterns in the developed economies and discusses how far these frameworks are valuable for or limited in illuminating women’s position in the Malawi context.

2.3.2 Gender regimes and women’s participation in the labour market

All sovereign states have specific gender regimes defined “as a complex of rules and norms that create established expectations about gender relations, allocating different tasks and rights to women and men” (Sainsbury, 1999, p.5). In this review, I focus on Pfau-Effinger’s gender culture typology and the familialistic and de-familialistic gender regimes.

2.3.2.1 The gender culture typology and its application to the Malawian context

Pfau-Effinger (1998) suggested a theoretical framework for cross-national gender research which proposed the need to look at the interrelationship between gender order, gender arrangement and gender culture. While gender order refers to structures of gender relations including the gender division of labour, gender
arrangement refers to how gender relations are profiled within a particular society (Pfau-Effinger, 2004a). As Pfau-Effinger (1998, p.150) further notes, “in every modern society certain uniform assumptions exist about the desirable, ‘correct’ form of gender relations and of the division of labor between women and men.” These assumptions become entrenched as norms and are somewhat persistent. The norms and values are called gender culture (Pfau-Effinger, 1998). It is gender culture that this study focuses on.

Gender culture varies among countries depending on historical, political and socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, using institutional explanations in isolation, for understanding the differences in women’s employment among countries, may not provide a true picture. Cultural orientations within particular countries are critical for a fuller picture but these orientations may change over time (Pfau-Effinger, 1998). Through her discussion of the modernization paths that the gender culture took in different national socio-cultural and institutional contexts, Pfau-Effinger (1998, 1999, 2004a) proposed a typology using the experiences of Germany, the Netherlands and Finland.

The first modernization path relates to the modernization of the male breadwinner/female carer model towards a male breadwinner/female part-time carer model found in West Germany and the Netherlands although the latter is argued to have further evolved to a dual breadwinner-dual carer model (Pfau-Effinger, 1998). In both cases, the traditional male breadwinner/female carer model represents the strict division of labor between men and women in the society’s public and private spheres (Pfau-Effinger, 1999; Pfau-Effinger, 1998; Crompton and Harris, 1999). In its pure form, it was based on the notions of men having the primary responsibility to earn a wage and provide for their families and of women being expected to stay home and provide caring services for their family members (Lewis, 1992; Lewis, 2001a; Pfau-Effinger, 2004b; Pfau-Effinger, 1998; Crompton, 1997).

In the modernized male breadwinner/female part-time carer model, culturally, mothers are expected and are able to do unpaid caring work whilst at the same time engaging in paid part-time employment (Pfau-Effinger, 1998, 1999, 2004b). Women have to negotiate both paid and unpaid work (Jenkins, 2004), made possible through engaging in part-time work.
The dual breadwinner/dual carer model which Pfau-Effinger associates with the end point of the Netherlands modernization path, represents “the notion of a symmetrical and equitable integration of both genders into society” (Pfau-Effinger, 1998, p.154). There is an assumed equal sharing of domestic work, especially child care and waged labor between spouses (Pfau-Effinger, 1999; Pfau-Effinger, 1998). However, considering that the Netherlands has the highest gender gap in terms of working hours in the European union at 27 percent (Warren, 2007), indicating that the gender division of labour remains traditional, this suggests that Pfau-Effinger (1998, 2004a) may have been overenthusiastic in arguing that the Netherlands exhibits egalitarian elements of gender equality (Crompton and Harris, 1999). In fact, the Netherlands’ experiences come close to the one-and-a-half earner model (Ciccia and Bleijenbergh, 2014).

The second modernization path in Pfau-Effinger’s (1998) original typology was that taken by Finland and originated from a “family economic model and ended with a dual breadwinner/state carer model (p.154).” Under the family economic model, both men and women work together, also assisted by older children, to ensure that their family business (farm/craft work) thrives (Pfau-Effinger, 1998, 1999). Here the work of women is just as important as that of men for family survival and there is mutual dependency. However, there is still a “strong sexual division of labour…which in fact varies in time and space” (Pfau-Effinger, 1998, p.154). In the 1950s and 60s, the Finland’s family economy, started evolving into the dual breadwinner/state carer model characterized by full-time participation in employment by both men and women with both spouses being considered as breadwinners and child care as mainly the responsibility of the welfare state and not primarily that of the family (Pfau-Effinger, 1998, 1999, 2004a).

Pfau-Effinger’s (1998) view of the possibility of full-time integration of both men and women in the workforce remains an ideal for most societies, although some Nordic countries have moved closer to this arrangement. In most northern European countries (though not in the eastern or southern countries), women still tend to work part-time (Ciccia and Bleijenbergh, 2014; Smith et al., 1998). This has been associated with child care costs and, limited state support with child care.
Child care is still mostly a female responsibility, although there are national differences in the degree of public responsibility for child care and men’s participation in care activities (Bazant, 2016).

Pfau-Effinger’s (1998) typology is important for a recognition that “policies do not shape employment choices in a cultural void: policies interact with culture to influence women's (and men's) choices about managing work and family” (Budig et al., 2012 p.164). As Kremer (2006) points out, literature on female employment which ignores the specific cultural context within which women work may overemphasise the impact of institutional factors on women's employment outcomes. However, Pfau-Effinger (1998) and subsequent authors that focused on the cultural influences shaping female employment (Budig et al., 2012; Kremer, 2006) based their argument and evidence about the influences of culture on western societies.

Additionally, review of existing literature shows that there is increased interest in how women combine work and family interface following an increased number of women entering employment, the increase in dual breadwinner families and single parent headed households in societies (ILO., 2009). Despite the global nature of the changes in socio-demographics, existing research on the subject matter is largely based on experiences drawn from western societies (see Tavora and Rubery (2013), Rubery et al. (2005), Crompton et al. (2007), Crompton and Lyonette (2006), Tavora (2012b), Tavora (2012a), (Tomlinson, 2004 ), Dex (2003) and Dex and Smith (2002 ), among others). Where socio-economic contexts are similar, evidence from western societies might be applicable but this is less likely where there are variations in cultural values, national policies, availability of employment opportunities, the structure of the families (Annor, 2014), level of national income or pattern of economic development. Therefore experiences with combining work and family responsibilities can be expected to be very different in industrial-led development societies than economies dominated by subsistence agriculture.

Karamessini (2014) identifies three important sets of differences between advanced and developing countries that call for different focus in research on women’s employment. Firstly, women in advanced economies are concentrated in services and in formal paid employment but their counterparts in developing economies are mostly found in manufacturing or agriculture jobs as well as in informal paid and
unpaid employment. Secondly, the welfare state and safety nets in developed countries are much more established than in the developing countries where these are residual. Lastly, in developed economies, feminists have challenged traditional gender and family roles and the gendered division of labour. This makes it difficult to generalise western evidence to non-western contexts resulting in a literature gap on how gender culture influences employment and the combining of work and family responsibilities in non-western contexts (Mokomane, 2014; Annor, 2014; Steiber and Haas, 2012).

The limited literature based on non-western societies is biased towards Asian contexts, (see for example Beauregard (2007) and (Aryee, 1992) among others). A recent edited book explores the subject matter in 14 Asia-Pacific countries (Baird et al., 2017). Chen et al. (2017) takes the case of China and argues that wealthier families in urban areas use private childcare and pre-schools to enable parents work. For less well-off women, extended family members, mostly grand-parents helped with child care. Female domestic workers are also used to provide child care and elder care in China. In the same book, Crinis and Bandali (2017) discussed how Malaysian working women rely on family, informal child care and foreign domestic workers as a way of meeting care needs. In the public sector, workplace practices like career breaks also help women to concentrate on family issues in Malaysia.

Scholarship on the work–family discourse based on the Sub-Saharan African context’s experience is limited. Yet, there is high women’s labour force participation and employment rates among these countries (ILO., 2016) and the significant challenge especially to women who have to juggle paid and unpaid work due to the cultural expectation for people to marry and have children (Kyalo, 2012; Phiri, 2007), the high dependency ratio (Index mundi, 2017), the high prevalence of HIV (GOM., 2010b; World Bank., 2016; Kharsany and Karim, 2016) and the limited state’s support especially for working parents.

However, there is a rising body of literature that focuses on the importance of cultural context in women’s employment decisions in developing countries like Sudan (Kargwell, 2008), Nigeria (Nwagbara and Akanji, 2012), and South Africa (Whitehead and Kotze, 2003; Lewis et al., 2007).
Recent efforts include an edited book by Mokomane (2014) which discusses experiences of working parents in reconciling work and family in seven of the 52 Sub-Saharan African countries although Malawi was not included. Nevertheless, there is still limited research into women’s employment behavior and their efforts to combine work and family responsibilities in these contexts. For instance, Whitehead and Kotze (2003, p.80) in their study found that their female participants most often experienced “job-parent conflict” even though all had some form of household support for child care and household duties. Now the question that the team did not address was why despite all this support available to working women in South Africa, they still experience the job-parent conflict. This is a question that can also be raised for all societies outside South Africa that share similar attributes in terms of availability of household support for child care and household duties by considering their gender culture.

The next sub section discusses Malawi’s gender culture, in order to contextualise the position of women in the family economy context and how the family context shapes the career orientations of individual women in Malawi.

2.3.2.1.1 Gender culture in Malawi: Gender relations in Patrilineal, and matrilineal societies in Malawi

Based on women’s role in the family economy to date discussed in subsection 2.3.1 above, Malawi’s experience comes close to Pfau-Effinger’s (1998) modernisation path two associated with the modernisation of the family economic model and moving towards a dual breadwinner model. Through either formal or informal employment, Malawian women have been instrumental for the survival of their families and have historically been associated with high participation in employment. This applies also to the few women in formal employment who have worked full time alongside their husbands, showing that both men and women are fully integrated in employment. As at 2011, in relation to other SADC countries, Malawi’s monthly minimum wage was the second lowest after Burundi pegged at USD23 (ILO, 2013) (see Table 2.5). Due to Malawi having generally lower minimum wages (ILO, 2013), the more people work per family the better; hence women have to be earners alongside their spouses.
Table 2.5: Minimum wages of Malawi in comparison to selected countries in SADC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Monthly minimum wage in US dollars (rounded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Angola</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Botswana</td>
<td>$108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
<td>$47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Lesotho</td>
<td>$125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Madagascar</td>
<td>$44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Malawi</td>
<td>$23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Mauritius</td>
<td>$138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Mozambique</td>
<td>$79 (for manufacturing industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Seychelles</td>
<td>$125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Swaziland</td>
<td>$58 (unskilled worker)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 United Republic of Tanzania</td>
<td>$51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Zambia</td>
<td>$86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ILO (2013)

But unlike Finland, the example underpinning modernisation path two in Pfau-Effinger’s (1998) typology, Malawi’s own modernisation path has not been associated with the state taking responsibility for child caring. Despite their key role as providers, Malawian women participate in domestic work more than men often utilising the underpaid services of other women, whether hired or extended family members. Additionally, domestic work has reduced among higher income earners due to increased use of cookers, washing machines etc. Nevertheless, there is still a strong sexual domestic division of labour that has not substantially eroded despite women participating in paid employment.

In Malawi, an interplay of historical, socio-cultural processes in pre-colonial times and during colonial rule and political rhetoric in the post-independence era, have all contributed to Malawi’s gender culture which may explain the gender relations of production and overall women’s status in public and private life. By the term gender, I mean the “socially constructed differences between men and women and the beliefs and identities that support difference and inequality” (Acker, 2006, p.444). The way gender is socially constructed changes from one historical period to another and also differs among different cultural spaces. This means that it is not possible for two societies to structure gender relations therein similarly (Davison, 1993; Pfau-Effinger, 1998).
Gender relations may also vary from one group of people to another within the same national boundaries (Davison, 1993). For example, within Malawi, in some ethnic groups, marriage arrangements determine that a husband relocates to the wife’s village after getting married-uxorilocality (Phiri, 2007; Davison, 1993). Ideal uxorilocal marriage patterns are practiced in matrilineal societies where descent is determined through the mother’s lineage (Phiri, 2007; Mair, 2013). Yet in other parts, a wife moves to her husband’s village- virilocality (Phiri, 1983; Davison, 1993). This in turn is associated with patrilineal systems, where descent is determined through the father (Phiri, 2007; Mair, 2013). Patrilineal and matrilineal societies have occupied Malawi since pre-colonial times (Davison, 1993; Semu, 2002; Hodgson, 1933).

Patrilineal and matrilineal cultural elements are key to Malawi’s modernization paths at the level of gender culture as they influence the locus of control of women’s productive and reproductive roles. These have changed over years but there are still legacy effects shaping gender culture today. It is the Chewa\textsuperscript{11} and Lomwe\textsuperscript{12} ethnic groups (GOM, 2008a) that are the main matrilineal groups while Ngoni\textsuperscript{13} and Tumbuka\textsuperscript{14} are the main traditionally patrilineal groups. Since Chewa is the largest and earliest matrilineal group in Malawi and has had a great influence on Malawi’s way of life, I focus on their culture and compare it to the culture of the Ngoni. Table 2.6 below is a summary of the Chewa culture (since the 1660s) and the Ngoni culture (from the nineteenth century). As the table shows, despite the Chewa people being matrilineal, with some provisions for protecting women’s interests, they were not matriarchal but patriarchal. This is so because Chewa women were largely reliant upon and totally controlled by their maternal uncles or brother (guardians-Nkhoswe) whether married or single in the spirit of the dependant (’mbumba’) (Semu, 2002; Hodgson, 1933; Phiri, 2007; Phiri, 1983).

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
Ethnic Group & Culture Period  \\
\hline
Chewa & Since 1660s  \\
\hline
Lomwe &  \\
\hline
Ngoni & From 19th century  \\
\hline
Tumbuka &  \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Comparison of Chewa and Ngoni culture}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{11} 33.3\% of Malawians are Chewa and are in majority
\textsuperscript{12} 17.8\% of Malawians are Lomwe
\textsuperscript{13} 12.9\% of Malawians are Ngoni
\textsuperscript{14} 8.7\% of Malawians are Tumbuka
Table 2.6: Summary of the culture of the Chewa and the Ngoni

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Chewa culture (Matrilineal)</th>
<th>The Ngoni culture(Patrilineal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lineage traced through the mother</td>
<td>Lineage traced through the father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women considered as important instruments for community’s survival through child birth</td>
<td>Women’s subordinate position enhanced through payment of bride price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women stayed in their own village with husband after getting married (uxorilocality)</td>
<td>Wife was expected to move to her husband’s village (virilocality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women had social or symbolic respect as givers and nourishers of life through detailed initiation ceremonies</td>
<td>Women had less social or symbolic respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women had religious powers in shrines</td>
<td>Women had no religious powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women had economic rights through inheriting land from their mothers</td>
<td>Women had no right to inherit land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers had rights of ownership and control over her children but this control was mostly exercised by her uncles and brothers</td>
<td>Husband had full authority over the wife and the children upon paying bride price in full</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: (Phiri, 1983; Davison, 1993; Radcliffe-Brown, 1987; Roberts, 1964; Phiri, 2007; Semu, 2002 )

Table 2.7 below provides a timeline for the four external influences that can be argued to have introduced changes among the Chewa’s way of life since the early nineteenth century. These changes made the Chewa women start to become economically dependent on their husbands and lost the symbolic status they once enjoyed (Phiri, 2007; Phiri, 1983). The details in terms of how these drivers for change influenced the Chewa culture have been provided in Appendix 2.

Table 2.7: External influences on the Chewa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time line</th>
<th>Driver for change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From 1810</td>
<td>Growth of slave trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1840-1870</td>
<td>Invasion of patrilineal groups especially the Ngoni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1876</td>
<td>Introduction of christianity by the early missionaries, whose teachings contradicted the Chewa’s way of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 1893</td>
<td>Colonization and the introduction of the cash economy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source (Hodgson, 1933; Phiri, 1983; Phiri, 2007).
Due to these external influences on the Chewa, including missionary education, migration to urban areas, the expansion of the cash economy which underscored individualism (Phiri, 1983), by the 1960s the basic unit of production and consumption became the nuclear family comprising husband, wife and children and matrilineage and its major tenets were no longer dominant (Kandawire 1977). This is not to say that modern Malawian families follow the individualistic perspective of their counterparts in western societies (Mair, 2013). Based on Geert Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, Malawi’s disposition is more towards collectivist than individualist (Sulamoyo, 2012). Extended family members are still important and are assisted by or can assist the nuclear family. However, there are important legacies from the historical cultural factors drawn from both the matrilineal and patrilineal societies, which continue to influence gender relations in modern Malawi.

To begin with, as was the case historically, in modern Malawi, the patriarchal system at the household level has persisted with more men (76.1 percent) than women (23.9 percent) being household heads15. The female household heads are mostly lone mothers (GOM., 2012a). This means that more men than women are in charge of making the important economic decisions in the households, which may sometimes fail to take into account the interests of women. Now, however, it is the father in both patrilineal and matrilineal societies who has control over the family, consistent with the historical role of fathers among patrilineal societies where the father is the guardian of children (Hodgson, 1933). Since most fathers are now in control over their children and wives even among the Chewa, power has just been transferred from one male figure i.e. maternal uncles or brothers in the historical period, to another male figure, the father. Nowadays it is rare to see even among the Chewas, a mother’s brother exercising the kind of authority over her and her children as they had before. The nature of guardianship required has changed tremendously over the years (Phiri, 1983). Current guardianship requires proper improvement of the child including proper training in school and meeting all the expenses required in preparing the child to fit in the new and expanding economy as opposed to the subsistence agriculture village life that the Chewa depended on before the nineteenth century.

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15 A “household head is defined as the person who makes economic decisions in the household” (GOM, 2012a, p.12).
These are responsibilities which the father fulfils more enthusiastically than the maternal uncle, resulting in increased father’s influence over his children than was the case before (Phiri, 1983; Mair, 2013). Thus patriarchy persists in both matrilineal and patrilineal societies in modern Malawi (Phiri, 2007), with only the change in the source of control and continues to determine gender relations.

Phiri (2007) further notes that patriarchy has defined women as inferior to men, thereby perpetuating the oppression of women in the society. Using patriarchy to define women influences whether women participate fully in society and determine the roles they can play therein. Due to patriarchal tendencies, women end up taking low level positions in employment, participating less in education, not doing well in business circles (Nation online, 2013) and even in politics (Kayuni, 2016), thereby making lower contributions to development. The traditional patriarchal set up was recently cited as a major limitation towards achieving four of the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals, namely eradicating extreme poverty, achieving universal primary education, improved gender equality and improved maternal health where Malawi has lagged behind (GOM., 2014a; Nation online, 2013).

Despite the persistent strong patriarchal system, women have had a long term role in family provisioning. As early as before the nineteenth century, women in Malawi played an important role in both productive and reproductive roles. They engaged in agricultural work as well as cooking and preparing food and basic household and child caring activities, (Phiri, 2007). Men were mostly absent especially during the dry seasons when they engaged in fishing and hunting and other long distance trade, including engaging in slave trade. Women continue to be key providers alongside their spouses and they still combine productive and reproductive roles.

Similarly, in modern Malawi, as was the case among the Chewa in the past, women are still socialised to view men as superior. Female initiation ceremonies were and are still important as they prepare girls for their future roles as wives and mothers and provide sex education (Phiri, 1983). Although female initiation ceremonies could be looked at as a means of emphasising the importance of women among the Chewa, these nevertheless highlighted the superiority of men over women as a young girl was taught to be submissive to her future husband and to “treat her
husband like a king” (Phiri, 2007, p.38). Initiation ceremonies still occur in most ethnic groups today especially in the rural areas. In urban areas, bridal showers and/or other before and after wedding advisory sessions still serve to inculcate the same principles of being a good home maker and wife for the bride to be.

During independence movements in the 1960s, women played a crucial even if unpublicised behind the scenes role, supporting the men who were resisting colonial rule (Lwanda 1996). Furthermore, Kamuzu Banda, Malawi’s first president, being a Chewa himself (Gough, 2004a), imposed Chewa matrilineal concepts throughout Malawi. The nationalists and later the Malawi Government manipulated the “literal and figurative role of women in the matrilineal cultural sphere” (Semu, 2002, p.81). However, culture was then redefined to the advantage of the politicians with no genuine intentions of sorting out the inherent contradictions in promoting women’s status. Rather, these contradictions were consolidated. Banda thus adopted the matrilineal concept of mbumba (being dependent on male family members) but ignored the idea of women as tslide (the root of the lineage- which highlights the symbolic status of women among the Chewa) (Phiri, 1983). He created a nation-wide “matrilineal mbumba culture” (Lwanda, 1996, p.203), through which he mirrored the traditional relationship between women and their male guardian, from the mother’s side (Nkhaswe in Chichewa) (Hodgson, 1933). In 1963, Banda declared himself “Nkhaswe No. 1” (Chipembere, 2002, p.79). In exchange for this favour, women had to show loyalty by wearing political party uniforms adorned with Banda’s portrait and to sing and dance praise songs at political party meetings (Semu, 2002).

In order to amass popular support for the party, Banda gave women token power while he and his male protégés retained full control. Thus, there was sham promotion of matrilineal values to support the new president whilst reinforcing male power as the reality was that he never worked to change the social-structural context that hindered women’s participation in public life (Amundsen and Kayuni, 2016a). This is evidenced in that during Banda’s regime (1964-1994), women’s participation in public life was very low (Semu, 2002). For instance, in 1977, only 6 percent of women were engaged in non-agriculture jobs, compared to 26 percent of men (Hirschmann, 1984).
Also, women's participation in decision making positions in the civil services was “negligible” (Hirschman, 1984, p.iii) due to women’s lower levels of education. Since 1994, Malawi has embraced international human rights and adopted a constitution based on democratic principles which guarantees and respects all people’s human rights (GOM, 2004). However a cultural discourse that presents “contradictions and ironies” concerning women’s personal and public lives may limit the extent to which these processes can result into meaningful gains for Malawian women (Semu, 2002, p.77). The gender equality debate in employment is yet to gain momentum in the public sphere despite the enactment of the Gender Equality Act in 2013, although the 50:50 selection policy is in use for education and training purposes. Despite women exhibiting high labour force and employment rates to date, their participation in formal sector and leadership positions still trails men, with the number of women in leadership position in the public sector being at 24% in 2013 (DHRMD, 2013). Similarly, in the private sector, there is male dominance (85%) of professional groups (GOM, 2012a).

Another legacy from the historical cultural factors relates to the collective role of women in community and social reproduction activities. Chewa women, apart from giving life through giving births, were also responsible for nourishing and shaping it. The woman worked around the home whilst socializing her children in the norms of her society, sharing this work with other women of the same clan, emphasising the role of extended families in child care (Phiri, 2007). This collective role of women in community and social reproduction activities continue in modern Malawi through working together during child births, weddings and funerals among other community functions (Mphande, 2014).

Therefore, understanding gender culture, which is dominated by patriarchal elements, despite women having a long term role as family providers, is important in understanding relationships in the family context, which then impacts on women’s employment and career decisions. As O’Neil et al., (2016) observed, there may be variations within societies and women who take responsibilities outside the home and do things that are considered inconsistent with the society’s expectations and norms about women, may be supported by sympathetic family members.
Family members therefore may be key in how women’s careers are shaped - “whether this is a father who supports his daughter’s education or encourages her to speak up, or a husband who is willing to share domestic responsibilities” (O’Neil et al., 2016, p.23) or support a woman’s career in any way.

2.3.2.2 Familialistic vs de-familialistic gender regimes

Gender regimes’ literature categorises societies into familialistic and de-familialistic gender regimes based primarily on European societies. Familialism is when the private family members, as opposed to the state, are the central provider of the welfare and care needs of its members (Leitner, 2003; Esping-Andersen, 1999). Familialism is linked with a traditional gender division of labour and a strong male-breadwinner system. Conservative welfare states, Southern European (and Japan) are strongly familialistic since they lack both service provision by the state and the market (Esping-Andersen, 1999).

This is contrasted to “individualistic” and “de-familializing” gender regimes (Sumer, 2009, p.4) where there is an assumption that both men and women will participate in paid employment as state provision towards child care and eldercare is high. In this case, de-familialization refers to the extent to which family members are relieved from providing welfare and caring services to their family members who need it (Esping-Andersen, 1999). Thus a de-familializing system aims at removing the load of care from the family members and reducing the degree to which individuals have their care needs met because of their linkage to a particular family (McLaughlin and Glendinning, 1994). It therefore relieves women from the household duties and aids their high participation in productive endeavours (Esping-Andersen, 1999). It encourages “women’s full time, life-long participation in the labour market by lessening the familial burden” (Esping-Andersen, 1999, p.45).

Scandinavian welfare regimes exhibit de-familialization features through extensive public childcare services, generous parental leaves to allow providing care, money for care and care services are available (Leitner, 2003; Ellingsæter, 1999). In this case, social/state policy is clearly designed to promote the economic independence of women (Esping-Andersen, 1999) and minimise the work-family tensions coming
about due to the decline of the male-bread winner model and getting closer to the dual breadwinner model (Ellingsæter, 1999). Similarly, liberal welfare states like the UK also have a *de-familializing* gender regime but this is through market driven service provisions (Leitner, 2003; Esping-Andersen, 1999; Taylor-Gooby, 2001).

In Sainsbury’s (1996) effort to gender the welfare states, she contrasted states in the male breadwinner (*familialistic*) from the individual models of social policy (*de-familialistic*). The former has a familial ideology based on the importance of marriage and on a strict gender division of labour. In this model, “the husband is the head of the household, and it is his duty to provide for the members of his family...through full time employment. The duties of the wife are to make a good home and provide care for her husband and children. The division of labour is codified in family law, social and labour legislation and the tax system...” (Esping Andersen 1999 p.41). Thus, caring and reproduction tasks, are a domain of the individual households and is unpaid. Labour market policies aim at promoting men’s employment.

Sainsbury’s (1996) individual model, (*de-familialistic*) assumes shared tasks with both husband and wife responsible for financial support and care of their children. Here labour market policies cover everyone regardless of their sex. Additionally, most of the reproductive tasks are provided through the public sector and even where these are provided in the home, they are still paid for and entitles the carer to social security benefits. Based on the above discussion, Malawi’s gender regime, like many developing societies, may be described as a hybrid model, depicting traits drawn from both the *familialistic*-male breadwinner model as well as the *de-familialistic*-individual models. However, there is also a need to differentiate the meanings attached to familialism by context. For Esping-Andersen (1999), familialism implies deliberate policies to encourage traditional family arrangements that intentionally or unintentionally discourage female employment.

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16 Malawi has limited welfare provisions as such cannot be fully categorised as a welfare state. However some of the elements in Sainsbury’s (1996) analytic construct can be used to describe Malawi as well as other states with limited welfare provisions.
This view was supported by (Crompton and Harris, 1999) who considered state policies to be deliberately supporting strategies that exclude women from paid work with the aim of ensuring healthy infants, or enforcing the norm of men as breadwinners. But familialism in the Malawi context (and until recently also in Portugal) may not necessarily be a deliberate strategy, but the result of the underdevelopment of the welfare system. In order to elaborate on Malawi’s hybrid gender regime, this discussion turns to Malawian women’s participation in the labour market. In this case, it firstly highlights how the labour market is regulated. This is then followed by a discussion of women’s high labour force participation/employment rates alongside high fertility rates as well as family policies and practices. Then, the chapter discusses time use among men and women in Malawi.

2.3.3.1 Regulation of the labour market in Malawi

The labour market is an important vehicle for improving the position of women in every society (Sümer, 2009) but positive impacts are only likely with an appropriate regulatory framework. The 1994 Public Service Act in Malawi was aimed at providing fair and equal treatment of all public officers in all aspects of human resource management and development regardless of one’s sex, age, origin, political, tribal or religious affiliations (GOM, 1994). Likewise the 1996 Labour Relations Act was aimed at regulating public and private sector employment relations under democratic principles. This was followed by the 2000 Employment Act which among others protects all employees including those with family responsibilities against discrimination of any form (GOM, 2000).

Further, the 2000 Employment Act sets 48 hours per week as the maximum working hours for all employees except guards and shift workers and provides for maternity leave as we discuss further later. A 2011 Pension Act introduced some welfare provisions including pension rights (see section 2.3.1) and annual leave (minimum 15 days). By protecting employees including those with family responsibilities in employment, the state has recognised the family as an integral player in employment issues.
The most direct indication of government’s commitment to achieving gender equality is the 2013 Gender Equality Act. Among other matters, this provides for quotas in recruitment and promotion in public service by stipulating that “an appointing or recruiting authority in the public service shall appoint no less than forty percent ... and no more than sixty percent ... of either sex in any department in the public service” (GOM, 2012b, s.11). Although its implementation is yet to effectively start and is limited to public institutions, such equal opportunities legislation is an important feature of a de-familialization regime as it provides opportunities for redressing sex discrimination in recruitment, selection and promotion, thereby promoting the full participation of both Malawi men and women in employment.

2.3.3.2 High fertility rates, labour force participation and family policies and practices

Elsewhere, high labour force participation rates for women have been associated with a decline in fertility rates (Crompton, 1999; Sümer, 2009). In Malawi, there has been a notable decline in fertility, from a total fertility rate of 7.6 in 1977 to 4.4 in 2016 for those in the reproductive age category of 15-49 (National Statistical Office [Malawi] and ICF International., 2016; GOM, 2008b). This, has largely been due to strategies in the 1994 and 2012 national population policies which focussed on “reducing the growth rate of the population [and]supporting the achievement of sustainable socio-economic development” respectively (GOM,2012,p.1). The focus of these policies was “enabling women access and use contraception” (GOM.,2012,p.5). The 2012 population policy also advocated for women’s empowerment and gender equality, so as to enable women to negotiate with their spouses for reproductive health services, including family planning (GOM., 2012c). There are however clear differences in the use of contraceptives across socioeconomic groups in Malawi with only about 42 percent of married women reported to be using modern contraceptives in 2015 (Population Institute, 2015). As a result the high fertility rates have persisted.
Although Malawi still has a high fertility rate at 4.4, this represents significant progress over the 7.6 rate in 1977, which has important repercussions for women’s health and status in society. However, the high labour force participation and employment rates coupled with high fertility rates may show that high fertility rates have not been a deterrent for women’s participation in employment. In other societies like the Scandinavian countries, high fertility rates (fertility rates in Scandinavian countries are high for European standards but low for African standards) and high employment rates for women have been made possible through extensive public support for child care and strategies towards ensuring the father participates in child care as well (Sümer, 2009).

In Malawi, there is limited public responsibility for pre-school children in Malawi. It is mostly the domain of private families, mostly women, with limited or no public funding going to the rural community based child care centres (Munthali et al., 2014), exhibiting a familialistic gender regime attribute. The high labour force participation for Malawian women alongside high fertility rates has been achieved through both their concentration in informal employment (although not implying that this is good) which enables reconciliation of work and child care for those women in informal employment on one hand, and through underpaid services of other women who act as maids and nannies for those women in formal employment. Thus the high employment rates of women in Malawi shows that it is possible to have high rates of female employment alongside high levels of familialism as was also observed by Tavora (2012a) in the context of Portugal, hence a hybrid model of a gender regime.

Moreover, we cannot say that the division of child care responsibilities has significantly changed over the years: it is still traditional. Malawi has gone through changes in terms of maternity leave provision. Before independence, a woman in a pensionable and permanent position in the civil service was required to resign the moment she gets married. However, they had a chance of re-joining later but not as permanent and pensionable members. Women were not entitled to any maternity leave either.
Following Skinner’s commission of enquiry report on the state of the civil service in 1963, this was considered unfair and not in the interest of the civil service which needed to retain qualified and well trained staff whether men or women upon gaining independence. The report highlighted in paragraph 224:

“...The choice as to whether a female officer should resign on marriage should be with the officer and resignation should not be compulsory. She ... alone should decide whether as a married woman, she wishes to surrender it in preference for domestic life... [taking] into account that as a member of the permanent and pensionable establishment, she will have to fulfil the obligations which go with such membership. [...] Being liable to transfer and will be required to carry out her duties as a normal member of the staff...

Skinner’s commission of enquiry recommended retaining women in permanent and pensionable positions and that they should be entitled to unpaid maternity leave of three months (Skinner, 1964). This later became paid maternity leave, first only for permanent pensionable civil servants but after democracy, this was extended to all groups and the 2000 Employment Act of 2000 finally mandated all employers to provide maternity leave to all female employees of at least eight weeks on full pay within a three year period together with rights to extended leave under the discretion of the employer (GOM 2000, s.47). Malawi’s statutory maternity leave at eight weeks is on the low side in comparison to other countries. At the global level, Malawi belongs to the smallest cluster of countries (fifteen percent) with a legal provision of less than twelve weeks of maternity leave (ILO, 2013). Malawi does provide maternity leave benefits of 100% of previous earnings but for less than 14 weeks (ILO, 2013) and is also among half of the SADC member states that require employers to meet the maternity leave costs.

These notable developments towards helping mothers reconcile work and child care notwithstanding, Malawi still has a traditional system of leave entitlements for parents as men are not entitled any parental or paternity leave to enable them adjust to the “parental role or bonding with the infant” (Singley and Haines, 2005 p.393) as well as assisting the mother to recover from child birth. The lack of men’s entitlements to any statutory parental leave shows the country’s gender regime to be familialistic and that the welfare system is under developed.
Yet, due to the increased occurrence of dual career/earner families, it might be considered that fathers ought to play an important role in child care and other family responsibilities (Smit, 2002), an objective that is more likely to be achieved when clear statutory provisions are available. Evidence from a South African study shows that men who utilise paternity leave are more involved in domestic task responsibilities as well as in rearing and taking care of children and will “experience marital integration” (Smit, 2002, p. 408). This highlights the importance of pro-family policies within formal organisations. The absence of paternity or parental leave can better be explained by Malawi’s dominant gender culture associated with child care as well as the familialistic gender regime. As previously discussed, traditionally, women in the matrilineal societies were working around the home whilst nurturing children together with other women of the clan (Phiri, 2007).

Today, this tradition continues. What happens in most cases is that whenever a pregnant woman is about to give birth, whether working or non-working, her female relations (for example mother, mother in-law, sister, aunt, grandmother) come over to support her during child birth (O’Gorman et al., 2010) and with any new child care related tasks until such a point when she has recuperated from giving birth and birth rituals have been completed. Although varying ritual traditions surround child birth in different ethnic groups in Malawi, they are all a “female domain … and observed exclusively by women” (Steinforth, 2009, p. 52), consequently, associating child care with women. In the process, the father/husband is being alienated in child care and involving him at a later stage may prove difficult. Moreover, when a married man is found in the kitchen helping out his wife by either his mother or the wife’s mother, this is seen as a failure on the part of the woman to do what she is supposed to do and is considered shameful.

The no paternity leave policies may also be due to the fact that most women in Malawi have traditionally not been in formal employment. As such there may be no perceived economic reasons behind providing the working men with paternity leave. More importantly, this decision may be based on the traditional model of one male breadwinner/female carer per family which does not fit the dual breadwinner family model evident in Malawi.
As argued in section 2.2 above, Malawian women have played a huge role in informal employment and their participation in formal sector has also been rising. Thus, Malawian women have “primary responsibility for activities related to social reproduction (child care; family health care; provision of basic resources such as fuelwood, water; food preparation etc.). But, this is in addition to their directly productive activities (subsistence and market-oriented cultivation; wage employment and own account income generation)” (Green and Baden, 1994, p.21).

It is evident that Malawi is making progress towards having dual breadwinning families regardless of whether employment is in the formal or the informal sector. Unfortunately, most of the family practices in Malawi have remained traditional and family policies remain undeveloped. Yet, it is the same element of dual breadwinning that forms the premises of the recently enacted 2015 Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act which puts duty to maintain family on both spouses as stipulated in s.50(1) of the Act and that the monetary contribution of each spouse should be proportionate to his or her income. Subsection 3 also provides for considering the non-monetary contribution of each spouse. By requiring either or both paid and reproductive labor of women in the sustenance of family, there is need for a shift in the “legitimate role expectations of men and women” as the once distinct role domains of men and women now have to be reconciled (Giele, 2006, p.116). Moreover, just as it is not possible to “count on the availability of house wives and full-time mothers...” in welfare states (Esping-Andersen 1999, p.70), the same is the case with informal security regimes like Malawi, where women’s participation in informal labour market activities has always been high coupled with their significant though limited entry into the formal labour market.

Although in Malawi the system is based on familialism with the primary responsibility for caring for the sick and children falling on family members “the nature of care work in Malawi today remains gendered” (Kanyongolo, 2011, p.177). Even in times of illness, women are the primary caregivers and bail out inefficient or non-existent state health facilities (Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance., 2015).
Yet, as observed by Sümer (2009), the goals of gender equality and social inclusion are hard to achieve as long as the gendered division of care work and work family reconciliation problems are not discussed as major public and political issues. Continuing to treat care issues as private problems to be solved within the private domain is unlikely to address the challenges at hand and may in fact lead to social polarization as only the privileged women in high paying jobs are likely to be able to access the unpaid and underpaid services of other women to enable them to remain in full-time employment. Thus, the familialistic gender regime in Malawi has important inequality implications for women belonging to different social classes. As Borchorst and Siim (2002) noted in the context of challenges facing the Scandinavian gender regime, it is only women with higher education and in middle class high paying jobs that find it easy to manage work and family responsibilities in familialistic gender regimes.

In the context of Malawi, this is because this category of women may be able to outsource labour for help with house work and childcare to enable them concentrate on their labour market roles. Unfortunately, being attached to full-time employment whilst accessing support of other women does not work to challenge the gendered division of work especially in the home. Yet, there is limited literature on the influences of family policies and practices on employment in Malawi, despite the existing literature noting the disparities in time spent on domestic work between men and women (GOM2012a). Yet the family, “as an institution, it systematically patterns people’s behaviour, expectations and incentives. Parallel to the state and the market, it is part of an integrated regulatory infrastructure that defines what is rational and desirable, that facilitates normative compliance and social integration” (Esping-Andersen, 1999, p.47). There is therefore a need to consider the family context and how this influences women’s employment and career orientations in Malawi.
2.3.3.4 Time use among men and women

Time use in the context of Malawi’s labour market is “conceptualised as the total number of hours devoted to market, non-market, domestic, care and volunteer activities” (GOM, 2012a, p.25). There are differences in time spent on market activities as either paid employees, own account or employer where men spend higher number of hours compared to women in similar activities. Malawian men spend about one and a half times more hours than women in market economic activities (GOM, 2012a). There are no differences on the time spent in non-market economic activities or as unpaid family worker in market activities. Yet, women spend about six times as much time in domestic, care and volunteer activities in comparison to men.

More evidence comes from the Integrated Household Survey of 2011 which shows that 82 percent of women and only 18 percent of men are involved in domestic tasks (excluding child care). No reason was given for excluding child care in this analysis but its inclusion would have increased the time spent on domestic activities for women. This also indicate that in Malawi, families, organisations and the society at large “have been free-riding” on caring labour [in this case child care] which is provided mostly by women, unpaid or underpaid (UNDP, 1999, p. 7). These statistics confirm the gender division of time use consistent with a familialist regime with men engaging more in productive activities and women more in reproductive activities. However we do not have disaggregated data for those families where the women are employed in the formal sector although all the available evidence fails to indicate any strong active involvement on the part of men.

2.4. Employment regimes

This section critically discusses the extant literature on employment regimes. This review dwells on the embedding of inequalities in public and private sectors that comes about as a result of organisational processes. The discussion is guided by Acker’s (2006b) inequality regimes framework, whilst being “intersectionally sensitive” (McBride, 2015, p.7).
This section proceeds as follows: Section 2.4.1 discusses Ackers inequality regimes framework. Section 2.4.2 identifies key characteristics of public sector employment and the implication on women’s employment as presented in existing literature. Section 2.4.3 points out the key elements of Malawi’s employment regime.

2.4.1 Inequality regimes: An intersectionally sensitive approach

Most organisations employ women and men in different capacities and at different levels of the organisational hierarchy. Those organisations that are traditionally a female domain often concentrate power and control in men’s hands (Acker, 2006a; Crompton and Sanderson, 1990). Such organisations are considered gendered because the human resource processes and practices continuously recreate gender-based differences (Acker, 2006a). Recently, studies have used this gendered organisational theory (Acker, 1990) to inquire into how gender inequalities are manifested in different employment contexts (see for example Bezbarauah, 2015). This gendered approach is “predicated on a construction of gender as binary (men vs. women)” (Carr and Thompson, 2014, p. 182). This not only results in basic comparisons and assumptions of similar experiences for all men and all women but also ignores the possibility that there may be important disparities among women themselves (Hankivsky, 2014). Specifically, McBride et al., (2015, p.7) recommends adopting an “intersectionally-sensitive” approach to the analysis of inequalities in employment. This approach recognises that inequalities may be due to different factors working together simultaneously.

The idea of inequality regimes is one possible approach to adopting an intersectionally-sensitive approach to occupational inequalities. Acker (2006b, p.443) defines inequality in organisations as “systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources, and outcomes; workplace decisions such as how to organize work; opportunities for promotion and interesting work; security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations.” These inequalities result from practices and processes that create and recreate inequalities within organisations by class, gender and race (Acker, 2006b).
Although every organisation will have some sort of inequality regime (Acker, 2006a, 2006b, 2012), the country or organisation’s history and local customs, give rise to specific practices and interpretations that result in the embedding of inequalities on lines that may differ by type of sector or type of organisation among others.

Adopting an inequality regimes framework that is intersectionally sensitive allows analysis to take into account multiple inequality bases operating simultaneously (Acker, 2012). This study therefore adopts this framework in order to understand how inequalities are manifested among different groups of people in different employment contexts in Malawi, thereby avoiding “the single axis of analysis [which] conflates or ignores intragroup differences” (McBride et al, 2015, p.5). Rather, experiences may vary among groups of women and men as well as between men and women in the studied industries depending on their social class and ethnicity/region. Therefore, although the study focuses on gender inequalities, where possible it provides room for considering other bases of inequality and how these may intersect with gender.

From Acker’s (2006b) framework, of particular interest in this study is the organising processes that may produce and reproduce inequalities in the studied contexts. Practices and processes may act to disadvantage women but in some contexts may be helpful to women’s careers. Thus some processes may not inherently be aimed at disadvantaging women, but formulated to give equal opportunities. Yet it is how they are implemented and their interactions with other policies and practices which may reproduce inequalities.

The inequality regime framework has mostly been used for studies at the level of the organisation where policies and practices can be considered organisation specific. As such, it is directly relevant for understanding the gender inequalities that exist in banks and insurance organisations in Malawi. However, this framework has rarely been applied to the public sector where policies and practices are shaped by the state which has multiple objectives. For instance, Healy et al. (2011) explored the interrelationship of gender and ethnicity in the three parts of the UK public sector. Applying this framework in a public sector context is interesting because, as Healy et
al. (2011) argued, it enables understanding how inequality regimes are sustained in the public sector, despite having well developed policies and stronger legal duties in upholding equality and equity compared to the private sector. This study contributes to this limited literature base, additionally focussing on a developing country context, to widen the literature base on employment practices and processes that work to disadvantage different groups of people even in public sector employment.

Additionally, existing research adopting intersectional frame of analysis are still nascent, with prospects for more studies to enable expansion of literature targeting both theory and practice (Rodriguez et al., 2016). By adopting an intersectional sensitive approach to understanding how inequalities are produced and reproduced, this study contributes to this limited literature. Also, there exist literature that has used intersectionality in work and organisation research in different national contexts from where it was developed first, the United States. For instance, Choo (2012) focussed on applying intersectionality to South Korean context Similarly, (Atewologun and Sealy, 2014b) used intersectionality to study the experiences of senior black and Asian, male and female workers in the UK context. Carrim and Nkomo (2016) who based their study on the South African context, studied the identity work of South African women of Indian origin occupying managerial positions). Bose (2012) has also examined how intersectionality has been used globally to study other dimensions outside the original focus of the concept which was associated with race, gender, class and ethnicity. Nevertheless, there is still limited literature in that regard (Rodriguez et al., 2016). This study therefore contributes to this limited existing literature in particular adding to the literature based on developing country contexts.

2.4.1.1 Organising processes that produce inequalities

Policies advanced by the state and the overall macroeconomic setting are important for understanding the changes associated with women’s place in employment (Rubery et al., 1999b). This is so because state policies have significant implications for women’s position and behaviour in the labour market (Crompton, 1997). Nevertheless, how a society is performing towards achieving gender equality in employment also depends on the decisions made and practices implemented by
different employers (Rubery et al., 1999b). Moreover, “mechanisms through which inequalities are manifested can differ in different employment contexts” (Bezbaruah, 2015, p.11). Yet, there is limited evidence regarding employment practices in different employment contexts. Rubery et al., (1999b) suggested that there is a need to collect more data on the different organisational practices so as to reflect on their implications for gender equality. Based on the European context, Rubery et al.’s (1999b) identified five areas associated with key developments in employment practices with particular implications for gender equality.

Firstly, the team noted that the 1990s had seen less stable employment relationships even in public sectors and jobs had become less secure. Women were more negatively affected as they had used the public sector as a haven after leaving less secure jobs in the private sector (Rubery, et al., 1999b). Secondly, there has been an increase in flexible employment contracts and different working time arrangements have been proposed and implemented (OECD., 2005). This has seen employers operating on the assumptions that women are available only for short hours without any additional pay and can easily move between being economically active to being inactive (Rubery et al., 1998b; Rubery et al., 1998a).

Thirdly, decentralisation of wage bargaining and individualisation of the employment relationship allows managerial discretion in the regulation of the employment relationship including pay determination. This may negatively affect women who may be working in less organised sectors and mostly “outside the regulatory net” (Rubery et al., 1999b, p.69) following decentralisation. Additionally, changes in the job structure and work organisation also increases the gap between managerial and non-managerial positions thereby increasing the barriers through which women have to go to break the glass ceiling (Rubery et al., 1999b). Lastly, the team also pointed out that the initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality appear to be weak and inconsistent (Rubery et al., 1999b).

Rubery et al. (1999b) further cautioned against generalising findings from the limited changes taking place in some countries or organisations and to assume that the identified employment practices and policies are all developing at the same pace.
Acker (2006b) also points out that inequality regimes in different organisations or country contexts take different patterns, further cautioning against generalisations with respect to employment practices and their implications on gender equality. To add to the filling of the literature gap concerning employment practices and their implications specifically on gender qualities, this study looks at the employment practices in organisations in a non-European context.

Acker’s (2006b) inequality regimes framework identified six major organising processes that produce inequality. These were firstly organising the general requirements of work, where work is generally organised on the image of an ideal worker—a white man who fully participates in paid work and has no child care and family demands. There is little flexibility to change expectations relating to working hours for example, with women being the most disadvantaged. This leads to simultaneous creation of gender, race and class inequalities. Secondly, the way positions and people are ordered in organisations may produce and reproduce existing class, gender and race based inequalities. The third element relates to wage setting and supervisory practices as wage setting tends to create hierarchies, thereby producing and reproducing inequalities. The way supervision is done may also work to sustain inequalities. The fourth process relates to informal interactions that take place between men and women whilst working that are based on gender and class based assumptions, which may then reproduce inequalities. The last organising process is recruitment and hiring, which is of interest in this study together with promotion process.

Hiring competent people is of supreme importance and this is dependent on effective recruitment and selection procedures. Recruitment and selection involves making predictions about future behaviour so that decisions can be made about who will be most suitable for a particular job (Newell, 2005). As Faulkner and Anderson (1987) notes, what is followed in matching jobs to jobholders or positions to candidates affect the distribution of rewards and opportunities within and across organizations. Olian and Rynes (1984) further argues that different recruitment and selection practices attract different types of individuals into organizations.
According to Acker (2006b), from employers’ perspective, the composition of the current jobholders at least partially define who is suitable. Depending on the composition of current jobholders therefore, segregation may then be perpetuated in hiring decisions (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990) since many jobs are highly segregated.

Recruiting prospective employees through social networks is one of the ways through which different kinds of inequalities are maintained in organisations (Acker, 2006b; Hebson and Cox, 2011). It has been estimated that access to most managerial jobs come through personal contacts (Davidson & Cooper, 1992). Yet women’s access to these informal networks is limited and attempts to join it merely reinforce existing stereotypes (Melamed, 1995). Melamed (1995) also highlighted that many important business decisions are not made entirely in the boardroom, but in social places where women’s access is either banned (e.g. men-only social clubs), or is limited (e.g. men’s social and sporting activities). This therefore means that they cannot access the career advantages that men do by belonging and accessing these networks. Ledwith and Manifred (2000) argue similarly that being outsiders to the male club and without their own well-established clubs, makes keeping up to date with the institutional grapevine hard for women. Consequently, women tend to rely on formal processes and job performance, as well as post-employment education to be successful.

Affirmative action programs introduced have altered hiring practices in many organizations globally. Acker, (2006b) notes however that the criteria that highlights competence does not automatically lead to removal of biases in selection decisions. This is so because competence and merit are socially constructed and hence subjective as they depend on the judgment of the one making the hiring decision, who may as well create a competence or merit list based on the candidate s/he has in mind for the job at hand. At the same time, the race, the gender, the ethnicity of both the applicant and the one making the hiring decision may influence that judgment, resulting in hiring decisions that are biased against certain groups of people.
Two sources of recruitment are identified in the literature: formal recruiting sources (for instance public and private employment agencies, trade unions, school or college placement bureaus, and advertisements through radio, television, newspapers, internet or professional journals) and informal recruiting sources (for instance employee referrals, referrals by friends or relatives, and self-initiated applications such as walk-ins or write-ins) (Armstrong, 2010a; Kirnan et al., 1989; Werbel and Landau, 1996). These may have different implications on production of equalities. Promotion is concerned with moving people from a lower position to a higher position. Just like recruitment and selection, how promotion is done may also produce and reproduce workplace inequalities. Despite the importance of the promotion function to organisations and individuals, little is known about how actual promotion decisions are made (Ruderman and Ohlott, 1994). Focusing on promotion process in this study therefore contributes to filling this literature gap.

2.4.2 The public sector and women’s employment

The public sector employment regime is expected to extend employment rights to all workers such that mothers may rely upon the public sector for more good employment opportunities (Rubery and Rafferty, 2014; Hansen, 1997). There have been significant efforts made to make the public sector fairer, through implementation of equality and diversity policies. In most countries, the public sector is known to create more jobs for women than the private sector, which may be a function of gender stereotyping. The public sector employers are expected to uphold and monitor the advancement of gender equality (Ellingsæter, 1999; Rubery and Rafferty, 2014). In the OECD, equal representation of women in public sector has been associated with realising “fairness, openness and representativeness” (OECD, 2015, p.86).

Further, public sector employment is in general conducive to women’s employment. Women are met with fewer obstacles when wanting to enter public sector employment and are less likely to suffer from occupational segregation than is the case in private sector organisations (The World Bank, 2004b). Globally, more women work in public sector jobs (World Development Report, 2012).
To some extent this reflects patterns of gender segregation and women’s association with jobs related to care and education. However, there are still variations in the segregation patterns and in women’s shares of public sector employment. In general these tend to be lower in developing countries, in part because of stronger competition from men for limited formal sector jobs. Within developed countries, the public sector may offer more favourable conditions of employment for women which includes substantial maternity leave benefits and shorter working hours than is the case in private sector organisations (The World Bank, 2004a). The public sector also allows for flexibility, including working part-time, making it possible for women to adapt their paid work to their family and personal circumstances across the life course, thereby achieving work-life balance (Ellingsæter, 1999; Rubery and Rafferty, 2014).

In contrast, women in private sector organisations in countries like the UK have limited chances of finding part-time work of good quality (Rubery and Rafferty, 2014). Part-time work to suit employee needs may be most prevalent in the public sector and have less negative implications for women’s pay than is the case in part-time private sector jobs where the hours of work may be more organised to meet employer flexibility needs (Ellingsæter, 1999; Rubery and Rafferty, 2013). Women are also able to return to the same job in the public sector following maternity leave on flexible basis, which is not always the case in private sector where women may have to seek another job if they wish to work part-time, often with lower status and pay (Rubery and Rafferty, 2014).

Public sector employment is also associated with a wide range of career paths and hence women have more options in terms of what to do (OECD, 2015; The World Bank, 2004a). Further, there is relative job stability, job security, employment protection in comparison to unstable secondary employment segments of the private sector (Rubery et al., 1999b). Public sector employment has not only been associated with stable employment but also entitlements to an occupational pension which in some countries may be less available in the private sector (Rubery and Rafferty, 2014).
Furthermore, the public sector is not necessarily driven by “profit motives nor productivity logic” (Ellingsæter 1999, p.50) as is the case in the private sector. But, there are certain expectations about public sector employment as the public sector (state) is known for being a “good employer” (Ellingsæter 1999, p.50). Although the public sector has been adopting some elements of the private sector associated with achieving efficiency and productivity (Ellingsæter, 1999), this has not been at the same pace as the private sector.

Women’s employment may also be promoted by public authorities being obliged to think about how their policies or decisions affect certain categories of people (Government Equalities Office, 2011). The private sector organisations are not necessarily expected to fulfil this duty (Healy et al., 2011). In public sector, there may also be lower gender pay differentiation than in the private sector jobs (Ellingsæter, 1999; The World Bank, 2004a), especially among those who work part-time (Rubery and Rafferty, 2014), making it an attractive employer for women and other minority groups (Hansen, 1997; Healy et al., 2011). In private sector organisations, negotiations over pay determination as well as managerial discretion result in gender pay disparities (Rubery 1993; Rubery et al., 1999b) as mostly women than men end up settling for a lower pay. As Rubery and Rafferty (2014) argue, the higher degree of gender based wage disparities in private sector organisations in the UK mirrors the high wage inequalities in the sector. Higher unionisation, particularly in the public sector is also associated with greater gender equality policy development (Healy et al., 2011; Rubery and Rafferty, 2014; Ellingsæter, 1999).

However these tendencies depend on the specific country, with some countries having a tradition of high and others of low wages. For example the socialist countries under the influence of the USSR tended to pay low wages and to employ mainly women and still only offer low pay (Rubery, 2013). Furthermore the public sector is also driven by political considerations, such that changes in the policy direction being driven by a particular political regime would have direct impact on the sector’s employment regime and consequently gender equality. Political regimes also influence employment relations and consequently the power of trade unions in collective bargaining efforts (Brown, 2016) like gender equality. Similarly, budgetary
constraints (regardless of the nature of job at hand) and in general austerity policies advanced by the state, which have aimed at reducing costs in the public sector, have been known to affect efforts towards achieving gender equality (Rubery and Rafferty, 2013, 2014, Rubery, 2015, Karamessini, 2014, Karamessini and Rubery, 2014).

The sector is also associated with a bureaucratic hierarchy. Although some scholars have argued that bureaucracy promotes inequalities in employment, since women are underrepresented in higher levels of the bureaucratic ladders (Acker, 1990; Ferguson, 1984; Baron et al., 2007), to a large extent, bureaucracy may promote equality by reducing biases in human resource management decisions, since these decisions largely follow formalised policies and procedures (Billing, 1994; Elvira and Graham, 2002; Reskin, 2000). Bureaucracy is in this case seen as a “great leveller” (sic), (Baron et al., 2007, p.35).

Lastly, government through public sector employment has the ability to act as a monopsonistic employer, who is the only one to employ people with particular occupation specific skills (Rubery and Grimshaw, 2011; Islam, 2011). This applies where the public sector dominates services such as education or health (Nowak and Preston, 2001). Even when there is some activity in the private sector, the labour market for the specific skills is shaped by public sector practices. Since more women than men are likely to be employed in public sectors, they are then more “vulnerable to monopsonistic employer power” (Rubery and Grimshaw, 2011, p.226). For the public sector, the monopsonistic employer power stems partly from the limited job alternatives available to those that work in particular public sector industries like teaching and health (Rubery and Grimshaw, 2011).

The above discussed factors make the public sector a significant player in achieving gender equality (Dex and Forth, 2009). Despite being well represented in the public sector, women tend to be concentrated in lower-grade and lower-pay occupations (OECD., 2014; The World Bank, 2004a). They continue to face challenges to move into managerial and leadership positions. In some countries many work part-time and are more likely to be on short term contracts (Grimshaw et al., 2012) and the gender pay gap still persists (OECD., 2014). Additionally, following research on the effects
of state transformations on public employment, recent evidence challenges the notion that the public sector is still the example of an employer everyone should have (Gottschall et al., 2015). Existence of gender inequalities in the public sector shows that there is resistance to attempts aimed at promoting equality and diversity even in the public sector (Healy et al., 2011; Rubery, 2013). This calls for the need for more studies to explain why inequalities persist in public sector organisations which are explicitly committed to challenging inequality regimes.

2.4.3 Distinctiveness of employment regime in Malawi
2.4.3.1 Public sector employment in Malawi

As pointed out in Chapter 1, Malawi’s formal sector is small, employing only about 11 percent of all those in employment spanning both public and private sectors. There are a number of differences between the public and private sector employment contexts in Malawi. To begin with, multinationals and big local private sector companies in Malawi tend to offer better pay than the public sector and therefore have a greater capacity to be good employers on that basis. However, private sector organisations are more concerned with productivity and how willing workers are to work long hours and overtime when required. As such, the private sector may not guarantee a successful career especially for women who may find it difficult to work long hours and during unsocial hours.

On the other hand, the public sector provides more job security (Ng et al., 2016), offering people an opportunity to have a job for a long time after joining. In fact, the civil service in Malawi has a history of being an employer of choice especially during the one party regime led by Kamuzu Banda (Anders, 2002b; Anders, 2002a). It is reported that the first years following independence, the Malawian civil service was “characterised by high morale and motivation [...] there was great pride in the service” (Anders, 2002a, p.45).

This good time was however short-lived since as early as a few months following independence in 1964, the civil service became politicised and people were reported to be working in fear (Anders, 2002a). During the British colonial rule in Malaw, people from the north, had accessed good education offered by the missionaries in
that region. As such, the majority of Malawians who worked alongside the expatriate civil servants were from that region. This unsettled Banda when he became president who then developed a plan to neutralise the north (Anders, 2002a). Many civil servants, from that region, were jailed, fired or forced into exile (Anders, 2002a; Kayuni and Tambulasi, 2010) shortly after independence and this control and politicisation of the civil service continued until the end of his rule in 1994. Standardised rules guiding discipline and dismissals were never followed (Anders, 2002a) and patronage became the key to survival (Anders, 2002a).

Nevertheless, in a context where only a small proportion of the working population is employed in the formal non-agricultural sector, getting a job even as a lowest level civil servant is still an honour and a rare opportunity in democratic Malawi (Anders, 2002a). Anders (2002a, p.44) specifically points out that working as a civil servant is “rare and highly valued. With it come a regular income, various benefits, social status and, potentially, access to the resources of the state.” Thus, traditionally working in the civil service has been associated with job security, although receiving low pay and it is still the case today (Englund, 2002). However the situation of civil servants appears to have deteriorated since.

Following the liberalisation policies promoted by International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in Malawi from the early 1990s, civil servants lost various benefits17 to reduce service costs and their status declined such that they are reported to no longer feel respected (Anders, 2002a). The civil service is now even more associated with low pay and limited career options due to restructuring (Anders, 2002a). Consequently civil servants have started engaging in subsistence farming, running private businesses and even engaging in corrupt practices. However, as Anders (2002a) noted, the status, regular income and the social relationships they make through their civil service job are critical in their success in their side-line activities.

17 Apart from the salary, civil servants also enjoy various benefits, including institutional housing and travel allowances. The value of these benefits is substantial and might be many times higher than the salary
Further, the Malawi public sector continues to be affected by budgetary constraints following strict donor aid conditions and inconsistent and even withdrawal of donor funding. As a result, it has adopted various austerity policies aimed at reducing costs directly incurred by the state, through for example limiting funding going to public services like education and health. The expenditure controls placed on the public sector relating to HR functions like recruitment (Tambulasi, 2010), have had varied implications for promoting gender equity and equality in public sector employment in Malawi (Theobald et al., 2005).

The public sector in Malawi is also highly bureaucratic and takes a centralised approach to its HR processes. Although the spirit behind the National Decentralisation policy adopted in 1998 was to decentralise some HR processes (Chiweza, 2010; Sineta, 2002; GOM., 1998), this has not been fully implemented. However some HR functions have been devolved, including pay roll management for teachers (Sineta, 2002), which has been characterised by delays in paying salaries.  

Due to under-development of the formal sector in Malawi, competition to join the public sector is stiff. Despite putting in place standardised policies and procedures to guide HR decisions like recruitment and promotion which among others emphasise good qualifications for entry, some authors argue that people still get jobs based on the relationships they have with senior civil servants and politicians (Anders, 2002b; Anders, 2002a; Dzimbiri, 2016). However, the Malawi government, through the public sector, has also shown its commitment towards reducing inequalities specifically in the teaching career through its recruitment and selection processes. A review of documents between 2000 and 2013 shows that in secondary schools, over 70% of teachers have been male, the ratio falling only to 60% at the lowest even in primary schools. This is characteristic of Sub-Saharan Africa where “women teachers remain the minority” (Kelleher, 2011,p.2).

However, the share of female teachers at both levels has increased during the same period from 20.5% to 27.4% in secondary schools and from 36.5% to 40.2% in primary schools.\textsuperscript{19} In an attempt to increase the number of women in teaching, government proposed to increase the supply of teachers by 35% with a positive bias towards female teachers trained for both primary and secondary school and to encourage and where applicable establish collaborations with private teacher training colleges so as to increase annual teacher training output (GOM, 2008). In 2009, a new distance mode of training of primary school teachers was introduced termed Open Distance Learning (ODL) to run alongside the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE), which was to add, at most four thousand trained teachers per year between 2011 and 2015 (World Bank, 2010). The ODL has since been abandoned due to limited funding.

Additionally, although the University of Malawi Senate rejected selection of its students using district quotas in 2007, since 2009/2010 academic year, the practice has been that students are selected on the basis of a combination of district of origin and merit (Chijere Chirwa, 2014). Under this arrangement, the top ten candidates from each district (five males and five females) are offered places first and the rest are selected based on both merit and the size of the population of their district of origin (University office, 2014). Its introduction was marred by political connotations with some perceiving it as a way of reducing the dominance of people from the northern region in the public training institutions. Historically, among the three administrative regions in Malawi (North, Central and South), students from the northern region were reported to dominate in higher education under the older system where only performance at MSCE and aptitude tests were used to select students into public training institutions. They have also been reported to get good jobs in both public and private institutions to the extent that in order to counter this, “during the 1980s, the state tried to apply regional or ethnic quotas in its employment practices, in the allocation of top positions in the civil service, and in awarding university scholarships” (Chijere Chirwa, 2014, p.7).

\textsuperscript{19} My own computation based on education statistics.
Additionally, the 50:50 selection policy aimed at selecting an equal number of men and women for training in public institutions has been instrumental in increasing the number of women joining public sector jobs like in teaching. Furthermore, for a long period of time, primary teacher training has been absolutely free but from 2015/2016 trainees are expected to make a 20% contribution towards the actual cost of training. Like all arrangements made for under-privileged students selected to pursue courses at both public and private universities and colleges in Malawi, primary school student teachers were assured of a chance to apply for either bursaries or loans (Nyasa Times Reporter., September 20, 2015). This ensured that the poor who cannot afford other expensive courses can still access tertiary education through subsidised primary teacher training as well as an opportunity for a bursary or a loan to cover the costs.

Furthermore, for many years, public sector jobs in teaching and health were assured upon successful completion of training until retirement without going through interviews again. The advert for 2016/17 for primary teaching still assures this. Analysis of the labour force survey of 2013 shows that from the 3 percent of the respondents who reported working for a government institution, 65.3 percent were males and 34.7 percent were females. From the 3.4 percent of the respondents who reported working for the private sector, 80.8 percent were males and 19.2 percent were females. Thus the public sector has more women (34.7 percent) than can be found in the private sector (19.2 percent) thereby permitting “job stability to a large proportion of women” (Adsera, 2004, p.21).

Moreover, larger government sectors like teaching create opportunities for formal, better paid (in comparison to most jobs in the informal employment) and stable employment. Public teaching in Malawi dominates the sector with 72.8 percent of those working in the education sector being in the public service compared to only 17.9 percent who were working in the private sector (GOM, 2010a). Additionally, in a labour market with limited stable job options as well as a small formal sector like in Malawi, larger government sectors like teaching ensure that a large proportion of people especially from rural poor backgrounds who cannot afford to pay to study for alternative careers could have steady jobs.
Moreover, women including the rural based and the poor, who have difficulties meeting the competitive educational requirements for admission into universities have another option of attaining a tertiary qualification and starting a career as a primary school teacher. However, for occupation-specific training like teaching, in a context of limited alternative employment opportunities, this results in government securing a “captive labour force” (Storper and Scott, 1990, p.581).

In private sector organisations in Malawi, the need to attain qualifications before joining is key for most positions. Then, people compete for entry, but social networks may influence selection decisions. In this case, studying inequalities in accessing employment therefore requires an intersectional lens taking into account class, gender and ethnicity. The focus in this study is largely on gender as this is where the evidence is the strongest, but its intersection with class or ethnicity/region is discussed where relevant. Requirements for geographical mobility is another key tenet of the Malawi’s employment regime. This is so because the majority of the population resides in rural areas as pointed out in subsection 2.3.1 above. This means that sectors that aim to serve the whole population need to have staff even in the remotest areas. This places a challenge on employers in staffing these remote rural areas. Consequently, employers, both in public and private sector organisations tend to put in requirements for geographical mobility as a condition for offering a job or promotion.

Such requirements brings in another important feature in Malawi’s employment regime: trailing spouses a term that refers to “individuals who relocate for their spouse’s employment opportunities” (Careless and Mizzi, 2015, p.2), which has a long tradition in Malawi (See Appendix 2).

2.4.3.2 Gender pay gaps in Malawi

Like many parts of the world, Malawian women both at the family and society level, still work more than men. As figure 2.1 below shows, Malawian women tend to work more hours than men but they tend to be found more often doing unpaid jobs.
Figure 2.1: Comparison of paid and unpaid labour in Malawi, by sex in 2015

Source: Own computation based on (UNDP., 2016a)

At the same time, women, as elsewhere, are paid less on average and positions of power in both public and private organisations remain male dominated (Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance., 2015). In Malawi’s public and private sectors, there are no differences in wages between women and men as long as they are on the same grade or are performing the same tasks (GOM, 2012a). This is currently being reinforced by law through the 2000 Employment Act (GOM, 2000). But since fewer women than men occupy high positions and work in waged or salaried jobs, Malawian women’s pay is less on average in comparison to men. Thus the gender pay gap defined as “the difference between men’s and women’s pay, based on the average difference in gross hourly earnings of all employees” (European Commission, 2014, p.2) also exist in Malawi.

As noted in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, “labour force education, work allocation with gender selection, and different unemployment rates by gender seem to be the key drivers of gender earnings disparities in this region”(Ñopo et al., 2011 ). Education categorises people in different jobs and positions, with those with good education in most cases doing high paying jobs mostly in private sector and occupying higher positions in the public sector. In 2009, a study reported that in Malawi “an overview of yearly remuneration in larger private companies revealed huge differences, with earnings in financial services 25 times those in agriculture, construction and real estate” (van Klaveren et al., 2009,p.5).
Higher educational qualifications are directly related to the grade occupied and hence earnings and seems to apply for both men and women but more strongly for women in public sector (DHRMD, 2013). Data presented in Table 2.8 below shows that out of 73 officers at grade A, B and C (top three levels in public service hierarchy) there are nine officers with at least a bachelor’s degree and only 1 Officer with MSCE and 1 with Junior Certificate Examination (JCE) (lower secondary qualification) as their highest qualification. Even for those officers with only MSCE or JCE as their highest academic qualifications, representation at decision making levels of grades D, E and F is still higher for men than women. Additionally, there are no female officers with education qualifications below a Bachelor’s Degree at Grade D and above. This then means that for women to make it to the highest positions, higher educational qualification is a prerequisite (DHRMD, 2013).

Table 2.8: Educational Qualifications at Different Grades in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>Masters</th>
<th>Bachelor</th>
<th>Diploma</th>
<th>MSCE</th>
<th>JCE</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>19</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Department of Human Resource Management and Development, 2014)

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter sought to critically review literature relating to welfare, family and gender and employment regimes, with an attempt to explain how existing frameworks are relevant in explaining women’s employment in Malawi. This has revealed several gaps. As pointed out earlier on, since Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999)
as well as his feminists’ critiques and other authors influenced by his typology focussed their studies on welfare states.

It therefore makes sense to consider women’s experiences in other welfare regimes. In this study, the focus is on women in informal security welfare regimes in developing country context, which may have different experiences from women in welfare states. The reviewed literature has shown that similar policies or other contextual factors may have different effects on employment patterns across countries and that different factors may in fact produce similar national patterns of women’s employment across countries (Crompton and Lyonette, 2006). Thus to explain the country-specific mechanisms responsible for the overall employment patterns, there is need to understand how different institutional dimensions interact, which is possible through in-depth analysis in a specific country, other than cross-country comparisons that require standardisation of how diverse institutional factors are measured (Steiber and Haas, 2012).

This review has also shown the importance of the family context in conceptualising the careers of women who alongside their spouses provide for their families, requiring them to work mostly full-time and continuously, despite also being responsible for domestic work, even if it is just to manage domestic workers. Based on this review, the study answers three related research questions: Firstly, to what extent are women contingent or permanent members of the labour force in Malawi and what contribution do they make to family income and resources? Secondly, what are the expectations placed upon women with respect to the family and community roles they are expected to fulfil and what resources and support are available to them with respect to child care and other family responsibilities? Thirdly to what extent are women supported or hindered by employment practices in fulfilling their dual roles in work and the family and whether the support they get is provided through formal or informal practices.

The next chapter critically reviews literature on career theories in order to assess the extent to which they can explain the careers of women who work continuously and mostly full-time.
Chapter 3: Individual Career orientations: traditional, boundaryless, protean, kaleidoscope and “makeshift” careers

3.1 Introduction

The overall objective of this thesis is to conceptualise the careers of women in developing contexts, based on the experiences of Malawian women in formal employment. This chapter critically discusses the existing career concepts to establish their applicability or otherwise to the Malawian case. Traditional and ‘new’ career theories assume that family and employment contexts are mutually exclusive entities in explaining careers and that individual workers have preferences that determine whether to prioritise work or family responsibilities. This study argues that the existing career theories are limited in their capacity to explain careers, which are shaped by the interactions between the family and the employment context factors. These operate in a woman’s life simultaneously, with no option of prioritising one over the other. On the basis of this critical review, a case is made for extending the range of career concepts to include the proposed “makeshift” career conceptualisation.

The chapter is structured as follows. The next section critically discusses traditional careers followed by a discussion of changes in modern organisations necessitating the development of ‘new’ career theories. Then, the dominant ‘new’ career theories are critically discussed, highlighting their limitations in explaining careers of women who work continuously and mostly full-time. The next section dwells on this critique to make the case for proposing another career concept, namely “makeshift” career. Lastly, the chapter concludes by summarising how relevant the proposed career concept is for studying careers of women who work continuously and mostly full-time.

3.2. Traditional careers

Theories of adult development (Super, 1957; Levinson, 1978; Levinson, 1986) have influenced understanding of traditional careers. These focussed on how people’s careers transformed over time. From this traditional view, career is defined “as a sequence of positions occupied by a person during the course of a lifetime” (Super
In this case, careers were perceived to be enacted within one or two organisations and progression was linear, (Sullivan, 1999). Stability of structure and clarity of career ladders entailed that it was possible to have clear, linear career paths (Baruch, 2004b; Defillippi and Arthur, 1994). Career success in this case is evaluated on the basis of upward mobility and external indicators of achievement, namely salary increase and change in social status (Wilton, 2011). Defined in this way, career and career success are seen to exhibit characteristics that make it possible to define them using objective means.

In contributing to the understanding of traditional careers, Kanter (1989) challenged the dominant assumptions regarding the link between careers and organisations and suggested three broader categories of careers, namely bureaucratic (traditional organisational), professional (traditional professional) and entrepreneurial. Bureaucratic careers align themselves to the traditional definitions of career. These are typified by the “logic of advancement and involve a sequence of positions in a formally defined hierarchy of other positions” (Kanter 1989, p.509). These careers normally hold within one large organisation. Career success is associated with promotion to a higher position within the hierarchy and comes with increased benefits (Kanter, 1989). In an ideal bureaucratic career, all the fundamentals of career prospects, like having more responsibilities, doing more challenging jobs, having more influence in the organisations, having access to formal training and development opportunities and receiving a higher pay (ibid), are closely linked to an organisational position. Limits in career progression following the bureaucratic approach can result in employees becoming “stuck” (Kanter, 1989, p.516), evidenced by low opportunities to move up the organisational ladder. Bureaucratic careers provide job security due to standardised rules guiding most processes and practices (Billing, 1994).

Professional careers reflect a more complicated relationship between the employee and the organisation, where status is not gained through occupying a hierarchical position, but by the status employees attain in a particular profession due to their “scarce, socially valued knowledge or skills” (Wilton, 2011, p.340). Career progression for such professionals does not necessarily entail moving from one job to another or from one position to another and they maintain the same job title for
quite some time (Kanter, 1989). Professional careers are also associated with increased mobility across organisations, since the professionals gain reputation due to their scarce skills beyond their organisations (ibid). Teaching is an example of a (traditional) professional career.

Entrepreneurial careers are defined as those “in which growth occurs through the creation of new value or new organisational capacity… the key resource is the capacity to create valued outputs” (Kanter 1989, p. 516). In this case, career development is therefore linked to working in projects or setting up ones’ own business. Status is not linked to organisational hierarchical progression, but by recognition of alternative achievement norms related to the successful development of the business. Careers can be said to be stuck when their business is stagnating (Kanter, 1989). Entrepreneurial careers are associated with greater risks, as there is uncertainty about the future in terms of growth.

3.3 Changing nature of careers

The ideas associated with the traditional careers respond to a model of organisation that has come under increasing scrutiny. Various changes taking place in modern organisations have implications for how careers are perceived and shaped. Jackson et al. (1996, p.1) specifically observed that “careers as lifetime experiences of individuals and as pathways through occupations and organisations are in a profound state of change. The change stems from a wide range of revolutionary forces affecting labour markets, employment structures, organisational practice and educational provision.”

Leach and Chakiris (1988) argue that social developments taking place in western countries, like the increase in dual earner families, demand for work-life balance and demographic changes (e.g. increase in women’s labour force participation) which are requiring paid workers to also participate in unpaid work at home, are contributing to the search for a more relevant definition of career and what it means to different people in different employment contexts. Additionally, factors like globalization, technological changes, diversity at work, new work arrangements among others, have all contributed to changes, like in organisational structures and how the
employer and the employee relate. This has resulted in changes in terms of how
careers are shaped (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). The new careers are associated with
the collapse of structures sustaining traditional careers, namely stable organisational
structures, job for life principles among others.

Based on the changes discussed above and considering that for many employees
career progression have never been linear based on organisational hierarchies, there
has been the need to redefine career and career progression. The type of career and
what can be considered as progression is defined by various factors other than just
the individual employee and the organisation in which they are working. These
include the type of work being done and the sector in which the career is being
pursued (Wilton, 2011). Following the new approach to looking at career, Arthur et
al. (1989) defined career as “the evolving sequence of a person’s work experience
over time” (p8). This incorporates a psychological/individually focussed view of
career. In this case, careers link issues of importance internally to the individual with
matters of external status, such as those concerning official position offered by the
organisation (Arthur et al., 1989).

The new approach to looking at careers also enables the concept to be defined in a
way that incorporates all elements of one’s life, both inside and outside of paid work
(Leach and Chakiris, 1988). Thus, whilst careers might generally indicate a
relationship between an individual and an organisation or the labour market, which
makes it possible to objectively define it, some contributions propose that career
should also be subjectively defined, taking into account how the individual views
their career experiences (Wilton, 2011). The psychological employment contract
between organisations and employees has also changed. In the traditional sense of
career, employees “exchanged loyalty for job security” (Sullivan, 1999, p.458) and
in modern forms of career, employees “exchange performance for continuous
learning and marketability” (Sullivan, 1999 p.458).

Debates abound as regards whether the traditional career theories successfully
explain women’s careers. Levinson (1986) argued that his model was applicable to
women A further research on women revealed that although women, just as men, go
through the same age-related stages, they face cultural challenges, social stereotypes and sexism due to “gender splitting... the creation of a rigid division between male and female, masculine and feminine in human life” (Levinson and Levinson, 1996, p.38). This makes it difficult for them to progress just like the men. Similarly, Roberts and Newton (1987,157) found that although women had gone through the same stages as had men of similar ages in Levinson’s model, they tended to have “split dreams.” For instance by age 30, women had changed their initial plans from either being career focussed to family focussed or vice versa (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007; Roberts and Newton, 1987; Sullivan, 1999).

Other researchers found little evidence supporting the relevance of the traditional theories in explaining women’s careers (Ornstein and Isabella, 1990; Smart and Peterson, 1994). This is due to different employment experiences between men and women, as women tend to face “workplace discrimination...pay and promotion inequities... greater family demands... and sexual harassment issues” (Sullivan, 1999, p.460). Thus the traditional approaches to careers do not sufficiently explain the women’s complicated lives (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007; Sullivan 1999).

Noting the inadequacy in studies applying Super’s (1957) and Levinson’s (1978) theories with female samples, Sullivan (1999) proposed the need for additional research to consider the gender differences in career progression. She specifically proposed that research on women’s careers in the future should take a much broader focus, taking into account how different organisational and family context factors interact to shape women’s careers (Sullivan, 1999).

Following Sullivan’s (1999) proposal for further research, studies have looked at the gender differences in career and career progression. For instance, Hakim (2006, p.286) through the preference theory, argued that “women’s preferences become a central determinant of life choices with respect to choosing to focus more on family responsibilities or on career matters.” Matus and McDowell’s (2005) study compared factors influencing career success among men and women. Ackah and Heaton (2004) explored the extent to which the traditional career has been replaced by Arthur's (1994) “boundaryless” career by studying career paths and career
progression of women and men occupying managerial positions. Tlais’s (2013a) exploratory study focused on the barriers and enablers that Lebanese women managers experience in the healthcare sector in their career. Beauregard (2007) also examined the many ways in which an employee’s family and personal life can influence his/her career through desk research. Granrose’s (2007) study reviewed gender differences in career goals and career tactics of men and women in China.

Research conducted in China suggests that the Chinese are less worried than westerners with choosing an occupation, as they do not have to consider how they will reconcile work and family. This may be due to the “Confucian tradition, which places duty above enjoyment and which sees work as a vital contribution towards the well-being of the family, and/or to the standard of living currently experienced by the mainland Chinese” (Beauregard, 2007, p.103). This may also be due to the one child policy and the shorter retirement age for most women at 50 and others at 55 (Tianhong Chen and Turner, 2015), which makes it possible for grandmothers to assist with child care. Opportunity to choose an occupation that allows proper reconciliation of work and family may also not apply to most workers in developing countries like Malawi, where formal employment is limited and people with opportunities to work have limited occupational choices, they just have to work to earn a living.

Moreover, the majority of career studies have primarily focused on western countries and this has been in the context of part time work, with only a few studies focussing on non-western societies, including, for example, Counsell (1999) on Ethiopia; Ituma and Simpson (2009) on Nigeria; Omair (2010) on the United Arab Emirates (Tlaiss, 2014) and Tlaiss (2013) on Lebanon, Tlaiss (2013b) on United Arab Emirates, Whitehead and Kotze (2003) on South Africa, and Pheko (2014) on Botswana. This paucity of research has led to calls for more empirical studies that explore the career presentation in non-western, understudied national contexts (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009; Tlaiss, 2014; Sullivan, 1999).

In particular, there is little research exploring women’s career paths in the developing countries of the Sub-Saharan African region notwithstanding a growing number of studies looking at women's issues.
These contributions have primarily focused on exploring the experiences of women working in male-dominated occupations in South Africa (Martin and Barnard, 2013), breaking the glass ceiling by women entrepreneurs in Nigeria (Madichie, 2009). Moreover, some of these studies (for instance (Pheko, 2014) and (Modesto, 2016) in Botswana) largely focus on the organisational context in which women’s careers are enacted, leaving out non-employment context factors. In Malawi, the literature on women’s position has been mainly concerned with their political participation, both at local and national levels (Chikapa, 2016; Kayuni and Muriaas, 2014; Semu, 2002; Amundsen and Kayuni, 2016b). In the few instances where employment has been studied, the focus has largely been on the public sector women (Department of Human Resource Management and Development, 2014; GOM., 2010c) and these studies also did not consider the family context factors. Studies on the private sector based employment contexts for women are scanty and limited to their participation in professional syndicates (GOM, 2012a).

There is therefore a need to explain further how women’s careers unfold, by looking at the interplay of both family and employment contextual factors and at the same time basing the study on empirical evidence from a developing country’s context in Africa. This is in line with Sullivan and Baruch (2009) proposal that further studies on the new careers should target under-researched topics on how careers unfold among different workers, organisations, industries and countries.

There have been attempts by Powell and Mainiero (1992) to come up with a useful model for explaining women’s careers. This model considers two critical issues that play a role in women’s lives and hence influence their career experiences. These are firstly “concerns about career and personal achievements at work” and secondly “concerns about family and personal relationships outside of work” (Powell and Mainiero, 1992, p.219). The team further argued that “at any point in time, women may place primary emphasis on career and personal achievements at work, place primary emphasis on family and personal relationships outside of work, or try to strike some kind of balance between the two” (Powell and Mainiero, 1992, p.219). As Sullivan (1999) argued, women place themselves somewhere on a continuum where at different times they emphasize their career, or their relationships, or balance
both. Similarly, Hakim (2006, p.286) contends that women are able to make “choices between market work and family work” [and] women’s preferences become a central determinant of life choices - in particular, the choice between an emphasis on activities related to children and family life or an emphasis on employment and competitive activities in the public sphere. With respect to choice, Hakim had earlier argued that “women now have choices,” [and] younger women consciously planned their careers around family life” (Hakim, 2003, p.53).

Some authors have gone ahead to propose ‘new’ career models. Most of these have argued that the traditional careers are becoming irrelevant for many workers (Leach and Chakiris, 1988). Some authors have actually talked about the “death of the career and emergence of new ideals in employment” (Adamson et al., 1998, p.251). Ackah and Heaton (2004) further observed that contrary to the traditional view, men and women are changing jobs and are taking charge of their own career development, thereby signalling that the traditional career has been replaced by the new careers. Thus, despite different western-based authors labelling the new careers differently, the new careers are associated with weak and less permanent relationships between workers and organisational hierarchies (Wilton, 2011).

However, other authors argue to the contrary, in that the traditional organisational career patterns are still relevant in understanding careers. For instance Baruch, (2004, p.9) argues that the “rumours” regarding the demise of traditional careers “have been premature.” Baruch (2006) also argued that aspects of the traditional career still exist in western societies. There has not been a move away from organisational careers. Additionally, King (2003, p.5) “provides evidence to suggest that [UK] graduates’ endorsement of the ‘new’ career is limited. [At the same time], employability is a key concern, but graduates expect to be able to develop that employability within the context of a traditional career.”

Other scholars have argued for the coexistence of both traditional and modern career facets. For instance, Hall and Las Heras (2009) argued that while the traditional career is indeed “alive and well” (p. 182), various characteristics of contemporary careers are depicted in women’s career accounts. Similarly, Tlais (2014, p. 2858)
revealed that, although Lebanese women managers follow the traditional bureaucratic career path, as they progress in their managerial careers, “at the same time,... [they] selectively adopt some aspects of contemporary, flexible careers to navigate their career paths amidst the macro-national economic and socio-cultural factors and institutional challenges.”

3.4 The ‘new’ career theories

Based on the discussed limitations of traditional careers, ‘new’ career theories have been proposed. This section critically discusses some of these ‘new’ career theories, which have received great attention in the literature namely, boundaryless, protean and kaleidoscope career theories.

3.4.1. Boundaryless careers

By the end of the twentieth century, the nature of careers significantly changed in the context of the boundaryless organisation, which saw “the emergence of boundaryless careers” (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994, p. 311). Boundaryless careers are defined as a “sequence of job opportunities that go beyond the boundaries of a single employment setting” (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1996, p.116). The new perspective about careers comprises different possible directions of development and people can define career success differently: “it can be a sideways move, change of direction, of organization, of aspiration” (Baruch,2004, p.61), contrary to the upward mobility associated with the traditional career success determined by pay rise and promotions (Sullivan, 1999; Hall, 1996).

In practice however, these elements alongside the traditional external measures of income, rank and status are now used to determine an individual’s career success (Baruch, 2004b; Inkson, 2006). Thus, although traditional vehicles for organisational career success, namely hierarchies, have been flattening (Littler, Wiesner, & Dunford, 2003 cited by Arthur et al, 1989), and external labour markets have gained increasing influence over today’s employment landscape (Cappelli, 1999 cited by
Arthur et al, 1989), individuals still expect the organisation to play an important role in shaping their careers.

Boundaryless careers also mostly feature in UK and USA research (Arthur, 1994; Arthur et al., 1989; Arthur et al., 2005). This was held true by Tlais (2014) who, based on the experiences of 32 Lebanese women managers, found that only three managers had pursued their careers across employers and industries. Additionally, for those who pursue boundaryless careers, they still “tend to privilege a specific type of boundary” (Inkson, 2006, p.55). This means that there will always be boundaries within which people enact their careers, be it determined by their occupations, qualifications, industries, or their location among other bounding factors (Inkson, 2006), contrary to the ideal type of boundaryless careers. There is therefore a seeming irony regarding whether boundaries exist or not in the ideal boundaryless career model (Bagdadli et al., 2003). Thus it is possible to cross one type of boundary, for example organisational, but still be faced with occupational or industry boundaries. As such we cannot genuinely argue for the existence of the typical boundaryless career as per the definition of boundaryless in practice (Inkson, 2006).

3.4.2 Protean careers

Protean career is “a career that is driven by the person, not the organisation, and that will be reinvented by the person from time to time, as the person and the environment change” (Hall, 1996, p.8). This indicates an element of voluntary action, with workers making a conscious movement in and out of employment, depending on the situation. It is associated with flexible work arrangements where women can, for instance, leave employment or work part-time, reduce working hours, accept a lower level job, depending on whatever is happening at that stage of their life course (Sullivan et al., 2007; Cabrera, 2009). An element of choice in enacting careers is thus inherent in protean careers, as presented through Hakim’s preference theory. At the sociological core of Hakim’s theory, which is also the focus in protean career theory, is the notion that, once women are presented with the opportunity to make genuine choices, they choose from three different life styles,
namely home centred, work-centred or adaptive, depending on the basis of their commitment to either career or family (Cabrera, 2009). Agency, defined as “the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act” (Ahearn, 2001, p.112), is critical in making choices regarding work and family responsibilities.

Protean careers are also premised on the notion that women may leave the workplace due to pull factors related to family reasons, like child care or following spouses when their jobs require them to relocate (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005; Cabrera, 2007). Although the idea that protean careers are driven by the individual is associated with the notion of new careers, this is not an entirely new idea. Alongside the traditional career, people have taken charge of their own careers based on their individually-defined goals and as such have not necessarily let the organisation drive their careers (Kanter, 1989). Additionally, not all workers, historically, have been following an upward career ladder. As such, the use of individual agency in constructing careers, whilst responding to institutional mandates, is not a new idea.

3.4.3 Kaleidoscope careers

Kaleidoscope careers share similarities in values with the protean career. Just like protean careers, the career orientations in kaleidoscope careers, are expected to vary over time as occurrences in life change, making people change their priorities (Cabrera, 2009). As people’s lives change, their careers adjust to the changes taking place in their lives. Also, like protean, kaleidoscope careers are “created on the individual’s own terms, defined not by a corporation, but by the individual’s own values and life choices” (Sullivan et al., 2007 p.5). Thus, depending on the life circumstance, individuals may decide to move out of the organisation and start their own business, so that they do not have to follow strict working times, as is the case when they remain within a corporation (Sullivan et al., 2007). Thus, just like in protean careers, there is self-directedness in such careers and employees define their own success (Cabrera, 2009).

Additionally, just like in protean careers, rather than follow the corporate career model, kaleidoscope career models have people pursuing alternative options that involve discovering fulfilling jobs that best suit their family responsibilities and their
interests (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006b). In this case, when faced with a particular challenge at a particular point, workers change the pattern of their careers by adjusting different aspects of their lives to arrange their roles and relationships in new ways. This is done in order to find a proper blend that best fits their life circumstances, their wants and needs, even if these choices run contrary to well-known definitions of career success. They evaluate the choices and options available in order to determine the best fit among their many relationships, work constraints and opportunities (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006a).

The two models, however, have one major difference. The kaleidoscope career model suggests that the reasons behind women’s opting out of employment are not as straightforward as advanced by the protean career model (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005; Cabrera, 2007). In addition to the protean career notion that it is a possibility that women may leave employment due to family reasons (pull factors), (Cabrera, 2007), kaleidoscope theory identifies other push factors that may make women leave employment. These factors include lack of career advancement opportunities, discrimination, harassment and masculine organisational cultures (Cabrera, 2007). Thus various pull and push factors work together to create interrupted non-linear patterns that characterise women’s careers. Therefore, the kaleidoscope career model looks at a broader array of reasons behind women’s decisions to leaving the workforce.

Based on this fundamental difference, the kaleidoscope careers concept was proposed to provide a more comprehensive explanation of why women leave corporations, other than just associating opting out of employment with the need to achieve work-life balance (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006b; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006a; Sullivan et al., 2007). According to the kaleidoscope career orientation, both men and women are moving out of corporations as a revolt against organisational conditions, that do not give them freedom to achieve their full potential through provision of stimulating work (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006b). In this case, kaleidoscope career theorists describe how careers are created by individuals (both men and women) as they make decisions based on the changing importance of authenticity, balance and challenge
across their lifetime (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006b; Sullivan et al., 2007).

Authenticity means “being true to oneself” (Cabrera, 2009, p.190; Cabrera, 2007, p.221). Authenticity therefore leads people to look for work that is well-matched with what they value. Balance “refers to the desire to successfully integrate one’s work and non-work lives” (Cabrera, 2009, p.190; Cabrera, 2007, p.221). Challenge “is an individual’s need for stimulating work (e.g. responsibility, autonomy) as well as career advancement” (Sullivan et al, 2009, p.290).

These three parameters are always present, but depending on the life situations, different parameters tend to be the major focus at a particular point in time. In this case, career patterns evolve in response to changing life priorities. The kaleidoscope career model is premised on individuals evaluating the choices and options available so as to determine the best fit among work demands, constraints and opportunities as well as relationships, personal values and interests (Sullivan et al., 2009). As one decision is made, it affects the outcome of the kaleidoscope career pattern. Mainiero and Sullivan (2006b) noted that men and women tend to follow different kaleidoscope career patterns. Women tend to follow the beta kaleidoscope career pattern, which is characterised by an emphasis on challenge in early career, balance being the focus in mid-career and authenticity being emphasised in late career. Men on the other hand tend to pursue the alpha kaleidoscope career pattern, where the focus is on challenge in the early career, authenticity in mid-career and balance in the late career stage (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006b; Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007; Mainiero and Gibson, 2017).

3.4.4 “Makeshift” careers

Based on the preceding discussion of some of the existing career theories, in this section, the major assumptions of traditional, protean and kaleidoscope career models are drawn out and juxtaposed with career experiences and constraints of women in developing countries and in Malawi specifically. The aim is to assess the extent to which the existing career models can explain the careers of women who work continuously and mostly full-time, so that a more relevant framework is proposed to explain such women’s careers. In Chapter 7, this proposed concept is
then used to assess the extent to which it is relevant in explaining Malawian women’s careers, based on the empirical data gathered.

In order to provide a systematic critical analysis of the traditional career theory, concise summaries of traditional career theory, provided by Cook et al. (2002) and Worthington et al. (2005), are used to guide the discussion. Firstly, traditional careers view work and family roles as separate entities. In this case, workers will not have anything to disrupt their pursuit of continuous full-time employment. The employee pursuing a traditional career is thus not expected to be entangled with family responsibilities and will follow a full-time, continuous, non-disrupted career. In this case, traditional careers “support the male-as-breadwinner family structure” (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009, p.1542). The traditional career is seen by others as reflecting a male form of career (Powell and Mainiero, 1992). For Cook et al. (2002) these males are typically white and from western Europe. Yet, for women working in traditional employment, especially in developing contexts, there is a need at the same time to fulfil their family roles. As highlighted in Chapter 2 for instance, women in Malawi have to combine work and non-work responsibilities, as they are expected to work to contribute to the family’s livelihood. Thus, there is limited focus on dual earner families in the traditional careers’ literature. Yet dual earner families are a common feature of developing countries, due to high income needs and less state support, where women also work full-time and continuously, just like men, giving prominence to dual earner families in developing countries. As such, traditional career theory is less likely to fully describe careers of other women in formal employment, especially in developing contexts like Malawi. This criticism, however, may also apply in developed economies where other women do not follow patterns of interrupted or flexible careers.

The second assumption of the traditional theorists is the “culturally prescribed values of individualism and autonomy” in pursuing careers (Worthington, et al., 2005, p.232). In this case, individuals are in charge of making autonomous decisions that help them realize their full career potential (Cook et al., 2002). As such, the persons pursuing a career are assumed to make decisions that are first and foremost in their own individual best interest. However, as Tlais (2014, p.2874) noted, in societies with a collective culture, like Lebanon, “women are expected to make their
obligations towards their families a priority.” In the context of Malawi also depicting culturally-prescribed values of collectivism (Sulamoyo, 2012), women are expected to provide for both their nuclear and extended families and their work contributes a lot in this avenue. Therefore by also assuming individualism and autonomy in decision making about careers, the traditional career theory is less likely to be adequate in explaining women’s careers in developing cultural contexts that emphasise collectivism, like Malawi, where decisions made ought to consider how the relevant others are going to be affected.

The third assumption is that work takes a central position in workers’ lives (Cook et al., 2002). Thus traditional career theorists highlight the supremacy of work responsibilities over other responsibilities in one’s life (Worthington et al. (2005). This entails an element of prioritising work at all times, as it is deemed the most important sphere for those pursuing traditional careers. With respect to Malawian women and others in similar contexts, they are less likely to prioritise work over other life’s roles as assumed under the traditional career theory. Based on the importance of both paid and unpaid work done by Malawian women to the family’s sustenance, they are more likely to juggle these two conflicting life roles with no chance of prioritising one over the other as both have to be done simultaneously somehow, with no option of moving in and out of employment. They are also more likely to adjust and see how they will reconcile these conflicting spheres at the same time.

In the process of reconciling these roles, these women are more likely to make compromises, an idea ignored in traditional career literature. A compromise is “a situation in which people accept something slightly different from what they really want, because of circumstances or because they are considering the wishes of other people.”

20 In the context of this study, this implies that when women are faced with work-family reconciliation decisions, they will not always make what could be considered as the best decision for their careers but may

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go for an alternative which is more suitable for reconciling their work and family roles.

Three compromises are explored in this study. Firstly, compromise relating to whether or not to work long hours and travelling frequently. These may be associated with performance and commitment to work, which may be linked to promotion prospects. Where the woman’s family situation does not enable her work long hours or travel frequently, she could be foregoing such promotion prospects for the sake of fulfilling family demands. The second compromise relate to whether or not to be geographically mobile for promotion and better job prospects. If the family demands make it difficult to relocate for a promotion, without necessarily moving out of employment, women may not relocate thereby foregoing the promotion. The third compromise relates to meeting promotion requirements including deciding when to upgrade qualifications, with women most likely to delay upgrading their qualifications due to family responsibilities. As women are making compromises, they have no idea how these decisions will affect their careers, as they are often making uninformed decisions and not following a long term plan. Contrary to Hakim (2006) who assumes a planned choice on prioritising career or families for women, some women are likely to have less planned careers and choices, and have to deal with situations as they arise.

Additionally, most career theorists and researchers like Hakim (2006), Super (1957) and Fagan (2001) argue that the birth of a child is the sole determinant family factor to whether a woman becomes career or family oriented, especially upon returning to work following child birth. Fagan (2001) specifically found that having children is related to change in employment commitment and this is especially the case for women. This study argues that child care is not the only family factor challenge to working women and explores other family factors. Thus, by assuming the supremacy of work over family responsibilities and planned and free choice in prioritising work over family, the traditional career theories fail to depict the realities of professional women and others in similar situations, who do both paid and unpaid work and whose careers are shaped through compromises and constrained choices between fulfilling work and family roles simultaneously (Crompton and Harris, 1998), as well as having other family challenges other than child care issues.
Traditional career theory is also associated with the idea that there is a “progressive, linear, logical nature of the processes of career development” (Worthington et al., 2005, p. 232). Thus, the argument here is that the rational independent decisions that individuals make in terms of their career enables them to “maintain an orderly, linear progression of career development in terms of continuous, increasingly skilled, and rewarding involvement over time” (Cook et al., 2002, p.293). This assumes non-interrupted careers. In some western countries, the focus in the literature has been more on non-linear or interrupted careers. In the Malawian and similar contexts, it may be a case of linear careers, but with different degrees of emphasis on family or career over the life-course whilst simultaneously fulfilling both roles. This also highlights the temporary nature of career or family orientations that women will adopt in the life course and this may not be a planned pattern.

The last assumption is that there are open opportunity structures in employment where any individual, as long as she/he works hard enough, will be able to realize her or his career potential (Worthington et al., 2005; Cook et al., 2002). This is contrary to the realities in the world of employment, where there are attitudinal and structural barriers that mostly work to the disadvantage of women’s careers (Tlaiss, 2014; Green et al., 2004; Crompton and Sanderson, 1990). This is the case even in Malawi (GOM, 2012a). On this premise as well, traditional career theory is less likely to competently explain the careers of Malawian women in formal employment.

With reference to protean careers, the discussion in sub-section 3.4.2 above shows that the concept assumes that individuals have choices in terms of moving in and out of employment, depending on what has to be prioritised at a particular life stage. As Cabrera (2009, p.188) argued with respect to protean careers, “individuals can reshape their careers in response to changing life circumstances.” This view assumes voluntary and independent action on behalf of the career actor (Tomlinson et al., 2017). The concept is thus associated with flexible working (Inkson, 2006). Thus the number of responsibilities outside work, taken on by most women, makes it very challenging for them to fit into the expectations of the ideal worker (Lewis 2010; Lewis, 2001b; Cabrera, 2009). Moreover, as jobs become more extreme, with long
hours, tight schedules, expectation for travel, among other things (Hewlett and Luce, 2006), women find it even more difficult to fulfil both their work and their non-work demands. As Cabrera, (2009, p.188) noted, this leaves “women searching for alternatives.” This holds true for western societies where women’s alternatives may include reducing working hours, working part time (Lewis, 1992) or even not having to work altogether (Pfau-Effinger, 1998; Pfau-Effinger, 2012). As Crompton and Harris (1989, p.129) noted, there is “fluidity of women’s employment orientations.”

In this case, women’s priorities can be said to change over their life course, for instance, from being young adults with ability to work full-time and non-disturbed at a particular life stage, to having a family at another life stage, which limits participation in work roles (Green et al., 2004). Although the ability to work part time or stop working altogether, for the purpose of prioritising family roles, may deprive women of the opportunity to realise their full potential in the labour market (Tomlinson, 2004), they may provide better alternatives for women than in societies where these alternatives are not available at all.

The protean career model is thus limited in explaining the careers of women in under-developed labour markets where there are limited flexible working arrangements although some professions, like teaching, may be able to offer this due to short official working hours. Additionally, income is the major reason why women remain in employment. In Malawi, most jobs are full-time with expectations to work long hours and women are expected to work to contribute to family earnings alongside their spouses, as pay is generally low (ILO, 2013). Yet, as we argued in chapter 2, the gender regimes and associated cultural norms still expect Malawian women to shoulder the brunt of household and care giving responsibilities, despite their involvement in full time employment (Kanyongolo, 2011).

At the same time, employers do little to support workers in reconciling work and non-work responsibilities. Thus, a male corporate culture has been retained in most workplaces in Malawi, as is the case elsewhere (Gale and Cartwright, 1995), despite most of the professional women in Malawi belonging to dual earner households.
Consequently, women still have to somehow find a way to juggle their demanding careers with their family responsibilities. As argued earlier, women have to weave family and work roles and make compromises, depending on what is happening in their life at a particular stage. It is a constrained and not a free choice, nor is it a prioritisation per se, contrary to protean theorists’ assumptions. Moreover, the constraints that women in the developing societies are faced with are different from their counterparts in developed countries, as leaving a job without another job to go to is more difficult, due to higher income needs and less social support. Malawian women adjust their aspirations to take into account organisational and family structures, at the same time as they may have limited leeway to pursue one ‘thing’ at a time.

Similarly, the agentic process that Malawian women may engage in to drive their careers, through self-development for instance, is not necessarily aimed at gaining independence from the organisation, as presumed by the protean career theorists (Briscoe and Hall, 2006; Hall, 1996). Rather it is for increasing their chances for organisation-dependent progression.

With respect to kaleidoscope careers, the major focus is also on why men and women leave corporations, citing the search for jobs that enable them to achieve authenticity, balance and challenge. This model also assumes non-limited options available to workers. Due to limited job options and the need to earn an income, men and women in Malawi may not be in a position to search for jobs that ensure they meet their interests at all times. An assumption of a possibility of opting out of corporations, a theme common to protean and kaleidoscope careers, also entails free choice, which may be limited among certain women. Additionally, despite broadening the reasons behind women’s moving out of workforce, the decision parameters (namely authenticity, balance and challenge) in the kaleidoscope career model are in fact misleading, as they put the individual employee in total charge of their career. Moreover, it does not recognise the fact that women in developing societies may not be seeking to achieve such higher order needs assumed in kaleidoscope careers model through the parameters, as their focus is on principally using their employment to earn income in order to meet their lower order needs,
namely physiological and safety needs. In this case, the kaleidoscope career model is also less likely to fully explain Malawian women’s careers.

Given the small size of the formal sector in Malawi (GOM., 2014d) and in other developing countries, the opportunities for job hopping between organisations, although these may occur, may be considerably reduced. This makes boundaryless careers less common, especially among certain groups of workers like teachers, who have occupation specific skills, making it difficult for crossing organisational boundaries. Moreover, as Inkson (2008) argued, the boundaryless career model appears a predominantly relevant model for understanding careers in industries that are based on temporary assignments like software development and film production as opposed to permanent structures, thereby limiting its application in this study, where the industries chosen are associated with permanent structures.

From the preceding discussion, it is evident that traditional, protean, kaleidoscope or boundaryless career theories are less likely to adequately explain the careers of women who work continuously and mostly full-time. This calls for a proposal for a more befitting conceptualisation of the careers that such women pursue. In this study a proposition is made that such women’s careers may be said to follow a “makeshift” career pattern in the process of simultaneously fulfilling work and family roles. The online Cambridge dictionary defines ‘makeshift’ as something which is “temporary and of low quality but used because of a sudden need.” It is “made to be used for only a short time until there is something better” (Oxford Students’ Dictionary, 2007, p.432). In the context of careers, this means that those pursuing a makeshift career may make compromises between work and family roles and deal with situations emanating both from family and from the organisational system, as and when they present themselves along the life course.

They may have no permanent plans, in terms of whether they prioritise work or career at a particular time, but mostly consider the situation at hand and act accordingly. They may have no fully formed ideas as to how their career will play out, based on the decisions they make, whilst forging compromises between work and family roles. Thus, instead of pursuing a linear career, “makeshift” career

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represents compromises individuals make at different points in their life course in the process of simultaneously trying to fulfil work and non-work roles. It is important to highlight that in these makeshift careers, women’s agency is critical as a way of utilising various strategies to manoeuvre themselves out of a position where otherwise they would become stuck. Others may also be able to continue to progress in these “makeshift” careers, although progress may be at a slower pace than for men.

From this discussion, key assumptions or features of the makeshift careers are identified. Firstly, in contrast to traditional and protean careers, those in makeshift careers are assumed not to be in a position to prioritise family roles over work roles and vice versa, but work continuously, despite fulfilling family roles simultaneously. Whereas it is assumed to be possible to evaluate choices and options available depending on changing priorities and what has to be prioritised in protean and kaleidoscope careers, in makeshift careers, the assumption is that when employees are faced with the need to prioritise either family or work roles at a certain time, they make constrained choices. Secondly, makeshift careers are assumed to be stronger in collectivist societies. This is not to say that makeshift careers cannot hold in individualist societies. However, makeshift careers are stronger where constraints impacting on women’s choice making are more and stronger and this tend to be the case in collectivist societies of the developing world. For instance, women in collectivist societies in developing countries have limited job opportunities, yet they have more financial responsibilities owing to the need to support members of their extended family, thereby limiting their chances for job hopping.

Thirdly, in makeshift careers, both employment and family context factors including childcare constrain women’s careers. Consequently, in order to understand women’s careers, both aspects need to be considered simultaneously. Fourth, the nature of careers in this career type is continuous but non-linear with different degrees of emphasis on family or career roles at different times depending on what is happening at that stage of an individual’s life course. Fifth, there is a possibility of mobility within the organisation through promotion. Similarly it is possible for people to progress across organisations. The sixth feature relates to opportunity structures. In the context of makeshift careers, the assumption is that individuals depend on organisation-led career and face attitudinal and structural barriers to their
progression. However, agency is key in ensuring that individuals overcome the barriers to achieving their potentials. Lastly, career success in makeshift careers can both be subjectively and externally assessed.

Table 3.1 summarises the major assumptions of the career models that I have also found useful for the analysis in Chapter 7, compared to the makeshift career conceptualisation. Considering the similarities between protean and kaleidoscope career conceptualisations, the table below combines them. Due to the limitations of the boundaryless career model discussed above, this has not been used in the analysis in Chapter 7, as such, it has not been included in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Major features of the career conceptualisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Traditional-organisational</th>
<th>Traditional-Professional</th>
<th>Protean and Kaleidoscope</th>
<th>Makeshift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Prioritisation</td>
<td>Supremacy of career over family roles</td>
<td>Career shaped by rules of the profession</td>
<td>Free choice to move in and out of employment depending on what is being prioritised.</td>
<td>Not possible to prioritise one role over the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Individuals evaluate choices and options available depending on changing priorities</td>
<td>Employees make constrained choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural values</td>
<td>Individualism and autonomy</td>
<td>Individualism and autonomy</td>
<td>Individualism and autonomy</td>
<td>Collectivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What constrains career?</td>
<td>The organisational rules</td>
<td>The professional rules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employment context factors plus family related factors constrain women's careers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of careers</td>
<td>Linear careers up mainly a single organisational ladder</td>
<td>Linear careers with status gained through membership in professional institutions</td>
<td>Non-linear careers: Different degree of emphasis on family or career roles by life stage and personal preference</td>
<td>Continuous but non-linear careers: Different degree of emphasis on family or career roles at different times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility</td>
<td>Mobility within organisation</td>
<td>Mobility across organisations</td>
<td>Mobility across organisations and between work/non work</td>
<td>Mobility within and across organisations possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity structures</td>
<td>Opportunity defined by organisations</td>
<td>Opportunity defined by profession itself</td>
<td>Individuals define and are in charge of their own success independent of the organisation</td>
<td>Individuals depend on organisation-led career and face attitudinal and structural barriers to pursuing opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing career success</td>
<td>Objective measures of career success</td>
<td>Subjective measures of career success</td>
<td>Subjective measures of career success</td>
<td>Both subjective and external career success matter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of this review, two related specific research questions will be answered. Firstly: how do individual women, in formal employment, make sense of the tensions emanating from the employment and family context factors and how this sense-making shapes their careers? Secondly, what is the role played by women’s individual agency in constructing their careers as they respond to organisational, institutional and family factors?

3.5 Conclusion

The Chapter has critically discussed the existing career theories in an effort to assess the extent to which they apply to all women, especially those in contexts with limited employment opportunities and social support. As the discussion has shown, the existing career concepts are limited, resulting in a proposal for another career concept: makeshift. This is then used in Chapter 7 to assess the extent to which it better explains the careers of women in contexts with limited employment opportunities, and where women work continuously and mostly full time. This is on the basis of empirical data from Malawian women in formal employment. The next chapter presents the study’s methodology, highlighting the research philosophy adopted, the research design, ethical considerations and how the results have been analysed.
Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Based on the literature reviewed and the research gaps identified in Chapters 2 and 3, the overall goal of this thesis is to conceptualise the careers of women in a developing country context. The existing ‘new’ career concepts assume that women are contingent and temporary members of the labour force, with the opportunity to opt in and out of employment at will. Such career concepts are limited in explaining the careers of women who work mostly full-time and continuously, despite having family responsibilities. This approach ignores the importance of providing a simultaneous and integrated analysis of women’s life in public and private spheres (Rubery et al., 2001; Ginn et al., 1996) when conceptualising careers. In fact considering the employment and family context factors simultaneously, may provide a better picture of women’s careers who work continuously and full-time, despite having family responsibilities. Malawian women in formal employment exemplify such women.

In order to achieve the overall objective, the following three groups of research questions were addressed:

1. a. To what extent are women contingent or permanent members of the labour force in Malawi and what contribution do they make to family income and resources?
   b. What are the expectations placed upon women with respect to the family roles they are expected to fulfil and what resources and support are available to them with respect to child care and other family responsibilities?
   c. To what extent are women supported or hindered by employment practices in fulfilling their dual roles in work and the family and is the support they receive provided through formal or informal practices?
2. How do different employment contexts support or hinder careers of women in formal employment in Malawi?

3. a. How do individual women in formal employment make sense of the tensions emanating from the employment and family context factors and how does this sense-making shape their careers?

b. What is the role played by women’s individual agency in constructing their careers as they respond to organisational, institutional and family factors?

With these research questions in mind, qualitative research design was a more suitable choice as it enables explaining ‘how’ careers are shaped whilst making compromises between family and employment context demands. Considering that employment contexts themselves vary, with the potential to have different effects on inequality and the career orientations of respondents, as well as respondents experiencing employment processes and practices differently, this study focused on two industries.

4.2 Research philosophy

An appropriate research philosophy, interpretivism, was adopted to guide the research design process. According to Saunders et al. (2016) and Duberley et al. (2012) interpretivism recognises that people and their social worlds cannot be studied in the same way as physical phenomena as people generate meanings to their behaviour, which are very important in studying them. Therefore, “different people of different cultural backgrounds under different circumstances and at different times make different meanings and so create and experience different social realities” (Saunders et al., 2016, p.140). Studying these different groups of people therefore requires creating a richer understanding of their context (Travers, 2001), possible through interpretivism. Adopting a positivist approach, which focuses on developing law like generalisations about different people in different contexts results in loss of rich information coming from these different groups of people (Saunders et al., 2016).
In this study, interpretivism enabled studying men and women’s experiences with employment and family context factors from different people’s perspectives. This was done considering that for instance, the way employers look at implementation of organisational processes and its implications may be different from the employees’ perspective. These differences are critical in making appropriate conclusions in terms of how employment and family context factors shape women’s careers.

Other scholars have argued against using interpretivism in studies on intersectionality calling for a search for alternative philosophies and methods (Rodriguez et al., 2016). However in this study, interpretivism was still relevant in understanding how different respondents experience workplace realities within and across employment contexts, and how different employment contexts contribute to inequalities which may be intersectional in certain instances. This meant considering the combined effect of gender, class and regionalism on inequalities. Therefore, by taking an intersectionally sensitive approach to analyse inequalities in the studied industries, this enabled understanding how different groups of men and women were affected by various practices in different employment contexts. In this case, the analysis considered for example how women from different social classes were affected by entry requirements into the studied sectors.

Thus, by being intersectionally sensitive in the analysis, other than revealing gender-based differences only, other differences among groups of men and women themselves were also revealed. This is in contrast to what the focus would have been if a positivist approach was adopted where the focus would have been on commonalities among research participants, regardless of context. Adopting a positivist approach would have resulted in the loss of the richness of the differences between respondents within one employment context, as well as across different employment contexts. Understanding differences in experiences is a critical point in this study. Also, the use of context-based evidence and the recognition that every social experience is subjective is key in this study.
4.3 Research Epistemological position

Research’s quality is also indicated by the appropriateness of the epistemological assumptions adopted rather than by mere technical correctness of the methods used (Hathaway, 1995). Guided by the interpretivist research philosophy, this study is located within a social constructionist epistemology as this enables considering the interaction between the individual and the context within which she/he is operating in order to understand the phenomena at hand (Burr, 2015). Therefore, through this epistemological belief, it was possible to learn about careers of women through discussions with respondents, premised on that fact that “reality is socially constructed” (Berger and Luckmann, 1991, p.13) and is given meaning by people through communication (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Berg, 2004; Bryman, 2012).

Burr (2015) pointed out four assumptions associated with social constructionism, two of which are relevant in this study. Firstly, social constructionism approaches the taken-for-granted knowledge about the world and people critically. This helps in challenging the idea that “conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world” (Burr, 2015, p.2). Through this epistemology, the study recognizes that the construction of careers depends on the subjective experiences of the individual respondents. Additionally, it helps in considering the differences in different employment contexts and among individual respondents.

Secondly, all ways of knowing and understanding are culturally and historically dependent. This is a critical point for this study because, as discussed in Chapter 2, Malawian women have a long history of high labour market participation for family provisioning within a strong patriarchal system where they also still participate in social reproductive roles. Therefore, studying gender equality needs to take into account this specificity in the cultural context that determines what happens at the family level and consequently shapes women’s labour market participation.

Prevailing mainstream economics that has been used to explain the link between gender relations and the broader economy tends to assume that all women and especially those in developed countries are always carers first with participation in paid work always relegated to position number two (Rubery, 2014). As such, women
have been seen as being “permanently in a state of contingent and temporary participation in the labour market work” (Rubery, 2014, p.17). This is generalization at best (Rubery, 2014; Rubery 2011), requiring the need to consider women in different national contexts especially those in developing countries, who may not be assumed to be carers first. Even within the developed countries, some women have not necessarily put employment as second best after caring. These may therefore not be regarded as “contingent and intermittent participants… [or] outsiders to the labour market…” (Rubery, 2014, p.20). Hence, adopting a social constructionism approach to study careers can significantly contribute to the current career literature through the use of context-based evidence as well as recognising that careers are themselves a subjective experience.

Additionally, studying workplace inequalities whilst being “intersectionally sensitive”(Mc Bride et al. 2015, p.7) in a developing country context, contributes to the limited literature that focuses on how intersectionality applies in other contexts outside the US (Rodriguez et al., 2016; Bose, 2012). Similarly, focusing on the importance of context through interpretivism and social constructionism, enables contributing to literature on how western based conceptualisation of gender and class elements of intersectionality may have different meanings in non-western contexts. This enables recognising that “intersectionality can travel but not without attention to variations in the forms and effects of …gender and class inequalities within and across nations” (Rodriguez, 2016, p.210).

4.4 Research design

A research design is a plan of how a researcher answers the study’s research questions and consists of methodological choice, research strategy and time horizon (Saunders et al., 2016). These are discussed next in the context of this study.

4.4.1. Methodological choice

Three methodological choices have been utilised in studies on women’s employment. Firstly, quantitative methods, which aim at collecting numerical data. Secondly, qualitative methods, which aim at gaining rich, in-depth understanding about a social phenomenon being studied (Bryman, 2012; Denzin and Lincoln,
Lastly, mixed methods, which aims at collecting both numerical and in-depth data about what is being studied (Saunders et al., 2016; Teddlie and Yu, 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2010; Creswell, 2010). This study adopted qualitative methods.

4.4.1.1 Qualitative method and its rationale

Qualitative research emphasises discovering the construction of social meaning and stresses the relationship between the investigator and the topic being (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Fontana and Frey, 2008). It also enables rich data collection, due to the opportunity to delve deeper into the respondents’ experiences (Silverman, 2010; Saunders et al., 2009; Silverman, 2013). Although qualitative methods are considered time consuming and yielding too much data to analyze (King, 2004a; Bryman and Burgess, 1995), they still enable the soliciting of rich data on attitudes and beliefs that could easily be concealed if quantitative methods were used (Cohen et al., 2005). Moreover, quantitative methods are limited in questions that seek going beyond mere description of a phenomenon (Bryman, 2012; Sale et al., 2002) by explaining why a particular phenomenon is the way it is.

The study’s aim and questions require adopting qualitative approach because it enables generation of detailed information specific to individual circumstances (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011), in order to examine how individual women’s careers are shaped. However, qualitative approaches, apart from being criticised for being time consuming, have also been criticised for inability to generalise findings to the wider population as data is usually generated from smaller sample sizes (Anderson, 2010). But in this study, the focus is not on achieving statistical generalisation (which requires bigger sample sizes) but theoretical generalisation “which draws theoretical propositions, principles or statements from the findings of a study for more general application” (Lewis et al. 2014, p.349). Therefore, by studying women’s careers in two industries, conclusions will be drawn from material collected that can be transferred to other similar contexts, consistent with the criteria for allowing transferability (Symon and Cassell, 2012). For instance, the way careers
of the interviewed women are conceptualised may not only apply to women in those industries, but may also apply to women in similar contexts elsewhere including developed countries, where women also make constrained choices regarding work and family as they work continuously and mostly full-time despite having family responsibilities. This is then used to broaden the existing career theories’ literature that has been premised on women being able to prioritise one role at a time.

Additionally, through qualitative methods, studying a national context where women are not necessarily contingent and temporary members of the labour market, extends literature that has criticised the dominant mainstream economics literature (see for example Rubery (2014) Figart, (2005) and Rubery (2011) among others), for its overall assumption that all women are carers first of all, irrespective of the differences in national contexts and their impact on gender relations.

Specifically, the suitability of quantitative research methods in career studies has been questioned (Arthur et al., 2005; Tlaiss, 2013b). Arthur et al., (2005, p.196) called for more qualitative studies in career-related research since the majority of current work does not involve “listening directly to the research subject or even allowing them to elaborate on their own criteria for career success.” Similarly, Acker (1992) pointed out that qualitative methods are important in understanding practices and processes which contribute to and maintain inequalities in organisations as these are complex and differ in time and space, mostly as a result of managerial actions which are guided by their perception of what the roles of men and women should be.

The qualitative method adopted in this study is semi-structured interviews. Documentary secondary data was also used to supplement the primary data (Lee, 2012). By openly pointing out how the data used in this research was collected (and analysed as discussed later), this study meets the confirmability audit criteria (Symon and Cassell, 2012).

4.3.1.1. Semi-structured Interviews

Research interviews are categorized into three types; structured, unstructured and semi-structured (Saunders et al., 2016) with the last two being associated with
qualitative research (Bryman, 2016). Structured interviews use a fixed list of questions, which are used to interview respondents exactly the way the questions are written and the interviewer records the responses against pre-determined responses (Wilson, 2013; Bryman, 2016). They are used to collect data that can be quantified, therefore they are associated with quantitative research (Saunders et al., 2016). In unstructured interviews, there is no list of predetermined questions to ask research participants apart from having a clear idea that has to be explored during the interview process (Bryman, 2016; Saunders et al., 2016). In semi-structured interviews, there is a set of pre-determined list of themes and some key questions that a researcher uses to ask research participants. The questions are open ended offering an opportunity to probe depending on particular responses (Bryman, 2016).

This study adopted semi-structured interviews. These “remain an effective way of exploring the ways in which participants experience and construct their lives” (Yeo et al., 2014, p.182). They enable probing deeply and obtaining clear explanations based on respondents’ personal experiences (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, King, 2004a, Bryman, 2016). In this study, this enabled understanding the interviewees’ viewpoint and how and why they held a particular perspective regarding how family and employment context factors shaped their careers. Furthermore, this research interview is suited for examining topics in which different levels of meanings need to be explored (King, 2004a), like in the current research where focus is on views from key informants, managers and non-managerial employees. Such varied responses enriched the data collected.

An interview schedule (Appendix 3), that is a list of guiding questions to be covered in the interview (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2016), was developed as a framework from which to plot out the developing themes whilst accommodating deviations when probing certain interesting lines (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Edwards and Holland, 2013). All interviews (except for three) were audio recorded digitally to ensure that no information was missed. These were later transcribed so as to have a verbatim recording of the responses, which helped in the findings’ presentation as it was easy to generate participants’ voices quoted directly in validating, emphasizing, or strengthening the major arguments (Chase, 2008;
Chandler et al., 2015; Gilgun, 2005). For confidentiality, pseudonyms were used to identify respondents.

4.4.1.2 Documentary Secondary data

Text materials were used as sources for documentary secondary data. These included Malawi’s development plans, government reports based on various surveys, adverts and minutes for recruitment and promotions meetings, acts of parliament and management reports from the sector case studies obtained mostly online and company newsletters. Some data was also collected from online newspapers, books and journals. As Saunders et al. (2016) argues, documentary secondary data is important for triangulating findings based on the collected primary data.

This was important in confirming and enhancing the accuracy of the presented research findings (Lewis et al., 2014). For instance, in this study, the documentary secondary data obtained through a review of adverts for teacher recruitment for training, has been used to cross check the criteria used for recruitment for teacher training. Journals and books have been used to obtain existing literature on women and employment, different career concepts, welfare regimes and other relevant issues to the research at hand.

4.4.2 Research strategy

Adopting one or more relevant research strategies is a key element of good research methodology (Saunders et al., 2016). The strategies associated with qualitative methods as well as business-related research include firstly ethnography. This is used when the study’s aim is to get a detailed understanding of a particular group of people’s social world (Saunders et al., 2016; Travers, 2001). The researcher becomes part of a group she or he is studying for an extended period of time and produces a written account of the findings (Bryman, 2012). The researcher collects data through observations, interviews, documents, listening and engaging in conversations of the group being studied. Considering the time scale, intensity and access constraints, this strategy was not used in this study. Banks are concerned with security issues therefore it would have been difficult to use this method.
Secondly action research is mostly used when the aim is to develop solutions to real organisational problems through a participative and collaborative approach. The researcher becomes a facilitator (Saunders et al., 2016). Like ethnography, this strategy requires more time and accommodating contexts where participants will be willing to collaborate in the process of solving an identified problem. This also brings in access challenges, therefore, it was not used in this study.

In grounded theory, the aim is to develop a theory, which is “a set of interrelated categories that describe or explain some phenomenon” from a set of data collected (Travers, 2001, p.42). It does not start from existing theories (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). In this case, the researcher does not have to review literature to consider existing theories to contextualise the research, but may proceed to collect data as soon as the research idea has been developed and the initial research participants have agreed to take part. The theories develop in the process of collecting and analysing data, which is done simultaneously. This strategy was not used in this study because it is also time consuming. Additionally, it does not start from existing literature, which is key in contextualizing a study, identifying the limitations of existing literature, so that the researcher may then develop perspective through which to extend the existing body of knowledge (Saunders et al., 2016). The last strategy, which this study adopted is case study (Yin, 2014; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Buchanan, 2012), and this is discussed in the next section.

4.4.2.1 Multiple-case study approach and its rationale

Yin (2014) defines a case study as an in-depth inquiry into a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context. A case study strategy would be the most appropriate in comparison to other strategies when (1) “the main research questions are “how” or why” questions, (2) the researcher has little or no control over behavioural events and (3) the focus of study is a contemporary (as opposed to entirely historical) phenomenon” (Yin, 2014, p.2). These conditions apply in the current study. Additionally, the strategy is important in gaining rich understanding of the research context. Studying within the real life context of a phenomena is not assured when other strategies like experiments are used as the experiment’s context is highly controlled to reduce the potential threats to validity (Saunders et al., 2016).
Furthermore, although in a survey strategy research is undertaken in a real life setting, the ability to understand the context’s impact is limited due to failure to generate insights from an in-depth data collection process (Yin, 2014). Considering that employment contexts themselves differ, studying two sectors was important in order to explore how different organizational/employment contexts contribute to inequalities and career orientations. The ultimate aim however, is to come up with cross-case conclusions from the two industries studied which can also include the fact that sector context matters (Yin, 2014). The multiple case study approach is also particularly important in identifying features of intersectionality present across different employment contexts (Rodriguez et al., 2016).

The case study strategy is limited due to its inability to achieve statistical generalisation (Yin, 2014). However, it does not focus on achieving statistical generalisation, which is concerned with the “prevalence of particular views or experiences, [or] the extent of their location within particular parts of the sample, about which wider inference can be drawn” (Lewis et al., 2014, p.351). Rather, the strategy allows for theoretical generalisation, whereby the focus is on drawing conclusions, theoretical propositions from material collected that can be transferred to other similar contexts (Lewis et al., 2014; Mayring, 2007; Yin, 2014; Symon and Cassell, 2012).

**4.4.2.2 Sampling and the cases**

Different employment contexts may present women with different challenges and opportunities in their careers. Therefore, adopting a strategy that allows for comparison of different employment contexts in public and private sectors helps in developing a clearer picture of women’s career experiences than when only one organisation or sector is targeted. Therefore, the education and the finance and insurance industries were purposively sampled, which means that they were selected based on a set of criteria (Mason, 2002; Ritchie et al., 2014; Teddlie and Yu, 2007).

To begin with, the Malawian government places strong emphasis on education as key to social-economic development (GOM.,2012). As such, this study explored career experiences of women in the education industry because of its pivotal
placement in the country’s development agenda (GOM, 2010a). Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in Malawi, is the largest ministry with teachers in public primary and secondary schools constituting more than half of the 130,000 civil servants (Chitsulo, 2017). Furthermore, the majority of teachers work in public schools with 72.8 percent of those working in education being employed by the public service compared to only 17.9 percent employed in the private sector (GOM, 2010a). The industry is also one of the important employers of educated women, although this applies to a lesser degree than in western countries. The industry is also faced with various threats and the actual experience of industrial action due to pay related issues.

The study’s findings are therefore envisaged to be central to policies and programs aimed at improving the education sector for the country’s growth and development. Additionally, education was targeted because it was one of the sectors that aims for greater gender equality in recruitment through the 50:50 selection strategy. Therefore, it was expected to be interesting to study how the industry was fairing in terms of achieving gender equality. The focus was on primary and secondary school teaching.

After the industry stage of sampling, stratified purposeful sampling (Palinkas et al., 2015) has been used at different stages in education. Primary and secondary education is managed by MoEST through its headquarters, six education divisions and 34 district education offices (GOM., 2014b). Respondents were drawn from schools belonging to two of these education divisions namely Shire Highlands Education Division (SHED) and Central West Education Division (CWED). This is because SHED is mostly rural based and CWED is largely urban based. Comparing differences in career experiences of those based in rural and urban areas was assumed relevant in the study.

SHED has four district education offices from which Chiradzulu, was chosen for logistical convenience. I chose one primary school and two secondary schools in Chiradzulu. Two secondary schools were chosen in Chiradzulu because it was not possible to fill the sample size of women in this district from one secondary school. These schools were purposively selected targeting one school in an urban or semi urban setting and another in a rural setting in each of the two divisions. CWED has
six district education offices, from which Lilongwe city and Lilongwe Rural East, were chosen also for logistical convenience. I then chose one secondary school in Lilongwe city and one primary school in Lilongwe Rural East in this division. Table 4.1 below is the distribution of male and female teachers in the sampled schools.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of male and female teachers in sampled schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>District Education</th>
<th>Name of school</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total staff</th>
<th>Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHED</td>
<td>Chiradzulu</td>
<td>Likalamba CDSS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PIM CDSS</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>St Michaels Primary school</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Semi-urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWED</td>
<td>Lilongwe city</td>
<td>Chinsapo Secondary School</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lilongwe Rural East</td>
<td>Chimwasongwe primary school</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study also targeted an industry with a similarly large share of employees but mostly private sector based. The industry was also to be one that requires higher educational qualifications for its employees. The finance and insurance industry fits these criteria with at least 60.8 percent of those employed there being in the private sector in comparison to 26.3 percent of those employed there being in the public service (GOM, 2010a). Additionally, the industry has over 40 percent of its employees holding a higher degree (Durevall and Mussa, 2010). Together, these two industries provide a good representation of career opportunities for women in formal employment in Malawi.

Figure 4.1 below shows the employee proportion, segregated by sex in the four organisations in finance and insurance industry, represented by pseudonyms. Again, stratified purposive sampling was used to select respondents in this industry. These four organisations were selected based on whether it was a multinational or a national organisation. This was done so as to be able to explore any similarities and differences in career experiences in these different organisational contexts.
The criteria used to select employee respondents in both industries was that firstly, respondents should be drawn from different parts of the setting and hierarchical levels. Secondly there was also to be a combination of respondents with different biographical characteristics based on age, marital status, young children and length of service. These were important variables for understanding any similarities or differences in career experiences among different groups of men and women. Such a situation would therefore provide more rich data on the subject matter. This also ensured having as much a representative sample as possible to the targeted population of working men and women (Teddlie and Yu, 2007; Ritchie et al., 2014).

Although the study’s main focus is on women, the decision to interview also men was to allow for comparison in terms of the effects of the employment and family factors on both men and women’s careers. Additionally, this was due to limited data on Malawian men’s careers to provide a basis on which to compare the women’s careers. However, since the main focus was on women, relatively fewer men than women were interviewed. In the multinational bank, the interviews were done with men and women drawn from different branches/agencies and the bank’s headquarters. In the local bank, interviews were done with men and women at both the bank’s headquarters and one of the service centres. As for the multinational insurance company, interviews were held with respondents drawn from the company’s headquarters and one of its branches. For the local insurance company, interviews were conducted at the company’s headquarters and at its two branches. Appendix 4 provides the biographical characteristics of the employee respondents.
Additionally, human resource managers or their representatives were interviewed as key informants in both industries. This enabled considering how human resource management processes and practices were implemented, the working conditions, the kind of jobs available for both men and women and any sources of inequalities (Rubery et al., 2001; Acker, 2006b). Specifically in education, key informants were drawn from the Teaching Service Commission, which is responsible for recruitment, promotion and disciplining of teachers; Department of Teacher Education and Development (DTED), which is responsible for teacher education and development and the MoEST headquarters which gives policy direction on teacher management, postings and pay teachers’ salaries. Additionally, those responsible for human resource functions at division and district education level were also interviewed as key informants.

A brief introduction of the five case studies is provided in Appendix 5, highlighting gender composition, official working hours and coverage of services in Malawi since these have a bearing on the issues being explored in this thesis. A more detailed comparative analysis of their employment contexts is presented in Chapter 5 and discussed further in Chapter 8.

4.4.3 The time horizon of the study

Saunders et al. (2016) points out the need to decide on the time horizon of the research; whether it should be one that focuses on a particular time (cross-sectional) or one that studies events over a longer period (longitudinal). Considering the time constraints associated with a PhD project, this study was cross-sectional although due to the nature of career research, attention had to be paid to the life course and biography of the participants. Thus, information was obtained on how women and men had reached their current point in their career and how they saw their future prospects.
4.5 Ethics, Access and informed consent

Before fieldwork commenced, an ethical clearance was sought from the University of Manchester, after which negotiation for entry into the research settings was begun. In order to gain access, a request to conduct research letter (Appendix 6) was sent to those responsible for human resource management functions. After explaining the study’s objective, access was granted. (See example of approval to conduct research letter in Appendix 7). The gatekeepers then helped in identifying respondents. Respondents were assured of confidentiality throughout the interview and they signed a written consent (Bryman, 2012) (Appendix 8), which highlighted my “promises to the participant and articulat[ed] [their] rights” (Webster et al.,2014,p.92), at the beginning of each interview. They were advised to feel free to withdraw their consent to participate at any point of the interview as well as not to answer questions they were not comfortable with. They were assured that participation was voluntary (Webster et al., 2014; Berg, 2004). They were also asked to feel free to seek clarification at any point regarding the research. All these formed the participant information sheet (Appendix 9).

Although gatekeepers were given a clear description of would be respondents, identifying respondents through gatekeepers could raise important ethical and data quality issues. Firstly, this may be due to respondents feeling compelled to grant me an interview. Therefore, gaining full informed consent of participants (Webster et al., 2014; Bryman, 2012) may not have always been possible as they may have accepted to participate because their managers said they should. In fact, Mason (2002, p.82) advises that “it may be impossible to receive a consent which is fully informed, and the responsible researcher should be prepared to recognize this, and think through its implications, in their research practice”. Observing from the interview process, however, it was evident that most of the respondents were clear about the purpose of the research, felt comfortable, and enjoyed engaging in a discussion concerning their work and family life. For others, it was an opportunity to get someone they could talk to freely about issues they did not have an opportunity to discuss openly.
For some, this was an opportunity to air their concerns and hoped that through the research, their experiences will get to be known and possibly influence changes in employment policies and practices. Therefore, despite the fact that they may not have fully given an informed consent, their openness and ease in discussing the issues suggest that the respondents were willing participants.

The second ethical issue relates to how reliable the data collected from not fully consenting respondents can be. If there was a possibility that the respondents did not fully understand that I was an independent researcher, and did not completely trust that the confidentiality and anonymity that I assured them at the beginning would be respected (Webster et al., 2014), then that could have influenced their answers to certain questions. However, in instances where respondents have doubted a researchers’ independence, respondents refused to have the interview audio recorded among other ways. However, to show that they did not doubt my independence, none of the employee respondents resisted the digital recording of the interview and were able to talk freely. It was only two key informants that refused to have the interview digitally recorded and in such cases, detailed notes were taken. Additionally by introducing myself as an academic from the University of Malawi-an institution held in high esteem and associated with various credible research in the country, I was able to reduce any doubts they may have had regarding my independent researcher status.

Thirdly, despite making it clear from the beginning the criteria to be used for purposive selection of the participants (Ritchie et al., 2003), since it was the employer representatives that selected the respondents, this may have provided room for biases. For instance, in the multinational insurance company, it could be possible that the gatekeeper, after learning the study’s objective, wanted to showcase that the company is doing well in terms of achieving gender equality in managerial positions. In this respect, she initially gave me as female respondents mostly those in top managerial positions (three out of four). These may also have been considered as less likely to report negative issues about the organisation as they were already occupying high positions.
Luckily, during the second research phase, I was able to add more respondents from other levels. In another case, in a primary school setting, the head teacher selected one respondent as a way of ensuring that through our discussion she could be motivated to upgrade her qualifications. Nevertheless, instances of potential bias were identified in only a minority of cases. As such the fact that gatekeepers facilitated the selection of respondents is unlikely to have significantly biased the data collection.

Guided by interpretivism, I understood the world from respondents’ point of view, adopting an empathetic stance (Saunders et al., 2016). I relied on the respondents to explain their experiences to me through their responses to the interview questions. I therefore did not challenge, or question their decisions and actions or impose my own view in relation to issues surrounding the research. I accepted their responses as they were given to me, whilst asking probing questions where required and making sure the process was an interactive one. This helped in putting myself in check to ensure that my own beliefs, values, background, interests among others (Mason, 2002; Mcgraw et al., 2000; Gilgun, 2005) did not unduly influence the research’s outcomes. This therefore minimised the effects of any form of personal biases that might have been introduced into the research, through the interview process, analysis of data, presentation and interpretation of findings.

**4.6 Pilot Study**

Pilot studies play an important role when carrying out qualitative research (Prescott and Soeken, 1989; Kim, 2010). These are defined as “small scale versions of the planned study, trial runs of planned methods/measures, or a miniature version of the anticipated research” (Prescott and Soeken, 1989, p.60). In this study, at the beginning of the data collection process, the first five interviews were done as pilot. This involved interviews with two key informants and three women. From the interview I had with the key informants it became evident that two guiding questions attracted similar responses. They both focussed on how performance appraisal information is used in promotion despite being asked differently. Therefore, the pilot exercise helped in removing the repetition.
From the pilot interviews I had with the three women, one woman indicated that the interviews were very detailed, to which I replied by explaining why I needed to get the detailed information relating to the respondents’ family and employment contexts in understanding their careers. However, this feedback helped me to clarify before commencing the subsequent interviews about the nature of the research and the importance of getting as much detailed information as possible. This helped to engage respondents throughout the interview session. Therefore, through the pilot exercise, I was able to assess the adequacy and relevance of the interview schedule and rectify any problems associated with the tool, to have a chance to update my skills and gain confidence in carrying out semi-structured interviews and dealing with different groups of participants including high level managers, consistent with some of the benefits of pilot studies (Kim, 2010; Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001; Nunes et al., 2010; Kaae et al., 2016).

### 4.7 The interview process

The interviews were conducted in two phases. The first phase took place from September to December 2014. This targeted only women and key informants. After initial data analysis, it was firstly realised that the sample had relatively fewer women with very young children. This made it difficult to come up with conclusive evidence on the impact of motherhood in a study focussing on women’s work and family responsibilities. Secondly, it was not clear how men were affected by the employment processes and practices initially analysed to be disadvantaging women. Consequently, the second phase of the research followed between March and May, 2016, and aimed at interviewing more women especially those with younger children as well as incorporating men in the sample within the same study settings. Two key informants were also interviewed. Some issues were also added or removed from the interview guide to make the tool more concise and directed at the issues that were not coming out clearly from the first phase of the interviews. The fact that this account of research process has been recorded here as well as the key changes that were made to the methodology adopted means that this research is dependable (Symon and Cassell, 2012).
The employer representatives facilitated the interviews and in most cases these took place in the organisations’ premises. In cases where this was not possible, the interviews took place in my car.

In only one instance was the interview conducted at a respondent’s house and in another at my lodging place. The interviews were conducted in two languages namely English (78) and Chichewa (six). Another six interviews were done in both languages. The interviews were audio recorded digitally and transcribed. I also took some written notes during the interviews (Appendix 10). Considering that I conducted the interviews alone, I thought it wise to translate the Chichewa interviews myself to avoid losing the meaning and the context within which the interviews took place than would have been in a case where an independent translator was involved. Each interview took about 45 minutes to an hour.

Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was reached meaning that “(a). no new or relevant data seem[ed] to be emerging regarding a category, (b), the category [was] well developed ... and (c) the relationships among categories [were] well established and validated” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.212). A total of 90 semi-structured interviews have been completed (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Distribution of study participants and industry and settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Organisation/Division</th>
<th>Number of men</th>
<th>Number of women</th>
<th>KI</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Shire Highlands</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central West</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upgrading student teachers</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Insurance</td>
<td>DTED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers’ service commission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ministry headquarters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Insurance</td>
<td>Local bank</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multinational Bank</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local insurance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multinational insurance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22 Interview recording of one respondent in this group could not be traced in my digital recorder. As such, only 6 interviews from this category of respondents are included in the analysis.
4.8 Data Analysis: Thematic analysis Approach

Thematic analysis defined as a “method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.79) was used to analyze data. A theme captures salient features from the data in relation to the research questions and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2012). King (2004b) notes that thematic analysis relies on thematically organising textual data according to a template of codes. A code is a label attached to a section of text to show it as relating to a theme in that data which the researcher has identified as important in the process of interpreting it (King, 2004b). In this case, “a theme and a sub theme is a product of thorough reading and re reading of transcripts ...that make up the data” (Bryman, 2012, p.579). The analysis utilised (King, 2004b) and King (2012)’s description of thematic analysis process exemplified by use of template analysis which involved defining themes and subthemes and then using them to group related parts of the interview transcripts. Guided by the research questions, three broader themes under which nodes or sub themes were created as follows: (1) the family context factors of respondents (2) the employment context factors for respondents (3) individual career orientations. It is around these three major themes that the three findings’ chapters are organized.

NVivo 11 software was used to make the thematic analysis faster and efficient, “by making most of the clerical tasks associated with the manual coding and retrieving of data easier and faster” (Bryman, 2012, p.608). NVivo also enabled report from the data (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013; Bryman, 2012; Silverman, 2010; Silverman, 2013). Use of NVivo also made the transparency and quality of the data analysis easy to demonstrate as it shows how interviews were coded into the sub themes (Spencer et al., 2014). Appendix 11 is an example of how coding was done using NVivo. Further, it was possible to present prevalence of themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006), in support of a particular argument, determined by sources of the nodes relating to a specific issue. To make more meaningful sense of the prevalence of themes, where necessary, tables were used to summarize some data.
The method has weaknesses. Firstly, it is accused of over-reducing the data in cases where the analyst over-focuses on template construction details than the analysis itself (Bryman, 2012). Secondly, in certain cases it does not allow personal engagement with the data and the process of coding using NVivo may lead to interpreting the data out of context (King, 2012). These weaknesses notwithstanding, the approach is best suited for the study due to its exhibited advantages. Firstly, it is not so prescriptive, therefore it is easy to use (Braun and Clarke, 2006, King, 2012). Secondly, template usage is critical when comparing the perspectives or experiences of different respondents as in the current study (King, 2004b). Lastly, the discipline of producing themes presented forces the researcher to take a systematic and well-structured approach to the process of handling data (King, 2012).

Related analysis approaches, namely content analysis, may be seen as suitable for preventing biased responses and analysis (Kolbe and Burnett, 1991). However, content analysis is unsuitable in this study because it does not answer the why or how part of the research, beyond the descriptive ‘what’ element as it often yield categorical data. The data collected with content analysis in mind may also be less sensitive to important elements in the process of qualitative data collection than is the case when data is obtained with a thematic analysis approach in mind (ibid). Thematic analysis is therefore more appropriate for this study than content analysis method.

The epistemology adopted also guides the choice of data analysis method. Thematic analysis fits the adopted social constructionist epistemology as the analysis will involve progression from mere description of career matters to emerging themes’ interpretation, so as to theorize the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

4.9 Conclusion

The study’s methodology allowed the generation of the data required to conceptualise careers of the Malawian women in formal employment. The use of multiple respondents and industries enabled developing a fuller picture that captured how different employment contexts contribute to different or even similar career
experiences. By also considering the family factors, the methodology allowed consideration of the influences of both the employment family context factors and how women make sense of the tensions emanating from these conflicting spheres as they work continuously and mostly full-time.

The study addresses three groups of research questions, which in turn organise the presentations of findings into three chapters. The first group focuses on the family context and how this contributes to the understanding of Malawian women’s careers. The findings in this regard are presented Chapter 5. The second research question focuses on how different employment contexts support or hinder women’s careers and the findings in this regard are presented in Chapter 6. The last group of research questions focus on how individual women in formal employment make sense of the tensions emanating from the employment and family context factors and how this sense-making shapes their careers. It also explores the role played by women’s individual agency in constructing their careers as they respond to employment and family factor constraints. The findings in this regard are presented in Chapter 7.
Chapter 5: Work orientations, family, welfare regimes and reconciliation of work and family roles among men and women in teaching, finance and insurance organisations in Malawi

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how women in Malawi combine their full-time employment with their family responsibilities under limited childcare support from the state and limited work-life balance opportunities afforded by the formal labour market. This analysis also takes into consideration that moving out of formal employment either into inactivity or into informal activity presents income penalties and risks that they may not be prepared to take. This chapter therefore presents the interviewed women’s experiences of the work family-interface and, for comparison, also those of men.

The key research questions addressed here are firstly, to what extent are women contingent or permanent members of the labour force in Malawi and what contribution do they make to family income and resources? Secondly, what are the expectations placed upon women with respect to the family and community roles they are expected to fulfil and what resources and support are available to them with respect to childcare and other family responsibilities? Thirdly, to what extent are women supported or hindered by employment practices in fulfilling their dual roles in work and the family, and is the support they receive provided through formal or informal practices?

The chapter is organised into three main parts. Firstly it focuses on the interviewed women’s work orientations and the value they attach to their income, in order to determine the extent to which these women were contingent or permanent members of the labour force and their contributions to family income and resources. Secondly, it focuses on the family and welfare regimes, specifically childcare arrangements and the support women receive for childcare and domestic work. This part also presents the wider issues of cultural systems, spousal attitudes and expectations placed on women. The last part focuses on how the employment context supports or hinders women’s fulfilment of their dual roles in paid and unpaid work.
5.2 Work orientations of women and the value they attach to their income
5.2.1. Work orientations of women

The positive work orientations of the women interviewed were firstly evidenced by the fact that most had long uninterrupted careers. As Table 5.1 below shows, 29 out of 55 women had been in employment for more than 15 years.

**Table 5.1: How long have women been in employment?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of years</th>
<th>Number of Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 years</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25 years</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total women interviewed</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondly, 36 out of 55 women had been working for their current employer for a continuous period of 10 years and above with 19 recording a continuous service of 20 years and above in their current organisation. Only one woman had changed jobs due to child care reasons as her previous job involved frequent travelling. The long employment and tenure in the current organisations can be considered an indication of women’s commitment to work. They were therefore permanent, rather than contingent, members of the labour force, despite the majority being also mothers as Table 5.2 below shows.
Table 5.2: Women respondents by motherhood status and number and age of children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of respondents</th>
<th>Teaching</th>
<th>Banking and insurance</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of women</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women who are mothers</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women with dependent children</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women with under-five children</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women with children aged 5 to 14 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.2 The value women attached to their income

Women’s commitment to work can be explained by the value they placed on their earnings. When asked how important their salary was to their families, all the respondents in teaching answered in affirmative. Norah specifically highlighted how her salary is important to meet her nuclear and extended family members’ needs:

“[My salary is] ... very, very important. I had two sisters and I have lost both of them together with their husbands and they left us [with their] seven kids and we only have three but we have [educated] them all” (52 year old Nora, Female teacher).

Norah’s experience is relatively typical of Malawian society due to high dependency ratio, which is exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, thereby increasing the financial burden on those working. Recent statistics show that at least 16.7 percent of children under 18 are orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Moreover, the majority of Malawi’s population is young with those aged 0-14 years comprising 46.5 percent (Index mundi, 2017).
Consistently, 22 out of 24 women in banking and insurance highlighted the importance of their financial contributions to their families. This is regardless of marital status as presented in Box 5.1 below.

**Box 5.1: Importance of women’s salary**

“...Very important, I pay school fees... for a lot of expenses requiring a lot of money, my husband and I put money together, (Nangozo, 52 years old, manager, the multinational insurance company)

“It is very important, if you take out [my] salary we would struggle... It complements a lot ... I don’t even think that my husband would start [asking me to stop working], he knows that’s what puts butter and bread on the table...” (38 years old Mary, female manager, married, the local bank)

“Very, very [important]. And currently my husband is running a private business and you know businesses in Malawi, now things are not that rosy. So it’s a major contribution.” (46 years old Janet, married, female manager, local bank)

“I pay my house rentals, I buy food, I pay my domestic worker and my [security] guard ...then I have two siblings that I help with university tuition fees... And I help my mum ... (34 years old Aggie, single, female manager, the multinational bank)

“It plays a crucial role ... Since [I am a manager]..., they pay ... very well so my financial contribution at home is very meaningful... we are still ... paying [towards a house] mortgage [which is in my name] and it is a substantial amount that goes from my pay...over MK300, 000.00 per month but I still come in and assist on other things in the home... When we have a particular financial commitment for a period that involves my husband, then I ... take over the other expenses for a period of like three months...when I do huge supplements... I can ... [settle] the water and electricity bills, pay domestic workers and buy groceries...” (35 years old Joyce, married with two young children, female manager, local bank)

The other two respondents underrated the importance of their salary to their families, largely because they perceived it as low and their husband’s pay covered most of the expenses in the home as Happiness explained below:
“My salary is not valued that much, but the little I get, I can still do something. [I] am able to buy a few things [for] the home, [like] kitchen utensils, beddings. I don’t ask [money] for these from my husband...” (42 year old Happiness, the local bank).

Nevertheless, these findings are consistent with the dominant literature on how women in developing countries spend their income. For instance, Blumberg (1988), writing in the context of other developing countries namely Ghana, Morocco, Gambia, Bangladesh and Mexico, argued that women spend most of their income for family needs. However, the evidence from the studied organisations in Malawi brings in an important caveat to the dominant literature shaped by Engel’s law which proposes that since women’s income is generally lower than that of their husbands, then they spend more family’s basic needs” (Blumberg, 1988). From my study’s findings women’s expenditures go beyond just meeting family basic needs but also contribute to other long-term projects like house mortgages and financing their own and their dependents’ education.

Thus much as work orientation is personal and therefore not directly deduced from the economic situation of a country, economic need has been found to partly explain the work orientations of women in other countries. For instance, Tavora, (2012, p.104) found that “economic need plays a major role in explaining [low educated] women’s employment” in Portugal. Similarly, Hill et al. (2017) argued that in low income societies, the main reason why women work is poverty. The importance of employment earnings to Malawian women can therefore be partly explained when Malawi’s economic context is taken into account. For instance, as of January 2016, life was becoming tougher for most Malawians in the face of skyrocketing prices of essential goods and services (Muheya, 2016). In a country where half of the population lives in poverty and salaries are generally low, with 2017 daily minimum wage pegged at MK962.00 (USD 1.33) (GOM., 2017a), having a dual earner family goes a long way in boosting family’s economic standing.
5.3 Family and welfare regimes: child care arrangements, support with domestic work and cultural expectations on women

This section presents findings relating to firstly, child care arrangements and support with domestic work and secondly to the expectations placed upon women in the family.

5.3.1 Child care arrangements and support with domestics

As shown in table 5.2, 33 out of 55 female respondents had children under the age of 15 with ages ranging from 6 months to 14 years. Similarly, 15 out of 24 male respondents had children aged 14 years and below and their ages ranged from 3 months to 14 years. As Table 5.4 shows, most parents used informal childcare in form of unregistered nannies as the main arrangement for babies and toddlers. In table 5.3, the comparison of usage of nannies between women in teaching and those from banking and insurance shows that it is mostly women from banking and insurance organisations that had nannies for their children. Teachers, due to their lower salaries found it difficult to pay the legal minimum wage, and therefore to retain domestic workers. Hence, out of all the 22 women teachers with children under the age of 15, only 8 had nannies compared to all 11 mothers in banking and insurance organisations.

Table 5.3: Usage of nannies and family members as a form of childcare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Banking and Insurance</th>
<th>Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mothers with children under the age of 15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women using nannies</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women using family members</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents also use informal childcare in combination with nursery care for children under six years old. Informal childcare is used as regular after-school and holiday childcare for school-age children. Table 5.4 shows that most women used informal child care in the form of unregistered nannies for children under three years.
Malawi can be seen as a society where child care is considered a private family matter but since market-based care is relatively cheap, a majority of the respondents “outsource care tasks” (den Dulk and van Doorne-Huiskes, 2007, p.36) by utilising nannies. As pointed out earlier, the 2017 legal minimum pay per day is MK962.00 (USD 1.33) and the majority of nannies and domestic workers are paid below this, especially those working for low income families. This is the case for most of the teachers who could not afford the minimum daily wage. Outsourcing child care “that is, to pay someone else to do them” (Crompton and Lyonette, 2007, p.116), therefore explains how mothers, especially those in banking and insurance organisations are able to work full time and provide for their families. Teachers mostly rely on family members for their child care needs.

Table 5.4 provides details of the childcare arrangements per child, but some mothers had more than one child and some children had more than one arrangement. Consequently, the number of children is higher than the actual number of respondents with dependent children. With respect to the 11 dependent children aged under five (see table 5.2) one was already attending school while 10 still needed preschool care. Of these, only four children were looked after by a nanny (two by a day nanny, one by a full-time nanny and one by a part-time nanny) although a fifth child (a respondent’s granddaughter) was looked after by a female neighbour who was not working. Three more children were looked after by nannies after participating in some formal childcare (one went to a private nursery, two went to preschool). Another child also needed some care after nursery but this was provided informally, namely she was left “with her friends to play” (with a possibility of the neighbours watching over) as Rachel, her mother returns to work as a Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) teacher. One child was taken care of by an older sibling and her father, whilst the respondent was away for studies.
From the table above, only three women with dependent children reported not having any childcare arrangement after school hours. The first two cases were teachers with older children aged 11 and 13. These stayed at home on their own while their mothers worked. In the first case, their home was within the school premises. The third case was a teacher with a four and a half year old who was already in school. After school hours, the child was taken care of by the respondent as the child’s school hours coincided with the respondent’s teaching hours.

As Table 5.1 shows, only eleven mothers did not have dependent children at the time of the interview. Ten of these eleven mothers recalled having had childcare support in the form of nannies and family members when their children were young.
Only one female secondary school teacher, did not have any form of child care when her child was very young and recalled how she left her child unattended whilst teaching at a rural based primary school:

“From five months, I used to take my son to [work]. Whilst teaching, I would leave him somewhere out where he could be seen and I was able to teach. …that is how he grew up... [When] it was raining, it meant [that] I should be with him [whilst teaching]... When he turned two/three years … I took him to a privately run nursery school where I paid a little something (Namada, a 42 year old widow)

Namada further explained that she did not have adequate resources to hire a nanny for her child and the private nursery, which was very cheap at the time, was a great help. Thus the limited (or non-existent) affordable formal child care for those women who cannot afford to have a good nanny make mothers of young children vulnerable to the need to resort to inappropriate child care arrangements like leaving them unattended. Moreover, since women teaching in rural based schools are located away from their extended families, they have less access to family-based childcare.

Two respondents, Meryl and Apawo reported that it was their husbands who took care of their children when they were young whilst they worked or went for teacher upgrading courses. Meryl’s husband was a subsistence farmer and could easily combine this work with childcare. Despite Meryl preparing in advance in terms of what the child would need in her absence, people still thought that her husband’s acceptance to take care of children whilst his wife worked was unusual. She reported:

“People thought that maybe I had given my husband some charms, yet his gesture was done out of love” (44 year old Meryl, primary school teacher)

Similarly, 39 year old Apawo, who was undergoing an upgrading course for a Bachelor’s degree in education at the time of the interview, left her children with her husband who is also a teacher whilst she went for an eight weeks residential part of the teacher upgrading course she pursued (Diploma). She also left her children with her husband over weekends when she could attend ‘study circles’ where she could meet other students in her zone for course related discussions as part of the course requirements.
This was also seen as an abnormal behaviour: She recalled:

“Other women, my neighbours...would [accuse me of using] charms on my husband for him to be allowing me to go wherever I wanted…”

The charm issue notwithstanding, what is evident from these interviews is that the prevailing gender culture meant that people disapproved of the inversion of traditional gender roles. They did not see fathers looking after children as part of their responsibilities whilst the mothers pursued career related endeavours. This highlights the gendered nature of child care provision (Hays, 1998).

With reference to the men’s child care arrangements, Table 5.4 shows that wives provided the most of the childcare for under-five children even though most of them were also employed; to a lesser extent nannies were also important providers of childcare in the case of men.

As Table 5.5 below shows, a majority of the married women (28 out of 31) had their male partners in professional and other full-time jobs. From the 13 married men interviewed, six had spouses in formal employment whereas three had their spouses in informal employment such as running a small business which for example selling food stuffs and other merchandise at a small scale. The remaining four described their wives as housewives. The same table also shows that 10 male respondents and 24 female respondents were either single, divorced or widowed and that the majority of married respondents in this study (41 out of 44) were based in dual earner households confirming that most households in Malawi are dual earner households.

**Table 5.5: What were the spouses of the married respondents engaged in?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What their partners engaged in</th>
<th>Male respondents</th>
<th>Female respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional and other full time jobs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional part-time jobs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House wives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal employment-small business</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total married respondents</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single/divorced/widowed respondents</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This suggests that in Malawi as the case is elsewhere, “women are more likely to have a spouse who is also a professional compared to their male counterparts” (Young et al., 2015, p.1763). Yet those women may still be expected to do a greater proportion of the domestic work.

Since all the female respondents had full-time jobs, I explored the support they had with domestic work. For those that had childcare responsibilities, their domestic workers combined child care and some domestic chores. Table 5.6 below shows that 23 out of 55 women interviewed had full-time domestic workers and just one had a part-time domestic worker. Thus for a majority of respondents, support with domestic tasks, like childcare, is outsourced (Crompton and Lyonette, 2007). The second largest category was those without support (19 out of 55) followed by those who rely on other family members (12). Again, a majority of those without support were teachers. For comparison, the table also shows the major source of support with domestic work among men. Most men rely on their spouses in informal employment for carrying out domestic tasks.

**Table 5.6: Major source of support with domestic work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major source of support</th>
<th>Number of women</th>
<th>Number of men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full time domestic workers</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time domestic workers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouses</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Family members</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No support</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were however divisions regarding how satisfied the women were with the maids/nannies. Those that did not have dependent children at the time of the interviews reported that due to negative experiences with maids/nannies they had stopped employing them when their children started school. Most of these were teachers. Additionally, those that had been satisfied with their maids or their children’s nannies were mostly those with higher income levels.
This may mean that those with low income found it difficult to attract and retain experienced maids/nannies as they would expect to be paid at least the minimum wage\textsuperscript{23}.

Considering the pivotal role played by domestic workers in a context of little state support, improved legal protections for domestic workers are welcome but this will have implications in terms of their affordability. Women who are also in relatively low-paid employment, such as primary school teachers, may not be able to continue working after having children if they cannot afford domestic workers to look after their children. For example, Patrick reported that following his wife’s maternity leave, he will ask her to resign from her low paying job as a shop assistant. As her pay is almost the same as the minimum wage that would have to be paid to a nanny, he considered his wife would be better off resigning to take care of their child herself. Although this one example is not a basis on which to predict future behaviour in the face of the rising cost of domestic workers, it is an important insight into what may happen in future if the affordability of domestic workers (who also have their own economic and child care needs) does not form part of the policy agendas regarding domestic work and women’s employment. Moving of women out of the formal sector where they are already in minority is not good for both the economy in general and specifically the advancement of the gender equality agenda. Raising costs of domestic work in the absence of a wider gender equality agenda may alternatively result in an increase in inadequate child care arrangements if women were to continue working in formal employment.

5.3.2. Cultural systems and spousal attitudes and expectations placed upon women

Since child care is not all or even always the main focus of family responsibilities potentially affecting Malawian women’s work-life, this section focuses firstly on cultural systems and spousal attitudes and secondly on expectations placed upon women.

\textsuperscript{23} In May 2017, the daily minimum wage was revised upwards, resulting in mixed feelings with trade unions being pleased, and civil servants expressing concern that domestic workers will no longer be affordable (Nkhulembe, May 23, 2017)
5.3.2.1 Cultural systems and spousal attitudes

The analysis here focuses on whether the cultural system in which the women were embedded influenced their work orientations and men’s attitudes towards their wives’ careers. Based on literature on patrilineal and matrilineal societies, one would expect that the career decisions of women in patrilineal societies would be largely influenced by their spouses. This is so because women in patrilineal systems are considered ‘owned’ by the husband after the dowry has been paid and as such are under the provision and control of the husband (Ogbu, 2009). Under this system, women would be less oriented to work and to advancing their careers than their counterparts in matrilineal systems. However, based on the analysis of the interviews, the cultural system that female respondents belonged to did not appear to matter in women’s work orientations. Also, fifty out of fifty-five women reported that their husbands fully supported their careers, regardless of their cultural system.

Table 5.7 below shows the distribution of male and female respondents according to their cultural system. Among the female respondents, there were 38 from matrilineal tribes and 16 from patrilineal tribes. This is not to suggest that more people from matrilineal societies are more likely to be employed than those from patrilineal groups. Instead this reflects the majority of matrilineal groups in the national population.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Matrilineal</th>
<th>Patrilineal</th>
<th>Not Asked the question</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24 The study did not deliberately include ethnic grouping as a sampling criteria
Specifically, most of the women from the patrilineal society reported having the support of their husbands towards achieving career goals as extracts in Box 5.2 below show:

**Box 5.2 Husband’s support towards their wives’ careers**

[...] maybe I married a better Tumbuka\(^{25}\) who is more understanding. He is the one that supported me [even financially] when I was in college … (46 years old Janet, female manager, local bank).

“[My] husband has been encouraging me to go to school…” (42 year old Malita, female teacher).

“[my husband is very, very supportive [to my career] bearing in the mind that most of the times I finish work late and most of the times I find that he is already home… he is understanding, he does not complain about this…” (42 year old Happiness, the local bank).

“My husband supports my career. In fact for me to reach this stage, it is because of him. I got married before I started working. I joined the teaching profession whilst married.” (38 year old Chisomo, teacher).

From the above extracts, husbands from patrilineal societies can hold positive attitudes about the careers of wives within the context of it being to the overall good of the family. Although some husbands in matrilineal societies were also reported to be supportive and that they held positive attitudes towards women’s career orientations, 5 of the 38 women from matrilineal societies reported that their spouses had negative attitudes regarding their careers, especially when it meant staying away from their families for longer periods. These were mostly those that had decided to upgrade their qualifications that meant staying away from home for long periods. This applied mostly to those that had decided to upgrade their qualifications. This is not to say with certainty that husbands in matrilineal societies do not support their spouses’ careers due to limited evidence in that regard. Also, it may be due to a tendency for women from matrilineal societies to be more independent minded, ambitious and more likely to challenge gender stereotypes which in turn could generate greater resistance from husbands. However, this finding offers an important lead into investigating further the differences in the two cultural systems as regards spouse’s attitudes towards their wives’ careers.

\(^{25}\) One of the patrilineal ethnic groups in Malawi
One of the women from the matrilineal society recalled her experience when she had gone for an upgrading course:

“My husband … did not allow me pursue the course. [He threatened] that my failure to listen to him could lead to the end of our marriage, I … [told him that I will] proceed with my studies because this was my once in a life time chance. …he argued “the way you are behaving now, the moment you [complete] this course … you [will be] taking [over] the role of a husband”… [We indeed separated] but we are now living together again after being apart for two years…” (Daina, 41 year old female secondary school teacher)

Martha, a 28 year old female primary school teacher from the matrilineal cultural system, reflecting on factors that hinder career progression of women, despite not directly talking about her experience argued:

“What I see is that when you have a husband who is at a lower level of education than you, as I said my husband is a business man and here I am working for government…some men will be jealous and would not want you to upgrade professionally for fear that when you get [better] educated than them, you will start belittling them. As a result, when there is an opportunity for you to advance your career, they can say you shouldn’t take that opportunity… they will do whatever they can to frustrate you...”

Apawo recalled her experience with studying on the distance mode which required her to be in college during specific periods for the residential learning and in study clusters over weekends:

“...it was tough on my family you know as women we are supposed to be home caring for the home, the children and the husband...but then we were spending 8 weeks [in college] because the residential period was for 8 weeks so it meant leaving the family. [Additionally] each and every weekend we were supposed to go for study circles ...sometimes [my] husband would say, “No, today I think you should be home, do this and that but in most cases he could say go, ... but not always willingly ... there could be some conflicts here and there...” (Apawo, 39 year old secondary school teacher, under upgrading training)

Two out of four married women interviewed whilst undergoing a teaching upgrading course at Domasi College reported that their partners were unfaithful during their period away in college. Such experiences or their anticipation may prevent women from making progressive career related decisions. Cognisant of the fact that this sample is too small to make any realistic conclusions, this is also an important lead into understanding the attitudes and behaviours of male partners of women who
decide to re-enter higher education for the sake of progressing in their careers. This is so because spouse’s positive attitude and emotional support have the greatest influence on reducing the conflict between career and family that professional women face (Whitehead and Kotze, 2003; O’Neil et al., 2016). Yet most of the studies that focus on the family challenges highlight child care issues (Lin, 2016; Home, 1997). As this chapter argues, child care challenges may not tell the full story as regards family responsibilities that may affect women’s careers in Malawi.

From the analysis, there is evidence, albeit limited that husbands from patrilineal societies though supportive of their wives’ careers, they also appeared to have had a greater influence on women’s career decisions. Three female teachers said that their partners had influenced their decisions regarding what course to study. These respondents reported that they had wanted to pursue other professions like nursing and secretarial, but their spouses had told them to pursue teaching.

Two other respondents (one from matrilineal society) reported how their husbands did not allowing them to quit the jobs that they thought had no progression prospects. For instance, 42 year old Malita reported that her husband influenced her decision regarding when to go for further studies and what kind of further studies she was to do. Malita ended up doing a course that had not earned her any recognition in her profession as a teacher as she did a degree in Human Resource Management. The argument presented by the husband was that she could study a degree in Human Resource Management which is offered over weekends whilst working as a teacher and staying in a free institutional house. If she had decided to pursue a relevant qualification for a teaching job, involving attending lectures during the week, the family would have had to vacate the institutional house. Looking for a house to rent at a market value, was an idea that the husband did not support due to his financial status at the time. Also, almost five years since she graduated with the degree in Human Resource Management and despite not getting any recognition following her new qualification acquisition in her teaching job, she has also not been able to apply for a new job. Her husband had told her to put this on hold until he gets a good job that will make him earn decently so as to be able to pay the house rent somewhere else.
Although this decision could be considered as jointly made, on the basis of mostly securing sufficient income for the family against the risk of changing jobs, this respondent seemed unhappy with this decision (which may imply that the husband dominated the decision making process) and she explained that this was the only reason why she “was still stuck in teaching.”

The above evidence therefore suggests that the support that women receive from their spouses with respect to their careers may be conditional: men’s support of women’s careers is mostly dependent on what the husband views as a priority at that point, resulting in women enacting their careers around their husbands’ careers and interests. As long as women follow their husband’s decisions regarding their careers, they will be supported. This is with respect to what kind of career to pursue, when to pursue it and where to pursue it among others. The aspect of where in this case leads to women being supported in their careers as long as they work within the same geographical location as their husbands which requires some women to become trailing spouses, explored in more detail in Chapter 7. The discussed men’s support of women’s careers thus may not necessarily be with the intention of prioritising women’s careers per se.

5.3.2.2 Expectations placed upon women

With respect to expectations placed upon women, the interview analysis suggests that despite having support with domestic work, women still reported that they needed to do some household tasks themselves. In Box 5.3 are extracts from women’s interviews in support of this finding:
Box 5.3 Women’s domestic tasks

“I normally wake up at 5 am and I do my household chores, of course I have a [domestic] worker but some of the things I need to do on my own, I make sure my kids are up at six, I get them ready...for school” (45 year old Takondwa, multinational insurance company)

“I wake up around half past five [in the morning], I have to prepare my daughter for school, prepare her food, make sure she has taken her bath, she has eaten…we drop her at school… then I come to the office.”(Mary, 38 year old female manager, local bank).

“… There are certain roles that we still have to do due to cultural or societal expectations: taking children to under five clinic, dropping off and picking children from school. ....” (Sandra, 40 years old, Manager, Multinational Insurance Company).

“...you have to do your chores at home, then you do the work at school, you prepare your [class lesson] and there are times when they say, no teacher should [go home] before [completing] their lesson plans... that was really difficult...By the time you get home, you are very tired...[but] there is no way a husband would come and find a wife seated on the sofa, he would want to eat something prepared by the wife.”(61 year old Tinyade, retired primary school teacher but working on month to month arrangements).

Victor (aged 36), a male respondent in the multinational insurance whose wife was also in formal employment, expected her to cook his food although he reported having a maid. He argued:

“...Where I grew up, a wife is supposed to be cooking for the family. As far as cooking is concerned, when I am there, she is supposed to cook...”

Happiness, aged 44, one of the female bankers in the local bank, explained her experience with finding her husband at home upon her return from work:

“I finish work late and most of the times I find that my husband is already home, it’s embarrassing as a woman to find your husband at home because culturally it’s a woman who is supposed to be home first... he complains, jokingly that [it seems] “it’s you who “married me” ...because I am always the one who opens the door for you these days.”

“Married me” in Happiness’ interview extract above has been deliberately put in quotation marks. This phrase, when presented in western contexts may not show any hierarchical relationships between a man and a woman in a marital relationship. However, its literal translation into the national Malawian language, Chichewa connotes the power relationship between a man and woman in a marital relationship. In the local language there are different word derivations from ‘marry’ to differentiate between men and women. It is a man who ‘marries’ a woman and a
woman gets ‘married to’ a man. In the above extract therefore, Happiness, by working long hours and finding her husband already at home is being seen as altering the power relationships- she should be the one opening the door for her husband and not vice versa.

This finding therefore highlights the importance of societal views about women’s role which can make women have problems managing work and family responsibilities even in cases where there is support with childcare or domestic work (Whitehead and Kotze, 2003). Societal views about their roles can also affect their self-esteem and identity as they feel they are not fitting the description of a good wife or mother as socially defined and expected. For some of the women without maids or other forms of support with domestic chores, the domestic division of labour was still traditional as the women practically did all the domestic tasks:

“I wake up at 2:30am … I fetch water then do some household chores like mopping, sweeping ...then... I prepare my child for school then I get myself prepared for work. Ndaziona, 44 years old, married, secondary school teacher)

“... I am one of the busiest woman ... [at this school] because, am married and I don’t have a maid at home, so I do all the work.... I wake up by half four or five am. I sweep the surroundings of the house, mop, then I let my husband have a bath then ... I prepare my eleven years old child for school, then I prepare breakfast and I am the last one to have a bath to come to [work]... I am expected to be here by seven o’clock and I spend the whole day here at school. … in between, I sneak out, go home and prepare lunch for my dear husband and for myself...when I finish work at five I make sure that I have [food] ready for [the next day]… if there is ironing to be done[I do]. But usually the washing and the ironing, I do that over the week-end.” (52 years old Norah, Female secondary school teacher).

The above quotes also suggest that the husbands played a minute or even no role in domestic chores. Some women reported that their husbands assisted with specific roles like washing, cooking, dropping off and picking up children and helping children with homework when the women were busy or when the maids were off during weekends. This finding is therefore consistent with Crompton and Lyonette, (2007, who argued that when men participate in domestic work, they are more likely to do certain chores than others.
“Like the washing, he does help me and sometimes even the cooking. He likes eating food prepared by his wife and by himself...” (52 years old Norah, Female secondary school teacher).

“He does [help], but because he is the only man in the house... he does it may be over the weekend, when ...the nanny is off. But with the morning chores... it is just me...I [also] have to make sure that I have helped my daughter with her homework and she has finished before putting her to sleep...” (Mary, 38 years old, female manager, local bank)

A 30 year old Apatza, a female secondary school teacher, expressed an explicit view that she did not expect her husband to participate in domestic chores since she was there and they had a maid to help out too. Another female teacher reported that her husband could not do anything because from his patrilineal ethnic grouping, ‘Ngoni... men “are kings” as such they wait to be served always. Joyce, from the local bank echoed this view:

“... Mine is a typical African [man], he does not do anything, completely. Such that at one time I had a two days trip to Lilongwe and when I walked [into the house], I was asked, “where are my handkerchiefs?” and I was like mmh! ... For my husband, you do everything for him, he is my big baby...”

This therefore is consistent with a study by O’Neil et al. (2016) involving Malawian female members of parliament who argued that culturally, a woman is expected to be responsible for all domestic tasks regardless of the public office she holds, even if this is only to do with overseeing domestic workers. For comparison, I asked the interviewed men whether they did any domestic chores or not. A majority of men indicated that they did not have to do any domestic chores, some indicating they may help over weekends when the wife is busy. The men’s views regarding their participation in domestic work and childcare which were highlighted in the interviews with men are presented in Box 5.4 below. The extracts thus allude to the same point raised earlier on: men play a limited role in domestic chores.
Apart from expectations placed on women by their husbands, “...there are also other societal expectations on women that are posed on them regardless of marital status....” (Sandra, 40 years old, Manager, Multinational Insurance Company). In this case, women are socially expected to participate in other community based activities and they do spend more time in such activities than men. Women are expected for instance to participate in cooking during funerals, weddings and other similar community based activities. Men tend not to play a big role and spend a less time in such events. Moreover, since most men have spouses in informal employment, it is expected that these women can easily represent the men in such community activities whilst the men concentrate on work related assignments. However, when working women show commitment to fulfilling community obligations or expectations this is sometimes interpreted as a failure to prioritise work as Janet, a female manager explained:
“... I would [not] leave a sick child home for work ... but there are other issues like, a funeral for a church member, I know that I belong to that community but when I know that I have an assignment [at work], surely it’s something I need not to compromise [on]. I would have to excuse myself ...With other women, they would say I have to go to the church funeral, in case something similar happens to me I will need other people’s help ...our priorities sometimes we put them upside down. It’s not that I don’t attend funerals [in my community]. I do go but it’s really a way of planning ... when there is a funeral somewhere, I prefer attending the night vigil so that during the day, I [can] come to work...”

5.4 The employment context and reconciliation of work and family roles

This section focuses on how the employment contexts support women in combining work and family responsibilities. Specifically, it assesses the extent to which formal and informal arrangements in the studied industries enable work and family responsibilities to be combined.

5.4.1 Formal institutional arrangements

The formal institutional arrangements of relevance in this section are maternity leave, compassionate leave and unpaid leave. These have implications for assessing the extent to which these enabled interviewed men and women to combine paid and unpaid work.

5.4.1.1 Maternity leave

As highlighted in Chapter 2, the statutory provision for maternity leave is a minimum of eight weeks in every three years. This means that if a woman has more than one child in three years, she will not be entitled to leave for the second child. This runs contrary to a requirement for giving time off to mothers to enable them recover from child birth and spend time with a new born child while keeping their jobs (Rossin, 2011). Among the respondents, there were no cases of women who had resigned from these jobs despite the sample having three cases of teachers who had more than one child in three years.
This is possible because there is some flexibility in teaching, whereby teachers do not have to go to work every day. As such if a teacher had two children in three years and was not allowed the second maternity leave, there is still a possibility that they will be able to continue working. In banking there was only one known case of a woman in these circumstances who also remained in employment and who relied on domestic help for the care of their young children including the new born baby.

The interviews revealed that teaching provides 12 weeks of maternity leave, which is higher than the statutory provision. For most of the women teachers interviewed, this was considered adequate. However, this should be understood in the context of flexibility associated with teaching jobs in Malawi where especially secondary school teachers can report for duties only on days when they have a class or a meeting. Although teachers, like all civil servants are expected to stay at work from 7.30 am to 4:30 pm, in practice this is not the case. Instead, the practice has been to align the working hours to the school hours. Despite revising school days by making them longer than before, from a minimum of slightly over 3 hours to a minimum of 4 and half hours (See Appendix 7), the school days are relatively short in comparison to working hours in banking and insurance jobs, thereby facilitating reconciliation of work and child care responsibilities.

Moreover, the data reviewed shows that there are no clearly defined regulations as regards the minimum number of hours of teaching one is expected to complete, as these firstly vary from one school to another and from one subject to another. Teaching hours per teacher in each school depends on the number of teachers available per particular subject and is lower where more teachers are available. Secondly, some subjects, due to their nature have more hours allocated per term than others, with more hours for example being allocated to Mathematics, English and Chichewa. In the end, some teachers will teach for more hours than others. Figure 5.1 shows differences in teaching periods among teachers within the same urban based secondary school in the third term of the 2016/2017 academic year. From the total of 64 teachers included in this analysis, four teachers had hours of between 16 and 20 per week, 27 had teaching hours from 11 to 15 hours per week, 24 had teaching hours from 6 to 10 hours per week and nine teachers had teaching hours of
less than five hours per week. Despite this range, pay given is the same across the board. One of the respondents highlighted that other teachers have what he described as a “free salary ride” as these have lower workloads than others.

![Percentage of Teachers](image)

**Figure 5.1:** Teaching hours per week in an urban based secondary school

Under these circumstances it is not always necessary to be at the school every day and some urban-based secondary school teachers reported doing so only on the days they had to teach. This favours women with childcare responsibilities. As Norah, a 52 year old secondary school teacher explained:

“...you are given the maternity leave and most of the time in the teaching profession, we have got houses near the school, and therefore it’s easy ... you can as well go and check on your child,[breastfeed] and then come back to work ... We also do not necessarily have to be in school the whole time... especially after maternity leave... even without a child, some teachers ... during a week...just come may be two days. For those that stay far... you can’t just come all the way here and do nothing unless you have been called to do something. When you don’t have a class, you can stay at home...”

Apatsa, (a 30 year old female secondary school teacher and a mother to one and a half year old son), recalled:

“Teaching...gives [mothers] time to take care of [their] young children. [In my case] I came back from maternity leave when my child was 4 and a half months old since my maternity leave coincided with school holidays.
Additionally, the head teacher was more understanding ... when I returned from maternity leave, I was given form 1[to teach] so as to reduce workload yet I was supposed to teach in form 26 four...”

So, although flexible working arrangements are not a replacement for maternity leave, they help the work-life reconciliation of women with younger children after the expiration of the maternity leave. This may explain therefore why most of the women in teaching did not have problems with reconciling work and child care.

In the local bank, the multinational insurance company and the local insurance company, the maternity leave provision is also twelve weeks as reported by the key informants. Like in teaching, this shows that these private organisations provide higher maternity leave than the statutory provision. The multinational bank provided only eight weeks of maternity leave. It is only in exceptional cases of complications with childbirth that an extra four weeks may be given. The 8 or 12 weeks of maternity leave were specifically highlighted in these organisations to be inadequate where working long hours and physical presence is the order of the day. In these cases, it is evident that women find it difficult to leave their babies when they are only between 8 and 12 weeks to return to work following exhaustion of maternity leave days.

To show that the maternity leave was still inadequate for women in the local bank, women reported accumulating annual leave days which were then added to their maternity leave days in order to spend more time with their new born child before returning to their full-time, long hours’ jobs. A 38 year old Mary, a female manager in a local bank, explained her experience:

“My maternity leave was … close to five months... But that was maternity leave plus my annual leave...I was [called back] before my annual leave days [were exhausted]”

Mary was pregnant with her second child during the interview. When I asked her if she had plans of going away just for the allowed 12 weeks maternity leave, without adding the annual leave days, she emphatically said:

26 Form is equivalent to a year in UK’s secondary school system
“No, I would love to go longer than that because I [would like] to leave my child when s/he is at least sitting or crawling) … [and not] when [s/he is] still very small. Otherwise I will be finishing work at half past four prompt. But my colleagues are used to calling at six o’clock in the evening expecting to find me still in the office.”

However, managers’ perceptions of this coping strategy (adding annual leave to maternity leave) showed that they do not fully appreciate women’s situations that make them require more leave. Joseph, the Head of Human Resources in the local bank reported:

“What most women do is that soon after the maternity leave, they will apply for annual leave to prolong their stay [with the new born child]. This affects operations in the organisation… When the woman had a lot of [annual] leave days it is [even] worse. There is a case of a woman who wanted to be away for five months... we had to call her back from her leave”

Janet, another manager even reported that some women ended up faking complications with delivery so that they can continue staying on leave after the maternity leave period. She reported:

“... We had a case not long ago. This particular [young woman] had problems with her pregnancy [so] she took advantage since her manager was understanding, it was a female [manager] so she took advantage of that … She went earlier for maternity leave which was agreed within their unit but this was a wrong decision because she needed more time after the baby[was born]..... She asked for an extension for leave up to the extent of … asking the doctors to write her a [fake medical note saying] that she was not fit for work … but there are [also] genuine cases… [and] they can be considered. ...

(46 year old Janet, female manager, the local bank).

Joseph and Janet’s quotes above also show that there is a contradiction between what the woman needs in terms of an adequate leave after new birth and what the managers see from this need for an adequate leave: For the women, this is to ensure spending more time with the new born child as well as recuperating from child birth. For the employers, what they see are costs (which they would like to minimise as much as possible). The costs are the ones associated with leave for paying a replacement for the woman on paid leave and its effect on disrupting operations as the new person gets used to the job. Thus, the managers are not necessarily concerned with the woman’s needs requiring more time off. Joseph, the key informant added:
“...[going on a maternity leave longer than 12 weeks] gives us a challenge... now we have a case at [one of the divisions], two women there went on maternity leave at the same time ... So we just had to get on board temporary employees to fill the gaps, we had no option since it is their entitlement...”

On face value, Joseph’s quote above may show that managers do accept that women are entitled to maternity leave. However, careful reading of his quote shows that managers only reluctantly accept that women have a right to maternity leave and therefore, are not very understanding of women’s needs requiring leave and more so the need to extend it when needed. Failure to genuinely appreciate women’s need for leave is evidenced in managers for instance calling back women on maternity leave who wish to have more leave as highlighted above. Yet, it is the employer’s responsibility to provide leave for the sake of the society where families receive little state support towards care. Joseph’s views also show that the maternity leave provision gives more powers to employers to decide and be convinced that a case at hand requires guaranteeing more leave days, as such it is not a right for a female employee to have more leave when required.

Similarly, the quote from Andrew below (a Human Resource Manager from the multinational bank which provides maternity leave of eight weeks), although showing acceptance of the fact that women can ask for more leave, still regards it as up to the employer (by emphasising management discretion) to grant more leave or not and makes it clear that it cannot go beyond 12 weeks of maternity leave. He submitted:

“Maternity leave [in our bank] is eight weeks according to the statutes of Malawi. But we also realize that [sometimes] the 8 weeks maternity leave cannot be enough especially when there are complications from giving birth ... we have put it deliberately in our policies that management, at its own discretion [may] award ...extra weeks ... to members of staff who have fallen in that category [as long as there is also written documentation from doctors [certifying that there] is a problem with the child or ..the mother[requiring more time off]. In such cases we have given [women] additional leave for a maximum of about 4 weeks” (Andrew, Human Resource Manager Multinational bank)

The evidence above therefore shows that in banking and insurance industries studied, the workplace culture provided limited support for combining work and family responsibilities.
The research has also revealed that there are no breastfeeding regulations in Malawi. Where these exist, organisations would either have to provide breastfeeding facilities or allow mothers to go home during the day to breastfeed (Ford and Nurchayati, 2017). These were not provided for in all the studied industries. Thus, the absence of breastfeeding facilities or the opportunity to go home to breastfeed especially in banking and insurance organisations may also be contributing to the feeling that maternity leave is inadequate. In a country where mothers are advised to strictly follow the UNICEF and WHO recommendation for exclusive breastfeeding of new born children until they are at least six months (National Statistical Office (NSO) and ICF Macro, 2011) lack of breastfeeding regulations makes such recommendation difficult to follow. This is especially the case for women in formal employment due to having maternity leave of less than 6 months, as well as lack of breastfeeding regulations.

Yet, exclusive breastfeeding for six months is an important component of child survival and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV among women with no access to baby formula (Kafulafula et al., 2013). This is so because breast milk is easy to digest as such it does not damage the intestinal mucosa (inner most layer) of the baby’s gastrointestinal tract, barring the entry of the HIV in breastmilk into the baby’s body (Coovadia et al., 2007). Mixing breast milk and other foods before six months increases the chances for mother to child transmission of HIV as this ulcerate the internal mucosa of the baby’s gastrointestinal tract, creating the portal for entry of the virus. Exclusive breastfeeding of infants under six months in low-income countries like Malawi is also important in promoting children’s growth (Kuchenbecker et al., 2015) and reducing neonatal mortality (Agho et al., 2011).

Additionally, bottle feeding an infant under the age of six months is discouraged in Malawi for hygienic reasons so as to prevent possibility of contamination, which may contribute to the high risk of diarrheal disease in infants, (National Statistical Office (NSO) [Malawi] and ICF., 2017; WHO/UNICEF., 2014). It is also only those with a private means of transport (or who live very close to work) that can manage to quickly go home and breastfeed during the one hour long or less lunch break.
In this study, a thirty-year old Susan explained how working long hours had affected her breastfeeding plans and bonding with her son:

“Working in the bank has made my son to detach himself from me. He stopped breast feeding when he was 6 months old...I had planned to breastfeed him for 2 years but since I left the house in the morning and came back in the evening when he was sleeping... he was so upset and he just [weaned] himself ...At least his dad finishes work early; mostly by 4:00 PM he is at home ... so he is more attached to his dad than me...”

5.4.1.2 Annual leave

Every employee is also entitled to an annual leave which may afford both men and women time off to attend to family responsibilities. For teachers, most of them are entitled to 21 days of annual leave. Approvals for annual leave in teaching follow a bureaucratic process. However, the majority of the respondents highlighted that there is little flexibility in terms of when teachers can go on annual leave since “for teachers, annual leave is within the school holidays” (Don, key informant at education division). Respondents also argued that, “formally requested leaves [outside school holidays] are mostly never granted” (51 years old Nambewe, female head teacher-under administrative arrangements). The expectation is that school holidays will coincide with mothers' need for time off as their children will be off school as well. Yet, in practice, teachers do not have the whole school holidays to use as annual leave as they are also expected to prepare lesson plans and schemes of work during the school holidays. But since this is done within the home and school holidays may be longer than 21 days, it is still a better arrangement than those mothers who work in banking and insurance organisations who are not guaranteed leave during school holidays. Informal arrangements also appear to be available to teachers when they need time off outside school holidays as pointed out later.

In banking and insurance organisations, annual leave entitlements depend on grade and years of service. Management and executive staff plus those with above ten years of service are entitled to 30 days whereas the lowest graded employees are entitled to 15 days of annual leave. This was the most commonly used form of reconciling work and family responsibilities for most of the respondents. However, as reported, work requirements limit the take up of annual leave days.
A male respondent in multinational insurance company, 36 year old Tony reported that “even to take a leave for you to rest, you have to lie...”

Takondwa, a 45 year old female respondent at the branch of the multinational insurance company added how difficult it is to have annual leave approved to attend to emergencies:

“... My aunt was sick. I told my [immediate supervisor] that...I needed to take her to the hospital... I needed two days leave... I filled the form and then I said, I am going and he was like ‘how? You should have given me notice’. I was like, how would I [have] given you notice? It is an emergency. [He said]‘ Hey! You cannot go ... I was like, what do I do now, my aunt is calling...I then ... wrote an email to [the Managing Director], copied ... to my immediate supervisor and I left ... It was on Thursday and unfortunately, she passed away there so I came back the following week on Monday and I wrote an email indicating that I am back but I had lost my aunt. Then the email was now forwarded to the head of Human Resources who [replied] saying “sorry but what you have done is very bad... next time don’t write to your [Managing Director, sort it with your immediate supervisor].

As pointed out earlier on, women in banking and insurance organisations are also not able to take much time off even during school holidays to be with their children, as is the case with teaching. This is contrary to what happens in other western countries like Germany, where parents are prioritised in terms of getting leave during school holidays to enable spending time with their children. It is not just about costs associated with child care during school holidays that necessitates taking time off from work. Spending time with children which ensures quality family time is also good for children’s development (Offer, 2013; Mestdag and Vandeweyer, 2005).

5.4.1.3 Compassionate leave

The key informants in banks and insurance companies also reported that they offer compassionate leave of five days per year to both men and women for emergencies relating to sicknesses and bereavement of close family members. However, one of the female managers who was also responsible for some human resource functions highlighted the gendered nature of compassionate leave when she argued that:
“This is mostly used by women because when [a woman’s] partner is sick, [she] is the one to look after him, [when a child is sick]...when they have lost a relative they take time off… [46 years old Janet, female manager, the local bank].

Thus although men do take time off when faced with similar challenges, the argument being made by Janet is that more women than men request time off for caring reasons. This is consistent with existing literature arguing that “gender plays an important role in shaping the burden of care in the African context [with] women [being] more likely than men to take on caregiving activities relating to the sick…” (Schatz, 2007,p.148). This shows that some of these pro-family policies tend to have gendered implications as it is mostly women who use them. Consequently, there is a tendency for managers to associate this with women being less committed to their work than men.

Moreover in the local bank and multinational insurance company, managers reported avoiding taking more women in their sections due to fear of increased requests for time off. Mary, a 38 year old female manager of a department that has more women compared to other departments in the local bank reported:

“Actually there was a time when I was saying ...there are too many women [here] because I could see levels of absenteeism, ‘my child is sick, my husband is sick, I am sick, I have gone to this funeral at the neighbour’s... as such it’s affecting our work.”

Janet, a 46 years old female manager in the local bank reported similar views regarding the same department:

“...We have one division where there are more women than men ...and the issues that come out are the same, excuses... from women [asking for time off]. I have been in that situation okay but I think it's really a question of, when a woman puts her foot down to say that I am not doing this, others look at you as the odd one out, and they say who does she want to be like?”

In order to crosscheck the managers’ views that associated women with more requests for time off than men, I asked both male and female respondents in the second phase of the research if they had asked for time off for any kind of family responsibility during their time of employment.
The results reported here are based on the interviews in banking and insurance only due to teaching having more accommodating working hours. Table 5.8 below shows that men just like women do ask for time off for family responsibilities. Thus, perceptions (that more women than men request for time off) may not be consistent with reality.

Table 5.8: Comparison of request for time off between men and women in banking and insurance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Request for time off for family related reasons</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Those who were not asked this question</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The identified family responsibilities were taking a child, spouse or parent to hospital and attending funerals of distant and close family members. In most of these cases, respondents used their annual leave days. Two of the men who reported asking for time off for family responsibilities also reported that managers were not happy with their requests for time off. Tony, a 36 years old male respondent in the multinational insurance company explained:

“... Because I am ... African...I have responsibilities even at the village level... my grandfather had died... I had to go...yet the [managers] also needed me here ... They were not happy that I had asked for time off [to attend the funeral]. Sometimes [when] my wife is sick and they want me here but I have to take my wife to the hospital or even my children...sometimes they think that [I am] lying so I take my wife to the hospital, take her back home and come back to the office, so that I am seen to be doing a good job... I take my leave days but they still complain...”

Simeon, a 27 years old single male bank clerk in the multinational bank explained his experience with requests for time off which shows that he also does make frequent time off requests to the extent that his annual leave days’ entitlement got exhausted yet he still had needs requiring time off:
“...my brother was sick....So I asked for time off to be with him...I used my annual leave days... it happens that maybe I have to attend a funeral of someone not very much closely related.... [and] have to take annual leave [and not compassionate leave] and I found that I had finished all my annual leave days. So I was in trouble...”

These quotes show that the interviewed men just like the interviewed women request for time off for family responsibilities and face equally negative reactions from their managers. Although more of the interviewed men ask for time off than the interviewed women, on average, there is still a difference in terms of frequency for such requests made by men and women. This is so because in addition to time off requests for attending to immediate and distant family members which may be similar to men, women are also socially expected to participate in other community based activities and they do spend more time there than men in such activities as alluded to in section 5.3.2.2.

Additionally, the difference shown in the managers’ reporting more problems associated with women’s requests for time off than men may come from the men’s ability to make up for lost time in meeting targets through working long hours or over weekends. In a society with high sickness incidences and limited government support towards the sick, there is a societal need for some people, mostly women, who have to provide caring services. These women especially those in formal employment, need to be supported to be able to combine work and care roles. Yet, employers do not appreciate this and hence not provide significant support to women in their double roles.

With reference to teaching, Violet, one of the key informants in education reported that the teaching profession has no formal compassionate leave provision. If there are any bereavements, or other emergencies, Violet said that teachers “just ask for time off ...to [attend] the funeral ... for three days and [come] back...” Even in instances of child or spouse’s sicknesses, they also informally ask for time off from their head teachers. The informal arrangements for reconciling work and family are presented in section 5.4.2.
5.4.1.4 Policy surrounding transfers to follow spouse

Recently, there have been changes regarding policies guiding transfers in cases where teachers would like to follow their spouse to a different location. In the past, transfers depended on showing evidence of marriage. As such, transfers requested in line with spouses’ mobility were easily approved. This resulted in an oversupply of teachers especially in urban based schools, as mostly teachers would be asking to move out of remote, rural based schools. Due to this negative policy outcome, Rosemary, a human resource management officer at one of the education divisions reported that there has been a change and such transfers are decided upon depending on the availability of other teachers with whom to swap teaching schools. This creates problems for trailing souses. Despite not finding someone to swap with, sometimes, teachers will still be transferred to the preferred school, but mostly, these will be those that have personal links with top management, as Rosemary pointed out.

5.4.2. Informal arrangements

Apart from the above discussed formal provisions, the respondents also highlighted how informal negotiations with their immediate supervisors have helped ease the work-family conflict so encountered. The informal negotiations with head teachers for time off was highlighted by the majority of teachers and key informants as mostly helpful in the teaching career for managing work and family responsibilities:

“[From] 2001 to 2006, I had a bed ridden sister,...in my house, I took care of her and that really affected my work because every week I had to take her to the hospital and at that time I had someone to take care of her but still more I was supposed to be there. From 2009 to 2010, I also had to take care of my other elder sister, ... we simply ask for a day off like tomorrow am taking my sister to the hospital, I won’t report for work ...it depends on the head teacher] (59 year old Tinyade, retired teacher, but recalled to continue teaching)

Chipiliro, a 50 years old Female CDSS teacher explained her experience with informal arrangements:
“…My husband was sick for a long time… I … asked for permission from the head teacher to allow me report for work around 9 o’clock [instead of 7:30 am]… My husband was on [Tuberculosis] treatment but he reacted [badly] to the treatment and got paralysed and I had to be moving him about. At the same time I was nursing a baby and the other children were also very young. So the head teacher just accepted my situation … I took care of my sick husband for two years whilst working [until he passed away].”

A head teacher also confirmed these informal negotiations regarding sicknesses. She argued:

“Such are considered [based] on humanitarian grounds…you need to accept upon [assessing] the situation” (51 years old Nambewe, female primary school head teacher)

In the private sector, informal negotiations with immediate supervisors were also reported especially for short time off requests like taking a child or a spouse to a medical appointment.

However, sometimes there are also difficulties in obtaining informal permission for time off for family responsibilities in taking informal leave arrangements. Tinyade, a 61 year old female teacher commented:

“Sometimes [the head teacher] will think that you are lying until when she sees the patient. Like what used to happen in my case. They would discuss my absence in the staff room… But because there were some colleagues who would visit me to see my patient they would ask the head teacher to do the same. Then the head teacher would come and say after seeing the patient “Is it this serious? Madam, how have you been managing?”…”

One head teacher’s response confirmed the strictness in granting these informal requests for time off:

“I do make follow ups myself and sometimes I do send someone who is nearby to check if the issue is true because some ladies are clever, they can lie to you that “my child is sick” while they have some personal issues…” (Nambewe, 51 years old, female primary school head teacher).

When requests for time off have been approved whether formally or informally, employees still get paid. In cases of unauthorised absence in teaching, “responsible officers must deduct equivalent salary from wages due and payable to a civil servant in respect of any period of absence, not authorised...”(GOM, 1991, s.1:550).
Additionally, staff taking unauthorised leave, are supposed to be subjected to a disciplinary action. However, this provision is rarely used in the civil service with the Public Service Reform Commission recently noting that most absenteeism in the civil service are not authorised and staff do not face any disciplinary action which is against the Malawi Public Service Regulations (GOM., 2014g).

In the local bank, if an employee goes on unauthorised leave of up to a maximum of nine days, they are subjected to a disciplinary hearing. They then get the days’ pay deducted from their salary and are given a written warning. If the unauthorised leave is for 10 days or more, the bank may dismiss the employee. Similar approaches are also followed in the other studied organisations. However, it is very difficult for one to be dismissed due to absenteeism as people rarely proceed on unauthorised leave for fear of facing disciplinary action or losing the job altogether.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter sought out to answer three specific research questions. Firstly, the chapter aimed at assessing the extent to which the interviewed women were contingent or permanent members of the labour force. To answer this question, the analysis focussed on women’s work orientations and the value attached to their income based on their contribution to their family’s sustenance. In this regard, the findings suggest that the women interviewed had positive work orientations evidenced by the fact that most women had long uninterrupted careers and had been with their current employer for a longer time. This is despite most of them being mothers. There is also evidence for high value attached to women’s income as they contributed significantly to their family needs.

The second research question related to the expectations placed upon women in terms of the family and community roles they are to fulfil. In this case, the findings have suggested that despite being family providers, women also played a key role in managing their homes. Domestic workers and family members have been critical for enabling them to work continuously and mostly full-time despite having family responsibilities.
Nevertheless, cultural scripts of gender roles and norms emerged as key in understanding how women in formal employment combine work and family responsibilities. Although marriage and child care did not necessarily make the interviewed women leave formal employment, mostly due to the availability of affordable domestic helpers and extended family support, this does not mean that the influence of women’s family responsibilities on their careers is not significant. There are still other cultural expectations placed upon women and there are deeply entrenched norms about what women are supposed to do in a marital union and in communities. Although the interviewed women received support from their spouses to pursue their careers and indeed were expected to remain in full-time employment, this was often conditional support, that is the women were not free to make career decisions that might impact on their husbands’ career or expected domestic arrangements and may also be expected to take career decisions to support their husband’s careers, for example by becoming trailing spouses (presented in detail in Chapter 7).

The third research question relates to whether women were supported or hindered by employment practices in fulfilling their dual roles in work and family. In this regard, there is evidence for existence of both formal and informal arrangements to help women reconcile work and family roles. However, the findings also suggest that the employers do not fully appreciate the women’s need for leave or regular working time (for example in banking), thereby putting more pressure on women who have to reconcile these work expectations with their family responsibilities. The next chapter discusses these issues further focusing specifically on how different employment contexts contribute to inequalities.
Chapter 6: Employers as architects of inequalities in careers: A compare and contrast analysis of employment contexts in education and finance and insurance industries in Malawi

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses research question 2: How do different employment contexts support or hinder careers of women in formal employment in Malawi? This is done by investigating how different employment contexts produce and reproduce workplace inequalities using Acker’s (2006b) inequality regimes’ theoretical framework. Chapter 2 highlighted that an “intersectionally-sensitive” approach to studying inequalities is key in revealing the persistence of inequalities which may affect groups of men and women differently (McBride, 2015, p.7; Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1243). The evidence presented here from the two sectors in many ways, gives weight to the intersectional perspective as not only does the actual form of inequality vary but also the various practices that contribute to inequalities affect different groups of men and women differently.

This chapter focuses on recruitment, selection and promotion as the organising processes highlighted most markedly in the interviews as producing and reproducing inequalities. The analysis reveals both similarities and differences in the recruitment, selection and promotion processes and practices in the different employment contexts and identifies how these affect different groups of people. The chapter is organised as follows: the next two sections present the employment contexts, first in teaching and second in banking and insurance organisations, drawing out comparisons to differences in the employment context between the two sectors. The chapter concludes by summarising the ways in which these two different employment contexts contribute specifically to the form, extent and incidence of gender inequalities.
6.2 The employment context in teaching

This section presents findings relating to how first recruitment and selection and second promotion are done in teaching. In both cases their implications for workplace inequalities and the persistence of gender and class based inequalities are analysed taking also into account government efforts to reduce inequalities are presented.

6.2.1 Recruitment and selection in teaching

The findings suggest that recruitment in teaching is centralised and not organisationally-based. Also, recruitment has been occurring at the point of entry into teacher training rather than at the point of filling teaching job vacancies. Formal methods, namely open adverts are used to attract people for training opportunities. The MSCE requirements for joining primary teaching have been made stricter since the 2015/2016 intake as Table 6.1 below shows, based on information from adverts.

Table 6.1: Changes in MSCE requirements since 2015/16 Academic year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic year</th>
<th>MSCE requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 2015/16</td>
<td>MSCE with 1 credit(^{27}) in English, 1 pass in Mathematics and 1 pass in any science subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>MSCE with 4 credits including English and one science subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>MSCE with 6 credits which should include English, Mathematics and one other Science subject plus an aggregate of 30 points(^{28}).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>MSCE with 6 credits which should include English, Mathematics and any other science subject plus an aggregate of 36 points(^{29}).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{27}\) There are nine possible scores per subject at MSCE ranging from 1 point (highest) to nine points (lowest). Points 1 to 2 are considered distinctions, 3 to 6 credits, 7 to 8 pass and 9 is a fail.

\(^{28}\) IPTE12 advert posted on 25\(^{th}\) June on the Domasi College of Education facebook page which I accessed on 5\(^{th}\) July, 2016

\(^{29}\) IPTE13 summary of advert posted on 9\(^{th}\) July on the Malawi National Examination Board Facebook page which I accessed on 21 December, 2017
With regard to selection of primary school teacher trainees, bed space in teacher training colleges appears to be the first determinant. Then aptitude test scores, quota system and the 50:50 selection policy are used to select the candidates. Emily, the manager responsible for primary teacher training, reported that a team of officers from various government departments participate in the selection process to ensure transparency. Shortlisted candidates write aptitude tests covering numerical, communication and reasoning skills and candidates are ranked according to their scores. Selection is then based not only on the scores but also on the district’s quota and the 50:50 gender representation. Thus for each district, first the 10 best male and female candidates are selected (five males and five females) and the rest are then selected on the basis of their scores with males and females selected separately, until their district’s share of the population is filled, ensuring equal gender representation.

Three main ways are used to recruit secondary school teachers for training. Firstly, qualified primary school teachers may be trained to the Diploma in Education level. Secondly, school leavers may be trained to become secondary school teachers at Diploma level. Lastly, school leavers can be selected to pursue a degree course in education, after which they become secondary school teachers. Selection for training at diploma level is similar to that for primary level teachers i.e. there are open adverts, aptitude tests scores and the use of a district quota system and the 50:50 gender selection policy. At bachelor’s degree level, from the 2015/2016 academic year, those seeking to pursue different programs in the public University of Malawi are selected based on only their MSCE scores, the quota system plus the 50:50 selection policy. At diploma and degree levels, candidates are also expected to have six credits including English, in addition to meeting the specific requirements for their preferred courses. This requirement is responsible for girls not filling their 50 percent share in courses demanding higher scores in particular subjects like sciences, which makes it difficult to achieve 50-50 in the final selection.

The recruitment and selection process used in teaching is advantageous for equality in several ways. Firstly, advertising training vacancies openly ensures that a wider audience is reached which may bring forth a wider pool of potential candidates from which the best candidates are selected (Newell, 2005).

30 A Diploma in Education is a qualification a candidate gets after completing three years of training post-secondary school at Domasi college in Malawi
Formal recruitment methods have also been theoretically associated with more transparency (Egbert et al., 2009). Therefore, using them in teaching in Malawi is good for equal opportunities. Secondly, clear stipulation of entry requirements in the open adverts encourages merit-based recruitment. People from different backgrounds can apply, provided they meet the criteria (Bezbaruah, 2015), thereby potentially providing a level field for all potential applicants.

However, women find it difficult to join teaching due to failure to meet the MSCE requirements. For instance, the 2015 recruitment of primary school student teachers under the IPTE 11 revealed gender differences in ability to meet the training requirements. As Table 6.2 below shows, the number of females shortlisted and selected has reduced significantly in the 2017 (IPTE13) selection following the higher MSCE requirement (see Table 6.1). Although the selection still aims at achieving 50:50 representation, a reduction in the number of those meeting the criteria means that this cannot be achieved as selection for primary teacher training in 2017 shows. This is an issue of inequality as this shows that such “equal treatment laws.... do not tackle the deep-routed causes of inequality” (Walby, 2004, p.6).

Table 6.2: Candidates for primary school teacher training in 2015 and 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015 intake (based on the 2015/2016 criteria)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicants</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortlisted for aptitude tests</td>
<td>11,097</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>4580</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>15,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who wrote the aptitude test</td>
<td>5944</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>4542</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>10486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those selected</td>
<td>1669</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>1517</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>3186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 intake (based on the 2017/2018 criteria)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicants</td>
<td>7533</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>5245</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>12,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortlisted for aptitude test</td>
<td>4137</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>1325</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>5462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who wrote the aptitude test</td>
<td>2954</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>987</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>3941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those selected</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>983</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>2927</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own computation based on data from DTED

31 Women selected are less than 50 percent, despite more women writing the aptitude tests. This can be attributed to data entry errors or to female candidates scoring so low that it was not possible to offer them a space, which resulted in male candidates getting women’s space.
This is also consistent with Mambo et al.’s (2016) findings that despite affirmative action measures to increase female enrolment in higher education, significant gender disparities persist. For instance female enrolment in 2011 accounted for 46.2 percent of the total in private institutions and 34.9 in public universities. Although the numbers of women meeting minimum requirements for joining teaching has always trailed that of men, the change in requirements in 2016/17 has widened the gender gap even further, resulting in fewer women entering primary teaching in 2017. As pointed out in Chapter 1, girls’ greater domestic burdens prevent them from doing as well as boys in education (Sankhulani, 2007).

Considering the different challenges that girls from higher socioeconomic status households and those from lower socioeconomic status households face, and that those from higher socioeconomic status households are more likely to go to good schools than their counterparts in lower socioeconomic status households, it is more likely that girls in the latter category will find it even harder to meet these requirements, resulting in inequalities understood from the intersection of gender and class. Additionally, Table 6.2 shows that in 2015 more men than women had more career alternatives than women since almost half (46.4%) of the male applicants shortlisted did not appear for the aptitude test compared to only 0.8% of the female applicants.

The change in MSCE requirements is also entrenching class-based inequalities by disadvantaging students from rural-based secondary schools and mostly girls who cannot favourably compete for the limited places in public tertiary training institutions including teaching. These rural based Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) do not have suitable teaching facilities like science laboratories and have unqualified teachers (Kadzamira, 2003) resulting in high failure rates among students in these schools (Mlangeni and Chiotha, 2015) with girls being the most affected. This is so because most students going to these schools travel long distances, resulting in more girls than boys reporting high absenteeism rates which may be reflected in their poor school performance. In certain cases, students may decide to find accommodation near the schools. In order to provide for themselves financially while away from parents, girls have been reported to engage in sexual activities with men (Chisamba, 2016).
This then affects their performance in examinations. Emily, a manager responsible for teacher education confirmed the negative effect of the revised MSCE requirement on females and candidates from rural schools:

“… We have noted that most females do not qualify to become teachers... because of the revised criteria for selection... [Additionally]… if we look at the conditions in CDSSs there are no laboratories which means… sciences are not taught as seriously as in conventional secondary schools. So most of the students coming out of the CDSSs may not do very well in sciences, thereby depriving them the chance to qualify for teaching...”

This finding is consistent with a report on higher education in Malawi which pointed out that at least 91.3 percent of students pursuing higher education, whether in private or public institutions, come from the “richest quintile (20 percent) of households, while the poorest quintile of households account for just 0.7 percent of higher education enrolment” (Mambo et al., 2016,p.xv).

6.2.1.1 Government equality policies and their effect on gender and class-based Inequalities

As discussed in Chapter 3, the Malawi government, has shown commitment towards reducing inequalities in public teaching careers through the recruitment and selection processes. Both male and female teachers engaged in the second phase of the interviews highlighted how the teaching profession afforded them an opportunity to pursue a career which ensured job security amidst limited options, even if it was not a career they had intended to pursue. From these interviews, some teachers (12 out of 25) highlighted not having chosen to pursue teaching but recognised that it offered them an opportunity to get into formal employment.

32 In the first phase of the interviews, this question was not asked but came as an issue to consider after the initial analysis of data collected plus the need to include men in the sample.
This was the case for 7 out of 14 male teachers and 4 out of 11 female teachers, as illustrated in Box 6.1 below:

**Box 6.1 Why are respondents in teaching?**

“… I cannot say [that] I chose teaching …, it was a matter of having a higher degree after failing [to go to the University of Malawi]...” (Promise, 33 year old, Secondary school teacher, Single, 10 years of service, Lilongwe)

“I have to be frank with you, it’s because there are no jobs. So when [I was] joining [teaching I said to myself] aaah! I will just [do this] to get experience and later on move out...I am a linguist by profession and I would have loved to work as a linguist but I have never had a chance” (Mateyu, 29 years old, Secondary school teacher with a non-teaching qualification, 6 years of service, married, Lilongwe).

 “… I didn’t choose teaching … in Malawi jobs are hard to find” (Gracious, 27 year old Primary school teacher 3 years of service, single, Lilongwe)

“In the beginning, my ambition was to pursue a technical trade. ... It was my uncle who was [sponsoring] my education ... he enrolled me at a ... Technical College but he failed to pay for my training...so I had to pursue teaching. [So I found myself in teaching] by accident.” (John, 39 year old, Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) teacher, 16 years of service, married, Chiradzulu).

“Teaching was never my choice ... After graduating [with a teaching qualification], I thought that I would only teach for a year or two and do another course... I have always wanted to be a Chartered Accountant. It pains to be a teacher.” (Apatsa, 30 year old female secondary school teacher, 8 years of service, Married, Lilongwe).

“ [Teaching] wasn’t a priority per se; it was a means to survive... ...but because of financial reasons I didn’t sit for the [University of Malawi] entrance [exams]... When I didn’t make it to university ...I just had to take anything [that came my way]. Domasi happened to be the only way out because it was cheaper. If it wasn’t for Domasi [where I studied for a Diploma in teaching], I wouldn’t have been this person... I wouldn’t have been here. Because my parents couldn’t afford to [train me in another profession]… I didn’t have [much] choice...” (Lexa, 30 years old, Single Female Secondary School teacher, Lilongwe).

This evidence of lack of choice of formal sector jobs for men as well as women reveals the obstacles to creating opportunities especially for women, as in the government 50:50 policy for teaching, in a context where there is overall lack of professional jobs for men. Men end up taking a large share of teaching jobs, despite it being feminised in other countries (Kelleher, 2011).
In 2013 only 4 percent of people in employment were in managerial, professional technicians and associated professional occupations (GOM., 2014d). Thus, teaching offers job security to both men and women, in a context of limited formal sector job opportunities. Emily, a manager responsible for teacher education, summarised the benefits of the teaching career:

“If you compare the courses offered in Malawi... teaching is cheaper... before last year it was free.... So [all] candidates [including] those from low economic status families... would opt for [it]... and entry into the civil service is somehow automatic, they don’t have to be interviewed33 again ... Once they finish the course, they join the public sector as teachers ...”

Additionally, teaching affords women with opportunities for work-life balance, due to shorter school days (see Appendix 4) especially for those teaching in infant classes in primary schools as confirmed below:

“...last year I was teaching [in] standard three and I was finishing work at 13:15 [now I am teaching in standard 1 and] we ... finish at around 10am.”
(Martha, 26 years old, primary school teacher, Chiradzulu).

However, the government’s efforts at ensuring that people from different backgrounds access teacher training is constrained by various factors as discussed next.

**Lack of a coherent social policy due to insecure budgetary support**

Following donor aid freeze34 in 2013 (Chinsinga, 2014; Dionne, 2014 ) and inconsistent donor support, the Malawi state adopted various austerity policies. These developments are of concern in the context of gender and class based inequalities operating both independently and intersectionally. In 2015/16 primary teacher training a 20% contribution towards the actual cost of training by students

33 Interviews are yet to start for primary school teachers although these have started for secondary school teachers

34 Malawi education system has for some time been benefitting from World Bank and other donor funding, but recent donor aid freeze following the massive theft of government money-termed “cash gate scandal” in 2013 left the Ministry with limited financial capacity
was introduced in order to achieve cost sharing with the government. Before 2015/16 not only was the training free but government also offered scholarships to some students to study in diploma and degree awarding institutions based on merit. This ensured that the poor who could not afford other expensive courses could still access tertiary education through subsidised teacher training as well as an opportunity for a scholarship (GOM., 2012a). Both subsidies have now ended and although the fees in Teacher Training Colleges are lower (about US$49/per term), students from poor backgrounds were reported in 2016 to be dropping out of these institutions due to failure to pay the fees or obtain bursaries or loans which were promised when the fees were introduced. This also applied to public institutions offering secondary school teacher education. Although the number selected is no longer based only on bed space only but on classroom space, in public universities, students from poor backgrounds also have challenges meeting upkeep and tuition fee expenses which are now higher. Due to limited funding, not everyone who applies for a loan/bursary gets it and in 2015/16 only about half of the applicants received their loans (Makina, 9 May 2016; Pembamoyo, 9 April, 2016).

This therefore is feared to lead to further widening of the gap between the minority rich and the majority poor (Chisamba, 3 June, 2015). Similarly, adequately-funded teaching jobs are limited to accommodate all the newly qualified teachers despite teacher shortages in Malawi, as indicated by high pupil teacher ratios as well as by targets for training teachers (GoM., 2015c; GOM, 2008c). The teaching workforce has been growing at just one percent per year which is inadequate to reduce the average pupil/teacher ratio measured at 76:1 in 2011 to the local target of 60:1 ratio by 2017, let alone to the ideal global target of 40:1 at primary school level (UNESCO, 2014a; GOM., 2008). Unavailability of funding for jobs has resulted in primary school teachers who successfully completed training in 2013 (IPTE 8) and in 2014 (ODL cohort 3) remaining unemployed for close to three and two years respectively (GoM., 2015c). Another group, which completed training in 2015 under IPTE 9 and ODL cohort 4, only got posted to teaching schools in mid-2017 (MalaviPost, 2017). IPTE cohort 10 and ODL cohort 5 teachers who finished studies in 2016 are also yet to be employed.

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35 4,166 out of 8,226 (Malawi University of Science and Technology Facebook page posted on November, 12, 2015)
Further, secondary school teachers who qualified in 2015 remained unemployed in December 2017 (MalaviPost, 2017). Also, due to limited jobs at secondary school level, in 2017 government started for the first time advertising job opportunities (MalaviPost, 2017) and interviewing candidates before they are posted to a school. This is done so that there is a focus on subject specific teachers namely sciences and languages. This will mean that those trained to teach humanities will find it difficult to get into the teaching jobs, even after training. As women are over-represented among these, this austerity focus on decreasing public sector employment may adversely affect women.

Similarly, although the recruitment for training under IPTE continues, the ODL mode has been abandoned in 2015/2016 academic calendar amid financial difficulties. This occurred despite a continuing problem of teacher shortages especially in rural areas that necessitated the introduction of the ODL programme in the first place (see Chapter 2). In fact, the advert for the latest cohorts specifically states conditions for the programme one of which is to “teach in rural primary schools”36. Although the ODL has been abandoned, there is not adequate funding in teacher training institutions to increase intake, let alone train at full capacity as currently the “ministry only enrolls [at] 60 percent of the bed capacity” (Emily manager responsible for teacher education). Limited bed spaces means fewer people admitted for training, thereby reducing opportunities and consequently restricting access to the occupation, especially for women and those from poor households. Therefore, although the government is making efforts towards creating women’s opportunities, as long as this is not done within a supportive social policy, there may be limited meaningful impact on reducing inequalities in teaching.

**Change in MSCE requirement and quota system**

Due to limited infrastructure and reduced social spending towards training of teachers, coupled with the increase in demand for training, MSCE requirements for the student teachers was raised as highlighted in section 6.2.1 above. This change is also contributing to gender inequalities by disadvantaging women, whose

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36 An extract from IPTE12 advert posted on the Facebook page for Domasi College of Education on 25th June 2016 but accessed on 7th July 2016
performance at MSCE always trail that of men. There is also a significant reduction in women passing MSCE between 2014 (46.9 percent) and 2015 (39.9 percent) as in Table 6.3 below:

**Table 6.3: MSCE results and selection into public institutions of higher education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Female %</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Male %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat for MSCE in 2015</td>
<td>137915</td>
<td>62663</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>75252</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCE Pass in 2015</td>
<td>75411</td>
<td>30059</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>45352</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat for MSCE in 2014</td>
<td>130293</td>
<td>58170</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>72123</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCE Pass in 2014</td>
<td>71486</td>
<td>27306</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>44180</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIMA in 2015/2016</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>1005</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUANAR(^{37})</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mzuzu University</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUST(^{38})</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>91.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domasi College of Education</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Training Colleges</td>
<td>3186</td>
<td>1517</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>1669</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total selected</td>
<td>7620</td>
<td>3385</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>4235</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of the total who passed MSCE in 2014 and selected into public training institutions in 2015/2016</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>4.7 (12.4)</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of men and women who passed MSCE in 2014 and selected to public</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own computation of MANEB MSCE results and selection lists or various institutions

Table 6.3 above also shows that Malawi’s higher education system is still very small in comparison to those of other countries in the SADC region to accommodate more men and women (World Bank, 2010; Mambo et al., 2016), resulting in stiff competition among applicants. The Table further shows that in the 2014 MSCE results, 54.9 percent of the candidates qualified for the award of MSCE. Yet, it is

\(^{37}\) Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources

\(^{38}\) Malawi University of Science and Technology
only about 10.7 percent of those who passed MSCE who managed to get into the subsidised public institutions of training including teacher training schools, with girls and those from poor households being the most affected as discussed in section 6.2.1. As such tertiary education remains a privilege available to only few Malawians. But, the table also shows that a higher share (12.4 percent) of all women who passed MSCE in 2014 were selected than is the case for men (9.6 percent). The quota system continues to attract criticisms with the major argument being that brighter students are left out for the sake of achieving equity in higher education through the use of district quotas (Khamula, 2016). The system is also feared to entrench class inequalities as those from poor households compete for space in their districts with those from the rich families (hence with access to good education) (Nyondo, 2016).

**Monopsonistic employer power and its effects**

The findings also suggest that the government has monopsonistic employer power. Since almost 99% of trained teachers were employed by government in 2012/13 (GOM., 2014b), this makes the Malawi government fit a typical monopsony employer in as far as teaching is concerned. The monopsonistic employer power is manifested in four ways namely: low pay, delay in paying teachers, not allowing teachers to engage in small businesses and making it difficult for teachers to change to a non-teaching job within the civil service. To begin with, the findings suggest that primary school teachers in Malawi receive low pay compared to other professionals in civil service who do not have to depend on the basic pay only. The teachers argued that although their basic pay was the same and in certain cases higher\(^39\) than other civil servants at a similar grade, a teacher’s total income is low and does not match with the demands of the job nor does it meet their basic needs. This is so because other civil servants were reported to have additional sources of pay in form of allowances obtained from field work, external travel and workshops. Although this additional income varies from one month to another, the other civil servants for the most part do not have to depend solely on their monthly salary,

\(^{39}\) Rural based teachers receive an additional hardship allowance amounting to K10,000.00
which is the case with teachers. Patrick, a 29 year old male secondary school teacher explained the difference:

“I can give you an example of a friend who was here [as a secondary school teacher] but is now at the [Education] division. He was telling me that he is making an average of K300 000\(^{40}\) a month”

This tends to disadvantage especially those just entering the profession who “earn less than one-third of teachers in the highest pay category” (UNESCO 2014, p.29). According to UNESCO (2014b), a teacher who is the main breadwinner and has at least four family members to support, needs to earn at least US$10 per day to keep the family above the poverty line of US$2 per day per person. In the context of Malawi, a lowest paid primary school teacher gets a gross monthly pay of MK74,309.00 (US4 per day before PAYE and approximately $3 after PAYE). An urban basic needs basket computed by Centre for Social Concern, showed that a family of six in Malawi needed around K120 000.00 ($168) per month as of March 2015 (Chauwa, Nyasa Times, 17 March, 2015). This means that the lowest paid primary school teachers have a shortfall of almost half of what’s required to meet basic needs. Most of the teachers echoed Lexa’s view:

“If you are joining teaching, you are signing a ticket to living below the poverty line. Always queuing in the loan facilities and the loan sharks” (Lexa, a 30 year old, single female secondary school teacher).

This finding is consistent with Kadzamira (2006) who argued that teachers in Malawi are underpaid and this is the main factor affecting their motivation and morale. The finding also concurs with (UNESCO, 2014b) which argued that teachers in some countries including Malawi do not receive enough pay to prevent their households from falling into poverty and that those entering the profession as well as those teachers with no promotion opportunities in Malawi, “barely have enough to live on” (p.256). The already low pay keeps falling due to high inflation with the daily pay for lowest paid primary school teachers remaining at an equivalent of US$4 since 2007/2008 (UNESCO, 2014a).

\(^{40}\) This is almost three times the gross salary of a Diploma holder secondary school teacher as presented in Table 6.4 below
Table 6.4 below compares pay in teaching and banking, showing in general that pay in banking is higher than in teaching.

Table 6.4: Entry level pay in teaching compared to banking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry level</th>
<th>Entry Gross pay (MK/month)</th>
<th>Entry pay(^{41}) (US$ equivalent/month)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary school teacher (Certificate- Grade L)</td>
<td>74,309</td>
<td>105.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school teacher (Diploma- Grade J)</td>
<td>113,859</td>
<td>161.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school teacher (BA degree)(Grade I)</td>
<td>177,980</td>
<td>252.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical level-bank(Diploma)</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>191.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical level-bank(BA Degree)</td>
<td>215,000</td>
<td>305.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Chilabade (2015) and local bank salary data. US$ dollar equivalent is as at 5\(^{th}\) July, 2016 accessed from the Reserve Bank of Malawi’s website.

Secondly, teachers are mostly never paid on time. Civil servants in Malawi are supposed to be paid by the 27\(^{th}\) of every month. However, teachers sometimes get their pay as late as the 11\(^{th}\) of the next month (Nyasa Times Reporter, October 11, 2012). Official reasons given for this delay range from challenges with managing teachers’ pay roll\(^{42}\) due to their large numbers, removing fake government workers\(^{43}\) in the teacher’s pay roll or implementing reforms as part of the decentralization process\(^{44}\). Unofficial reasons are also cited, that when government is having financial problems, it can easily tamper with teachers’ salaries without the significant repercussions than can arise with other public servants\(^{45}\). There are also delays in paying newly employed teachers, who can stay at least 3 to 6 months before they get their first pay. This is mostly attributed to inefficiencies in putting new teachers on pay roll, who are recruited in large numbers at a time. The salary arrears also take long before they are settled (Muwake et al., 2016).

\(^{41}\) As at 27\(^{th}\) November, 2015
\(^{44}\) https://malawi24.com/2016/12/04/teachers-union-malawi-laments-late-salaries/
\(^{45}\) https://malawi24.com/2016/12/04/teachers-union-malawi-laments-late-salaries/
This tends to entrench class-based inequalities as only those with better off relatives can be supported by their families during the time they are not receiving pay. Those without relations to help out, end up turning to *katapila*, loan sharks, who charge exorbitant interest rates. Coupled with low pay, when they get to start receiving their pay, they continue to survive on *katapila* to cope with the country’s high costs of living (Chauwa, 17 March, 2015). Legal money lending institutions like banks normally attach prohibitive conditions to their loans that teachers cannot easily satisfy. Lastly, government has also made it difficult for teachers to change jobs within the civil service despite retraining or getting the necessary skills for the non-teaching jobs. This restricts opportunities to change careers by pursuing other courses whilst teaching.

The government has been able to retain its monopsonistic teaching labour market power due to three major reasons. The first is limited job opportunities which made most of the respondents, see teaching as their way out of poverty. Other teachers who had contemplated leaving teaching reported that alternative job opportunities were difficult to find. This was the case for 15 out of 25 teachers interviewed in the second phase. This consisted of 9 out of 14 men and 6 out of 11 women. These shared Mateyu’s views:

“….I have applied and attended interviews [for alternative jobs] but … I haven’t been picked for [another] job...” (Mateyu 29years old, Secondary school teacher with a non-teaching qualification, 6 years of service, married.).

Secondly, after teachers have been teaching for some time, they find it difficult to move out but would rather wait until they get another government job. This is because they do not want to lose their years served in government for pension benefit reasons, as these are based on the employer and the employee contributions (GOM, 2010b). As Promise explained:

“I can only take a job within government because I don’t want to forfeit my 10 years that I have worked in government … [so] yeah I am stuck because I have to weigh the options.” (Promise a 33 year old male secondary school teacher who has served for 10 years).
Lastly, all the teachers also reported that due to short official school hours, teaching was a good profession for women with family responsibilities. At least three teachers interviewed in the second phase cited family responsibilities as a reason for not leaving teaching, as Apatsa expressed below:

“My child is still young [so] I have relaxed my plans a bit... I feel that it is not yet time for me to leave [teaching]....” (Apatsa, 30 year old female secondary school teacher, 8 years of service, Lilongwe).

### 6.2.2. Promotion in teaching

In order to promote teachers, first an open internal advert is sent out, clearly stipulating the criteria for applicants. Promotions are decided first on the level of experience as teachers are expected to have been at current grade at least for four years before they can apply for promotion. Those who meet this requirement are then shortlisted for a written exam followed by an oral interview for movement from the lowest two grades in primary school teaching hierarchy (i.e. from PT4 to PT3 and from PT3 to PT2). Promotion to higher grades in primary schools and all grades in secondary schools is only through oral interviews.

By following a set criteria and openly advertising the opportunities, promotion in teaching has traits of meritocracy, hence with a potential to reduce any inequalities. However, basing final promotion decisions on how one presents oneself during oral interviews and not on job performance itself may produce biased results against female teachers who mostly teach infants which is evidence of vertical segregation. Analysis of the 2015 education management information system data shows that a majority (55%) of teachers teaching in infant classes were women. On the other hand, only 23.8% of the teachers teaching in senior section of primary school (standards 6, 7 and 8) classes were women. Yet, in infant classes, Chichewa is largely used as a language of instruction. This limits the extent to which women can ably express themselves during oral interviews for promotion which are conducted in English and where largely how one presents him/her self orally determines whether s/he gets promoted or not. In this regard, analysis of the minutes for the 2013 promotion results for primary school teachers show that only 28% of all those
promoted were female, less than their overall share in primary school teaching of 40%. It was also discovered that the gender quota requirement in promotion as stipulated by the gender equality act of 2013 are not being used in promotions.

Although there may be other reasons why more female teachers teach infants in Malawi, associating teaching infants with mothering could be one possible explanation. This is consistent with an argument that there is “a long lasting appreciation of the relationship between teaching as women’s work and related to mothering, where the positioning of women close to children is both normal (needing no analysis) and acceptable (needing no critique)” (Gannerud, 2001, p.61). This maintains gender inequalities. As Moreau (2014) noted, this results in hierarchical arrangement of teachers guided by what and whom they teach criteria. In Malawi, the ‘what’ can apply to both subjects taught (especially in secondary schools) and the ‘whom’ they teach can refer to teaching in primary schools and specifically infant classes. Thus whilst elsewhere “women have traditionally represented the majority of teachers in primary schools, where ‘caring’ trumps the ability to ensure academic preparation of young children, and they are expected to demonstrate the mothering role they have traditionally held in society,” (Sperandio, 2014, p.50), in Malawi, female teachers suffer a double blow. Not only do they constitute less than half of the teacher population but a majority of them also teach infants. Malawian female teachers are underrepresented at both national level as well as in senior classes but overrepresented in infant classes. Teaching is thus segregated by gender, consistent with the global picture.

Additionally, respondents reported that teaching in infant classes is always undervalued and by using a criteria in promotion that disadvantages women who teach in infant classes, this systematises the undervaluation of teaching infants. Those teaching senior classes held the view that the women who taught in infant classes were afraid of handling senior classes. Yet, teachers in infant classes reported not choosing to teach in such classes, but were allocated the same by the head teacher. The sample had four women teaching infants and all shared Martha’s view below with the perception associated with teaching in infant classes:
“When I was assigned standard one some people were saying “teaching in standard one will limit your knowledge and ability to think because you deal with young children … and you can’t think … that [deep].” (Martha, 26 years old, primary school teacher, Chiradzulu).

However, despite being undervalued, there is a lot of impact that infant teachers make on children as Lontia explained:

“[Teaching in] standard one is tough ... because ... the children do not know how to write. This is different from the other classes like standard 5 that I have taught before, where children already know letters and numbers but those in standard one, you have to teach them from scratch, so it is difficult...” (Lontia, 31 years old, primary school teacher, Chiradzulu).

In secondary schools, gender differences exist in terms of actual subjects that female teachers teach, with men dominating in all the subjects. Analysis on teacher data collected from the two divisions studied show that female teachers mostly teach languages (31%) followed by humanities (26.4%). The least proportion of female teachers (17%) teach science subjects. Yet, as the respondents reported, teachers qualified to teach languages and sciences in secondary schools are prioritised in recruitment, promotion and other upgrading opportunities. In fact, all the nine teachers (both men and women) interviewed whilst pursuing further education at Domasi were studying languages.

The practice in promotion also requires that those that have been promoted should move to another school, which may be in another location. This geographical mobility requirement disadvantaged female teachers who were trailing spouses, some of whom forfeited promotion because they did not want to relocate without their families, some citing financial constraints and others social and religious requirements for a family to be together. I revert to a more detailed presentation on trailing spouses in Chapter 7.

Furthermore, both men and women in teaching highlighted that upward career mobility was tightly structured with limited opportunities for promotion as there are more people competing for a few positions, especially at the lower level positions.
Additionally, promotion freezes necessitated by financial constraints are common. There is also evidence of male and female teachers being at a lower grade whilst holding a qualification that would otherwise earn them a higher grade. This was because the automatic promotion based on acquisition of higher qualifications is no longer applicable due to lack of funded positions at higher levels. In the study, three respondents were in that situation.

There were also other teachers that had worked or were currently working at a higher position whilst being employed and paid on a lower level grade. Over half of both male teachers (8 out of 14) and female teachers (17 out of 31) had been employed on these administrative work arrangements which did not provide any extra pay and which although supposedly providing a stepping stone in their career, did not always translate into positive career experiences. The primary school teachers teaching in CDSS thought that such arrangements would provide opportunities for upgrading their qualifications to at least a Diploma level. But as the experiences of 47 year old James showed, this is not always the case. Despite working for a total of 23 years and having applied for a Diploma course nine times, he had not been able to become a qualified secondary school teacher. One of the female respondents had also accepted to become a head teacher under administrative arrangements, as she was of the impression that “those who had accepted to work [at that position] will be promoted to that grade [automatically]” (42 year old Ndaziona). Unfortunately, this did not happen for Ndaziona despite being in that position for four years.

For Paulo promotion opportunities were limited in both primary and secondary school teaching. Having worked at a primary school for about 15 years without a promotion, Paulo applied to teach at a CDSS where he thought, like James, that he would be prioritised for a Diploma programme to qualify as a secondary school teacher which was necessary for promotion within the CDSS. He had taught at the CDSS for three years before the advert for a Diploma programme came out but according to the advert, the MSCE must have been taken within 10 years so that long serving teachers like Paulo could not be considered. During the research period, Paulo was back teaching at a primary school. He explained:
“[When] the advert came out for PT3 promotions, the requirement [was that those promoted whilst teaching at a community Day Secondary School should be willing to go back and teach at a primary school]. I was [promoted]... that’s why I decided to [come back] to [teach at a] a primary school. Teaching at a Community Day Secondary School was very enjoyable but staying there meant ... no promotion....” (Paulo, 43 years old, male primary school teacher, Chiradzulu).

Other promotions in teaching (from grade P5) are political appointments. Two interviewees, Annabel (Grade P5) and Amy (Grade P7) expressed the view that promotion beyond the P5 grade would be difficult as it is the state president who appoints to such positions. Therefore, political interference is critical in determining who gets to positions above P5 (Dzimbiri, 2016). Appointments may be made that ignore public service staff establishment levels, budgetary considerations as well as gender equality since such appointments are more likely to be made in favour of male political cronies. This finding is, however, consistent with existing literature that has shown that “women further along in their careers face subtle barriers to advancement that diminish their work opportunities” (Schneer and Reitman, 1994, p.199).

Also, it is very difficult for serving teachers to get government funding for further education critical for promotion due to high demand for such opportunities and government’s budgetary constraints as government has always depended on donor funding for most of the teacher upgrading courses (World Bank, 2010). Due to limited job opportunities, some with non-teaching qualifications find themselves joining teaching. Such teachers will never be considered for a promotion unless they complete one year of training to obtain a University Certificate of Education (UCE). Patrick, a 29 year old teacher with a non-teaching qualification did not hide his frustration:

“I have never and will never be promoted until I go for University Certificate of Education... that is where my frustration is. I have been working for six years but I have never been given that chance... for me to go to Chancellor College and pay K300,000.00 [for tuition], [meet] accommodation, transport costs and other studying expenses I cannot find that money. So we always bank on government to fund us of course they send [some teachers] every year but they are just a few...”
Further, a review of adverts and minutes on promotions show that some positions are named in a way that can be interpreted as targeting men only, hence being overtly discriminatory. For instance the head teacher position is advertised as ‘headmaster’ position. Although in some settings “language obscures difference and inequality” (Acker 2006a, p.200), it may also maintain inequalities as people can be “sensitive to the linguistic forms of job titles,” (Liben et al., 2002, p.815). Thus these gender markings of job titles can send signals that such positions are for male teachers only (Moran, 1992). Lastly, when a promotion is awarded it still takes time to get a salary increment let alone receive salary arrears. For example those promoted in 2013 had not been given salary adjustment by the end of 2016.

6.3 The employment context in banking and insurance organisations

This section presents the findings on the employment context in banking and insurance highlighting how recruitment, selection and promotion is done and how these processes contribute to producing or reproducing workplace gender and class inequalities. The ways in which the processes and their effects differ from those described above in teaching are highlighted throughout.

6.3.1. Recruitment and inequalities

Unlike in teaching, recruitment in banking and insurance is organisationally-based and aims at filling vacant positions. However, as for teacher training, there are minimum educational requirements for joining banking and insurance organisations:

“We require a good MSCE with 5 credits plus a diploma, or certificate in a relevant field [like] computing, accounting ... but these days you also see even Bachelor’s degree holders coming forward, so we [hire] them.” (Chikutumbwe, Head of Human Resources, local bank)

“For clerical [positions we require] those with an MSCE plus an insurance certificate.” (Phiri, Financial controller, local insurance company)

“For clerical positions, the minimum qualification is a diploma... At [the moment]... we take any kind of diploma ... but we [prioritise] business related diplomas like accounting... and information technology…” (Andrew, Human resource Manager, multinational insurance company).
In the two banks studied, unlike in teaching, external recruitment for entry level positions does not involve open adverts but instead is done informally through ‘write ins’ or making unsolicited applications whereby applicants submit their dossiers without waiting for an advert for a vacancy. These are then filed and processed whenever vacancies arise (Werbel and Landau, 1996). Use of informal recruitment allows for self-selection by the potential applicants, resulting in systematic exclusion of certain people, thereby producing and entrenching inequalities.

This is consistent with Atkinson and Hills (1998), who argued that employers’ actions may result in exclusion of certain people. This is so because information about job vacancies is communicated through interpersonal networks and mostly word of mouth rather than through formal means. This has different outcomes for men and women as networks may help women less often than men because women may have less access to influential people (Drentea, 1998; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012), resulting in gender based inequalities.

Additionally, informal external recruitment methods also contribute to class-based inequalities. Those from lower socioeconomic status households are more likely to lack access to information, especially those based in the rural areas where it is difficult to hear about job opportunities, which are mainly in urban areas. It is even more difficult for these groups to join organisations like banks when openings are not advertised. Those in rural areas, most of whom are poor also have limited opportunities for studying banking and related courses as they may not know what courses are offered, by which institutions and lack the financial capacity to study such courses especially due to their limited chances of entering public universities. Thus, banks and insurance organisations in Malawi may be described as being “persistently middle class” in character (Sommerlad et al., 2010, p.42). Further, gender and class may also intersect to produce inequalities as most women from poor households will not be able to obtain the good MSCE in addition to the professional qualifications that are required. As discussed earlier on, girls do not do well in MSCE with those from poor backgrounds being the most affected as they do not have an opportunity to go to good schools to be able to concentrate on their studies.
Additionally, analysis of employee data in the local bank also shows the existence of regional differences. In Table 6.5 below, the representation of the smallest region, the Northern region at 27.1 percent of the workforce is more or less similar to that for the largest regions’ share, the central region, at 28.3 percent. These regional inequalities may also intersect with class as the northern region has fewer poor people than the other regions. People from the north are also better educated than those from the other regions. The trend is similar in terms of gender, with the North’s share of women employees being 29.4 percent, similar to that for the central region at 30.3 percent.

Table 6.5: Percentage of the population in local bank showing regional and gender inequalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own computation based on data from local bank and Population and Housing Census data of 2008

Relying on personal contacts to get a job is common in Malawi. The 2013 Labour force survey revealed that at least one third (33.8 percent) of the respondents got their jobs or business activities through family friends and acquaintances. Only 6 percent found their job or started a particular business through formal methods like adverts/press/internet. This finding provides qualitative support to a quantitative study in another African context (Tanzania) that found that “informal methods are primarily applied for low-ranking positions” (Egbert et al. (2009)’s p.iii).
For supervisory and other higher-level positions, the local bank used both formal and informal methods. Where the recruitment was external, this was mainly through head hunting, which can be characterised as “a recruitment practice of finding and attracting the potential candidates from direct competition” (Ghandi, 2016, p.20). Lameck, a 40 year old male who is currently in a junior managerial position explained how he got his first job in the local bank at a supervisory level:

“It was through headhunting, I was working with [another] Bank and they were looking for someone who was working in the areas that I have expertise in. So they just uprooted me [from my previous job to come to [this] bank.”

This is consistent with what happens in industrialised countries, where also mostly informal methods are used for filling high-ranking positions and detailed information about the applicants is needed to inform the recruitment decision (Gorter and Van Ommeren, 1999). Unlike banks, the insurance companies studied mostly used formal means to attract external candidates by openly advertising their vacancies for entry level positions.

### 6.3.2 Selection and implications on gender and class based inequalities

In the two banks, shortlisted candidates go through an intensive and competitive selection process with up to four levels of assessment comprising written tests and oral interviews. In the insurance organisations, only an oral interview is used. The selection process purports to be strongly meritocratic in both cases. As Rupia et al. (2012) confirmed, by emphasising performance during these assessments, rather than gender, ethnicity and class, there is the potential for moving beyond stereotypes and hence providing an environment in which all applicants can compete fairly. All 18 employee respondents in banking and insurance organisations in the second round of interviews were asked to state whether or not they went through interviews to get their first job in the current organisation and 15 answered in the affirmative.

Among the three respondents who did not go through interviews to get their first job in the current organisation, two were men from the local bank and one was a woman from the multinational bank. An account from Thoko, a 36 years old male clerk in the local bank confirms this:
“I … got a call from [the bank] [asking] me to join them... I did not go through interviews... …”

Similarly, Lameck, a 40 year old male described what he had as a small chat and not a formal interview in order to get his supervisory level job.

The case of one woman, Aggie, who did not attend interviews, may be more justified due to her prior experience with the company as she had previously worked with the bank on attachment during university holidays. If selection processes permit employers’ discretionary behaviour, they may “select people who resemble them closely, a process known as homosociability” (Kanter, 1977, cited by Bezbaruah, 2015, p.110). In a male-dominated environment like in the studied organisations, this may imply that male employers would hire other men. In a context where regionalism is an issue, like in the local bank, people may be hired based on their regional grouping. Unlike in teaching where selection follows laid out procedures to minimise gender disparities, in the local bank and multinational insurance company, a different picture emerged, highlighting gender-based discrimination in selection as expressed below:

“It is more worrisome that more women are joining [the bank] ... most managers are complaining... they... don’t want more women because ... when they apply for maternity leave [at the same time ] there will be a crisis [and]women complain too much about child care... even female managers ... complain [that] women are problematic, ... When we are posting women to the departments they say ‘if it’s a woman don’t post her to my division I will need to have a male employee’ …” (Chikutumbwe, Head of Human Resources, Male, local bank).

“I ... received a complaint ... because of pressure of work... one head of department said ‘any new vacancies I don’t want ladies... I am fed up...’” (Lucy, Female, Head of Human Resources, female Multinational insurance company).

Two respondents in the banks also pointed out that job interviews have questions that check candidates’ ability to work anywhere when successful. As Sommerlad et al. (2010) observed, such questions during interviews may mean that married women may not be offered a job that requires them to relocate. Mary explained:

“…when you are going through interviews they will [ask] you that you know the opening is in Kasungu, your husband is here, would he allow you to go? And most of the times women would say yes. Why? Because they want the [job]. Once they get it they then come back and say hey my husband is in
Blantyre, why am I in Kasungu…? Now with that, the [panellists] will always say “aah the position is in Kasungu, her husband stays here [in Blantyre, we] don’t think [that] she would want to go,” as such you are already side-lined based on that” (36 year old Mary, middle manager, local bank).

Although discrimination may not be openly used in making selection decisions, it may still creep in and influence selection. This may then partially explain for instance why out of all the people who were offered a job in the local bank in 2015, women constituted only 38.9 percent.

Similar to teaching, there is also evidence of vertical segregation in banks and insurance organisations where men are mostly in higher positions and women are mostly in lower positions. In the local insurance company men dominate at each hierarchical level although their share is highest at middle manager level (see figure 6.1).

![Gender distribution at different levels in the local insurance organisation](image)

**Figure 6.1: Gender distribution at different levels in the local insurance organisation**

**Source:** Own computation based on employee data

In the multinational insurance organisation, despite 50:50 representation at executive level, women are underrepresented at the other positions, as Figure 6.2 below shows.
In the local bank, the proportion of females declines from about 45 percent in senior clerical positions to 10 percent in management at executive level (see figure 6.3).

This is consistent with what April et al. (2007) had found in another Sub-Saharan African country, South Africa, where there are not many women holding executive positions, implying vertical gender segregation. Furthermore, like in teaching, the findings suggest that men and women in banking and insurance organizations were employed in different jobs. In some case these jobs were lower skilled and routine.
but in other case there was also evidence of undervaluation. In the local bank more women worked in routine and less status jobs in the operations section:

“Women are mostly in operations. Operations is ‘back office’… they receive … cheques from customers from the service centres and then they take them to this back office so that they make calls to check with the individuals like to ask ‘have you drawn this cheque?’... (Janet, 47 years old, female manager, local bank).

The background to operations section is interesting with negative repercussions on women as Mary, a female manager responsible for the section, explained:

“…operations section was seen as a dumping place. If there [was] a non-performer in a service centre they would say, this person should go to operations, if there is someone who is always absent, they would say this one should go to operations. So operations [section] was just receiving and now it has become my problem... It has a lot of women”

Even in the supervisory positions, work was routinised and monotonous. Ellen, a 45 year old female respondent was one of the supervisors in the operations section. Having worked with the local bank for 15 years, she was currently at the second supervisory level but was still involved in clearing cheques and vouchers. Apart from routinised work, more people were at clerical level thereby having more staff earning low pay. This is consistent with Acker, (2006a), who argued that the majority of women who work in banks do jobs with less status and low pay.

In the multinational insurance company, more women (13) than men (8) were in sales jobs and this was attributed to women finding it easier to sell. However, most of these sales jobs are temporary and people’s continued employment with the company depends on insurance policies sold. Most of these jobs are also non-salaried with no basic pay, which means they rely on commissions, which may be challenging sometimes due to expectations to work at night. Even for the salaried sales staff, progression is limited due to limited positions in the sales jobs hierarchy. Moreover, unlike their colleagues in mainstream insurance, they cannot be prioritised in company-funded training in preparation for a future opening at a higher level which is only open to those with insurance qualifications. This suggests that their sales jobs are being undervalued in comparison to the insurance jobs.
Similarly, the multinational bank had more women doing sales and service-related functions:

“... the commercial division ... when compared to IT, finance and other departments has ...more women than men ... because it is a sales and service role ...we are talking about bank tellers, customer service officers, customer service assistants” (Andrew, Male, Human Resource Manager, multinational bank)

By having more women in sales related jobs, this could be seen that these two organisations are still guided by stereotypes in hiring certain people for particular jobs. Moreover, positions like bank tellers are associated with lower pay and limited advancement opportunities (Acker, 2006a; Prather, 1971).

In the local insurance company more women worked in finance-related jobs:

“... It is ... a deliberate policy by the company... because we are looking at... the integrity of the people that are handling finance issues and traditionally women are considered to be ... [more] loyal than men when it comes to handling finance issues...” (Phiri, Male, Financial Controller-also responsible for HRM functions)

However, like the multinational insurance case, in local insurance it is mostly those that are in insurance occupations that are prioritised in terms of financial support (and do not have to pay back the loan) when studying for higher insurance qualifications and also have opportunities for promotion:

“... what is important within the organization is that for all those that want to excel they need to ...study [insurance] because the [industry’s]regulator, the Reserve Bank [of Malawi] values studying [insurance] as one of the element for one to assume big positions” (Phiri, Male, Financial controller- also responsible for HRM functions).

“It is difficult to get funding for upgrading qualifications [in other fields]...However, the company gives a refund on direct expenses towards studying for a higher insurance qualification after passing exams in insurance” (Donna, female, 32 years old, local insurance)

By not giving the same attention to career advancement processes for non-insurance occupations, mostly done by women, the jobs done by most of the women in the local insurance may also be undervalued.
6.3.3 Promotion in banking and insurance and implications on gender inequalities

Three main ways of filling higher positions internally were highlighted in the banks and insurance organisations, namely internal adverts, supervisor recommendations and succession plans. These are presented in Box 6.2 below.

**Box 6.2 Main ways of filling higher positions**

“When a higher position falls vacant, the first opportunity will be given to the internal staff ... with the required qualifications.... We also have a succession plan: for each and every position, there are two possible successors... to allow for continuity of services.” (Chikutumbwe, Male, Head of human resources, the local bank)

“We have a succession plan, each position has a successor. We identify critical positions first ... If we find a successor from within, we start grooming them for that position and we have a time period within which the potential successor should be ready. If we do not have that successor ... when that position falls vacant [we] recruit from outside. So when [we] have that succession plan when that role becomes vacant there is no need to advertise because [we] already have someone [ready to] take up that position. When it is not a critical position and someone has just resigned and in terms of the succession plan, may be someone is not ready, [we] advertise but first of all [we] advertise internally and we can only advertise outside if we have failed to identify someone from within” (Lucy, Female, head of Human resources multinational insurance).

“The position is advertised in our internal memos and people are advised to apply. They consider such things as qualifications, experience... people are called for interviews and then successful candidates are picked... There is also another process. ... when there is a vacancy, someone who is considered suitable for the position is offered the job” (Ellen, 45 years old, local bank).

In practice however, the internal adverts are rarely used, with the supervisor recommendations being the most common way of promoting people:

“Promotions go with your superiors... recommending you to move to the next grade... [They] are based on... performance...they do not advertise for promotion, otherwise everyone will rush for it.... We do half year reviews of performance, then end of year reviews, so it depends on how someone has scored during those reviews... plus of course the output of one’s team...” (Nangozo, a 53 year old female middle level manager in a multinational insurance)
Yet, use of supervisor recommendations to effect promotion may be biased, as several suitable employees may not be given a chance to compete. They are also associated with lack of transparency in terms of how people get promoted as expressed below:

“... I don’t even have an idea ... I think the problem is that they don’t expose much with regard to the criteria they use to promote people.... (Takondwa, 45 years old, female, Multinational Insurance Company, Lilongwe)

This lack of transparency was also confirmed in the local insurance company by Naphumisa, a female Executive Secretary, who also handled some HR functions:

“I hear [staff asking] .... I have this [qualification] why [haven’t I been promoted]. I feel the way we do it is not the right one. We should have been advertising internally and they should compete then when we choose someone I don’t think they would complain …may be the way we do it is not transparent…”

As Sommerland et al., (2010) observes, transparent implementation of formal processes are a pre-requisite for achieving fairness in an organisation. Although this study shows evidence of both men and women obtaining promotions through supervisory recommendations, women’s recommendations by male managers have been found to be rare and to take longer to materialise (Sommerlad et al., 2010). Moreover, when they do occur, evidence in this study suggests that these meet with men’s resistance who insinuate sexual relationships between a male manager and a promoted female employee or that women are being favoured:

“this place is good to develop one’s career but... you have to be tactical in doing things....because office politics is too much...There is a room for women’s [[growth] but not for men... it’s a mystery to explain it... but it’s the way things are led….. … am sorry to say so because some leaders are men, so to give a position to someone, someone has to show the body …they want to protect their position so [they would not want to] have many men following them, they have to push them out by frustrating them so that they can ... maintain their positions. That’s the tactic.” (Tony, 36years old, male, team leader, multinational insurance company).

“...we have policies that are favouring women, there are groups which are special for women and when women are doing well, they are even better placed to get managerial positions than men” (Bizwick, 38 year old, male, middle level manager).
Tony and Bizwick’s views above also demonstrate hostile sexism (Glick and Fiske, 1997). By portraying women as being favoured, such views imply that women do not necessarily deserve the promotions. They also suggest that women lack competence to achieve promotion through their own hard work (Glick, 2013). Unlike in teaching, there is also evidence that the private sector organisations plan staff’s careers through personal development plans and provision of educational loans which get refunded upon successful completion of a course on top of a salary increment (10% of current salary in the local bank).

In the multinational insurance company, some employees are put on ‘fast track’ to obtain a higher insurance qualification within a certain period in readiness for a future managerial position with the organisation’s full financial support. Those on ‘fast track’ are clearly more likely to be the ones included in succession plans. Unfortunately, neither the process of selecting for the ‘fast track’ programme nor for succession plans in both the local bank and the multinational insurance company is transparent.

Although not prioritised in professional development opportunities, those considered not doing say mainstream banking or insurance jobs (e.g. sales and human resource management functions) are also given an opportunity for an educational loan for studies until they complete a bachelor’s degree or its equivalent. Despite that these are expected to pay back the loan when those in mainstream functions do not have to pay back upon successful completion of studies, this still shows evidence of a combination of individuals planning their own careers and the organisations planning targeted individual’s careers.

Further, it appears that sometimes promotion in the studied organisations can be merit based thereby providing an environment good for all employees to progress (Rupia et al., 2012; Bezbaruah, 2015). However, these seemingly neutral attributes may disadvantage women. As Bezbaruah (2015, p.68) noted in the context of Indian banks, performance-based promotions “ignores the gender division of labour that defines care as primarily women’s responsibility.”
This gendered division of labour may make it difficult for women to put in more time at work so as to meet set targets, something that was also observed in banking and finance organisations studied. Elements of performance, for instance working hard and improving professional qualifications are associated with long hours of working and studying.

All the respondents in banking and insurance reported that they experience work pressures which makes them work long hours. Although official working times were mostly from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday, in the banks on average during the weekdays, employees reported to work for 11 hours, almost three hours more than the statutory requirement.

Additionally, bankers, especially those in service centres, also work on Saturdays. This is meant to be for four hours only but in certain cases extends to eight hours. Working time in insurance was shorter- nine hours on average in the multinational insurance, eight in the local insurance company where those who worked beyond 4.30 pm were also given extra pay. In contrast in the local bank only those in clerical positions were reported to be receiving extra pay and in the multinational bank, only those working beyond 8 pm received extra pay.

Work pressure was specifically felt by women with younger children especially due to limited leave arrangements in the banks and insurance organisations unlike in teaching as also presented in Chapter 5. Additionally, working long, irregular and often unsocial hours made it difficult for women to achieve work-life balance in these organisations. This finding therefore suggest that unlike in teaching where opportunities for work-life balance are available, these are limited in banking and insurance organisations studied. This is consistent with a study by Delina and Raya (2013), based on another developing country, India, which revealed work-life balance challenges associated with working hours among Information Technology sector professionals. As pointed out in Chapter 5, employees that utilised work-life balance initiatives like annual leave in local bank and multinational insurance company were not allowed to go on leave for longer period at a time thereby challenging work-life balance among respondents.
This finding is therefore consistent with a study by Mordi et al. (2013) based on managers in Nigerian banks, which revealed that senior managers encouraged the culture of working long hours among middle-level managers.

Working long hours is a feature of male-dominated organisations which may lead to ‘presenteeism’ - the tendency to remain at work longer than required (Simpson, 1998). Employees engage in presenteeism due to uncertainty over promotion opportunities, quest for achieving targets as well as to merely show that they are physically available. Presenteeism can yield undesirable results as employees compete over who stays longest in the office and such outcomes have important gender implications (Simpson, 1998).

Additionally, the balance score card method of assessing performance specifically mentioned in local bank and multinational insurance company can also result in unhealthy competition, discouraging teamwork among employees which may also lead to both physical and emotional exhaustion due to pressure to meet targets. The work pressures and the requirement to work long hours made most of the younger, single respondents specifically in insurance organisations to delay starting a family until after they attain the highest professional qualification to secure their careers:

“I am currently single...because of the way I have planned my life... ... in between school, work, relationship, the time is very limited. If I am going to commit to a relationship, I need to give it time... I am focussing on my career right now...” (Kerita 22 years old, female, multinational insurance company.)

“I am not yet married because I want to [complete] my studies first... marriage [has its own] challenges so I don’t want to mix challenges from studies and challenges from marriage. I want to [obtain] my [Advanced] Diploma first...” (Mphatso, 27 years old, male, local insurance company.)

“...juggling studies and work….. I think... if I had kids...I wouldn’t know what [to] do... it would be more complicated. But I decided no kids until I charter.” (Chifundo, 28 years old, female, local insurance company)

These views should be understood within the context that attaining higher professional qualifications in insurance is critical in promotion in insurance organisations. Yet this course was reported to be challenging and also costly. This study demanded a lot of time from the respondents which can be challenging when undertaken alongside family responsibilities and long working hours.
Like in teaching, requirements to be geographically mobile to effect promotion also appears to disadvantage women, especially in the banks and the multinational insurance company but this was not directly experienced by the respondents. Ability to be internationally mobile was also important in the multinational organisations:

“…[our company] is in a growth strategy, they are looking at Africa as one of the emerging markets so when they go into a new country … the first thing they do is to take people … from the existing countries for a short contract, of one to two years to set things up [before] handing over to local …” (Lucy, Female, Head of Human Resources Multinational insurance company)

Aggie, a 34 year old branch manager who was single, had benefitted from international experience in the multinational bank when she was sent to another country to head a department of the bank’s subsidiary.

However, those with family responsibilities especially younger children may find it difficult to participate in such arrangements as Nangozo explained:

“… They make us sign forms to indicate whether we are available to move, or not… they specify as short, medium or long term. Some people would have certain conditions that would make them not mobile… like if you are a young woman, may be you are pregnant, .. or maybe for the next two [or] three years you want to look after your child, so you can’t go on [a] secondment …” (Nangozo, 53 year old Female manager, multinational insurance).

Yet, as Harris, (2004), observes, the importance of international experience as part of career development cannot be overemphasised. Thus geographical mobility affects both entry and progression in a career for women especially those married and those that have younger children (Bezbaruah, 2015; Sommerlad et al., 2010). Additionally, the findings suggest that some of the men were promoted in order to retain them. This was the case for at least two out of the nine men:

“… I was promoted [for] a reason…It was not a [sincere] promotion…because my colleague had left [for a better job]…so they thought I would also leave. They did not advertise the opening…. [Assuming] they advertised … and they offered the job to someone else, I would have said “okay, thank you, am packing my things, I am going.”(Tony, 36 years old, male, team leader, multinational insurance company).

“[if] I had found an opportunity for growth than [here], I would have left. I have attended several [job] interviews before I became a manager. I started as an officer when I first joined. But since becoming a manager … I haven’t
applied for any job and I haven’t attended any interview. So am kind of settled” (Lameck, 40 year old Male, manager, local bank).

Furthermore, although key informants argued that there was no gender-based discrimination in promotion, there is some evidence to the contrary:

“…we have [got] women that have their husbands within the bank. Most of the times they would prefer to promote the man [over] the woman... Also, some [men] hold the same position and qualifications as me but they were promoted way before me. I don’t know why …” (a 38 year old Mary, Middle level manager, 16 years of service, local bank)

“..Sometimes when [managers]… want to consider you, they start thinking of your husband and if they know that the husband is … also doing well, they would be like, why are we loading this family?” (53 year old Nangozo, manager, 31 years of service, Multinational insurance)

“When I was joining [the bank] there was a position above mine, which I was really vying for… the head of division then left. Then [someone] filled his post to make [his own] position vacant. I was very sure that with my qualifications [and] my capabilities… I would [be promoted]… we started hearing that … the bank is not filling it because our …structure is top heavy…I said ok …this means that this will just be the end of [me progression wise]… I was disturbed …” (Janet, 47 years old, female manager, local bank).

“I worked as a banker for five and a half years and then I left to do secretarial. I left because then when you were a woman, they wouldn’t promote you until probably after 9 or 10 years. Yet men were promoted within five years.” (Maria, 55 years old, female, local bank, Zomba).

This finding is consistent with existing studies regarding barriers that women face which include “the more insidious and ingrained organisational culture, which maintains workplace inequalities through institutional practices” (Green et al., 2004, p.3).

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter sought to investigate how different employment contexts produce and reproduce workplace inequalities. It has specifically revealed five major elements that are important in providing this comparative analysis. Firstly, there are inequalities which are as a result of the intersection of social class and gender as a result of using merit in joining a career.
The teaching career, overall by openly advertising training vacancies and by subsidising teacher training, enables men and women from different social classes to access training. However, policies designed to address exclusion on the basis of social background or gender are unlikely to be successful unless the actual underlying factors contributing to inequalities are addressed (Kerr and West, 2010). Poor MSCE performance of girls and especially those from poor households reduces their chances of joining teaching. At the same time, inability to access loans or bursaries is also making it difficult for those from poor households to pursue teaching career.

Additionally, budgetary constraints, which limits availability of funded jobs is also contributing to both gender and class inequalities. Also, use of merit determined by performance during an oral interview for promotion disadvantages women, in particular because the interviews are in English and they are often only using their native language when teaching young children. Furthermore, there is the exploitation of monopsony employer power by paying low wages or even delaying payment and promotions. This shows that despite having opportunities for entry into teaching, after training, the teachers are not treated as professionals.

On the other hand, in banks, failure to advertise vacancies openly limits chances for others with no links to employees in the banks to join. Moreover, the higher professional requirements that banks and insurance companies demand can exacerbate class-based inequalities as these courses are expensive. This is consistent with Ashley and Empson (2016, p.115) who argued that, “ownership of such credentials tends to be heavily concentrated amongst more economically privileged students and as a result, this approach creates conditions for inequality and exclusion.”

Secondly, there is the undervaluation of women’s work. Evidence presented here suggests that women were employed in jobs that are undervalued in both sectors. For instance in primary teaching, undervaluation occurs due to the concentration of women in teaching infants. In the local bank, more women were found in ‘back office’ routine jobs in operations with a majority of them at the lower cadres. In multinational insurance company, more women were in sales jobs.
However, most of the sales job positions are temporary and continued employment is based on performance while pay is commission based. Even for those in sales jobs on tenure, there are also limited positions especially in the multinational insurance company, making progression difficult. Those in sales also have limited progression prospects as they are not prioritised for professional development as their counterparts in mainstream insurance, and in case they get an educational loan, they have to pay back in full. In the multinational bank, more women were also in sales and customer service-related jobs, which are associated with low pay and limited progression opportunities.

The findings also suggest that there is both overt and covert gender based discrimination in recruitment and promotion especially in local bank and multinational insurance with more men being preferred. Additionally performance-based promotion in which working long hours is seen as a sign of commitment and productivity, ignores gendered domestic roles of men and women and contributes to a culture of presenteeism. Additionally, work is segregated by gender where men mostly dominate in higher positions in all the cases studies.

Lastly, although there are opportunities for work-life balance in teaching due to relatively shorter working hours in primary school teaching and having control over work schedules especially for teachers in urban based secondary schools, this is not the case in the banking and insurance organisations, where strict work schedules are followed. A more detailed discussion of these major elements in the two employment contexts is given in Chapter 8. The next chapter discusses how family and employment context factors contributed to the makeshift careers of the interviewed women.
CHAPTER 7: The construction of makeshift careers among women in teaching, banking and insurance organisations in Malawi

7.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the extent to which the makeshift career conceptualisation, developed in chapter 3, can provide an appropriate and illuminating framework for analysing the interviewed women’s careers. The aim is to understand how women make sense of tensions emanating from employment/institutional and family context factors, the careers that arise in the process and the role of individual agency in shaping such careers. Specifically, the chapter will be answering two interrelated research questions: (i) How do individual women in formal employment make sense of the tensions emanating from the employment and family context factors and how does this sense-making shape their careers? And (ii) what is the role played by women’s individual agency in constructing their careers as they respond to organisational, institutional and family factors?

The results are organised around major themes related back to the research questions. To answer research question one, the chapter considers firstly evidence of women pursuing traditional, professional or protean and kaleidoscope careers in the studied organisations and secondly discusses the extent to which the careers of women in Malawi fits the makeshift career conceptualisation. To answer the second research question, the interviews were analysed for evidence of compromises that the interviewed women made at different points in the life course and how they used agency to enact makeshift careers.

This chapter draws on the discussion in chapter 3 of the limitations of existing career models. Table 3.1 highlighted the major assumptions of the career models that I found useful for the analysis compared to the makeshift career conceptualisation namely traditional (both organisational and professional), protean and kaleidoscope. Considering the similarities between protean and kaleidoscope career models, in this analysis, these have been combined, with a specific mention when either of them applies to the studied women’s careers.
The boundaryless career model, also discussed in Chapter 3, has been dropped in the analysis. This is so because as argued in Chapter 3, the model is conceptually misleading (Inkson, 2006) and appears a predominantly relevant model for understanding careers in industries that are based on temporary assignments like software development and film production (Inkson, 2008) as opposed to permanent structures represented by the studied industries.

This chapter uses empirical data drawn from the interviewed Malawian women to explore if there is any evidence for the makeshift career concept; this development of the concept in a specific context may still allow for its applicability to women in general and thus may permit wider theoretical generalisation, as discussed in chapters 4 and 9.

The chapter is structured as follows: section 7.2 assesses the extent to which the elements of traditional and protean careers exist in teaching, banking and insurance organisations followed in section 7.3 by an assessment of the extent to which the available data provides empirical support for the proposed makeshift career conceptualisation where the focus is on how women make sense of the tensions emanating from institutional and family factors and make compromises. Three themes are identified in terms of compromises made. These are compromises to do with: long working hours, geographical mobility and meeting promotion requirements. The focus is primarily on the women interviewees, for although the interviews with men are also interrogated, few examples of compromises are identified. The second part of section 7.3 provides a snapshot on the careers at the time of the interview followed by both male and female employee respondents, adjusted by the career stage. This also illuminates the role played by men and women’s individual agency in creating the careers. For women, agency is shown to be more important in enacting their careers than for the male interviewees as they face more problems in making sense of the interplay between employment and family contexts.
7.2. Professional, traditional, protean and kaleidoscope careers in teaching, banking and insurance organisations

Before discussing the extent to which the interviewed women’s careers have taken the traditional, or protean and kaleidoscope career orientations, a recap of the employment context presented in Chapter 6 is firstly provided in Table 7.2 below so as to put the differences and similarities in career experiences of women in the two industries in context.

Table 7.1: Comparative Analysis of employment contexts in studied industries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment practices</th>
<th>Banks</th>
<th>Insurance</th>
<th>Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>Informal: Self-initiated applications for entry used. Sometimes Head hunting is used for supervisory positions. Open adverts may also be used when there is no suitable candidate internally</td>
<td>Formal: Open adverts used</td>
<td>Formal: Open adverts used to recruit student teachers. Conditions of deployment are on willingness to work in rural based schools, with negative implications for trailing spouses. Of late funded jobs are not immediately available after training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection for entry</td>
<td>Mixed: informal discussions, and interviews used. Overt and covert forms of gender discrimination</td>
<td>Meritocratic: Interviews used</td>
<td>Aptitude tests used. Positive selection strategies for women used: equal gender representation and district based quota system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jobs segregated by gender: Women mostly work in operational jobs which are mostly routine jobs</td>
<td>More women work in sales jobs with lower job security</td>
<td>Women mostly taught in primary schools and also in infant classes with limited promotion opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews inconsistently used</td>
<td>Interviews used often for lower level jobs and when there is no one suitable in the organisation</td>
<td>Based on performance in written tests and oral interviews</td>
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<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>On the job performance, length of service plus supervisory recommendations key</td>
<td>Current and past on job performance key for promotion. Based on supervisory recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretive succession plans</td>
<td>Secretive succession plans. Acquisition of higher insurance qualifications key in promotion</td>
<td>New qualifications no longer leads to automatic promotion but is critical in speeding up promotion as soon as funded vacancies are available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upward career mobility tightly structured</td>
<td>Local insurance provides room for growth. The multinational insurance also provides room for growth due to the international nature of the company.</td>
<td>Upward career mobility tightly structured due to large numbers of teachers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Targeted employees for higher positions are placed on a ‘fast track’ training programme in the multinational insurance</td>
<td>Geographical mobility key in promotion of teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geographical mobility key in promotion; disadvantaging ‘trailing spouses’</td>
<td>International mobility key in multinational insurance</td>
<td>Short official working hours although teachers spend time at home doing work related activities. Some schools run open or night schools</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working time and work</td>
<td>Long working hours and significant work pressures reported</td>
<td>Long working hours and significant work pressures reported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pressures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>Lower level staff have low pay, and there are big gaps between pay levels.</td>
<td>Relatively good pay in comparison to teaching</td>
<td>Generally low pay. Teachers may use the additional time to run open or night schools to supplement their low pay or engage in other activities to supplement their low pay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.2.1 Evidence for traditional professional and protean careers in teaching

This sub section discusses the extent to which women teachers’ careers reflected elements of a traditional professional career as expounded by Kanter (1989). Public teaching in Malawi reflected elements of Kanter’s (1989) professional careers but only to a limited degree. As argued in Chapter 3, in ideal professional careers, status is not gained through occupying a hierarchical position but by the rare knowledge and skills employees have. Additionally, career progression for such professionals does not necessarily entail moving from one job to another or from one position to another (Kanter, 1989).

Moreover, the movements up the hierarchy, when they occur, are not necessarily within the same school but tend to be within the sector. The assumption is that teachers should be able remain at one grade for a longer period without feeling that they are stuck. This is possible if the profession has all attributes associated with a
profession namely “rigorous training and licencing requirements, positive working conditions, an active professional organisation or association, substantial workplace authority, relatively high compensation and high prestige” (Ingersoll and Merrill, 2011, p.185-186).

However, many of these features do not hold for Malawi’s teaching profession. Some of these problems in fact apply more widely, particularly in countries where the profession is feminised\textsuperscript{46} like in OECD countries, some parts of the Caribbean and Latin America, where the teaching profession is only considered to be semi-professional (Basten, 1997; Wylie, 2000; Kelleher, undated). There have in fact been appeals to have more men join teaching in order to improve its status whilst at the same addressing the boys’ poor performance in schools (Kelleher, 2011; Skelton, 2012).

As argued in Chapter 6, although entry into teaching in Malawi is meritocratic, secondary school teaching in Malawi is limited in its professional status as evidenced by having only about half (49.8 percent) of the secondary school teachers being qualified to teach there in 2013 (GOM., 2013). Additionally, the profession does not enjoy positive working conditions similar to the situation elsewhere. For instance, Herbert and Ramsay (2003) highlighted poor working conditions as one of the factors responsible for high turnover among teachers in Texas of the United States. This is also the case in several other countries outside and inside Africa including Malawi (Kayuni and Tambulasi, 2007).

Similarly, teaching in Malawi is stressful, exacerbated by high student-teacher ratios and lack of adequate learning and teaching resources. In fact, general poor working conditions in the teaching profession is the main cause of attrition in Malawi related to factors as poor housing and school infrastructure, low salaries, high death rates due to illnesses without accessing a medical scheme for quality care, among other

\textsuperscript{46} In this paper, feminisation is looked at from both the statistical and sociological angle where the focus is both on countries that have high female teacher percentages in relation to men as well as the important factors behind the observed statistical trends like the “causes, consequences and implications” (Kelleher, 2011,p.2)
factors (Kayuni and Tambulasi, 2007). The National Education Sector plan estimates a “6 percent attrition rate of primary school teachers” (GOM, 2008, p.18) with resignation being the second cause of attrition in the 2012/13 academic year (GOM, 2014b).

For an occupation to be a profession, it ought to have high status, attracting respect from the society (Ingersoll and Merrill, 2011). Low pay, limited promotion opportunities, low morale, poor infrastructure and high student-teacher ratio pave way for industrial actions and create a feeling that the teaching profession is not valued by society.

A review of newspaper reports shows frequent mention of teachers threatening to go on strike when they do not get their salaries on time. As at September, 2016, the media reported about a nationwide teachers’ strike, which resulted in the closure of the country’s public education system (Ligomeka, 2016).

However, there were mixed views from the teachers interviewed regarding the status of the profession. From the total of 26 teachers, both men and women interviewed in the second phase and who were asked to state in their opinion if teaching is high or low in terms of status, half of these described teaching as a low status job. Box 7.1 below shows some of the sentiments expressed supporting this view drawn from interviews with both male and female teachers.

**Box 7.1: Teaching is a low status profession**

“Teachers are always looked down upon. They are treated without respect just because they are teachers. Even in communities that teachers live, if a female teacher has nice things, they will say she is engaging in prostitution so as to afford good things...” (30 year old Apatsa, female secondary school teacher, married with one young child)

“You can have two people undergoing bachelors’ degree courses at the same time but simply because one is in a law field and the other one in education, going out there the one who graduates with a law degree will be accorded a higher status than the one pursuing education...”(Anne, CDSS teacher, currently pursuing a degree programme)

“... it’s a low status job because if you compare it to other professions, their housing needs may be taken care of, they have a medical scheme... in teaching, there is no medical scheme...”(42 year old Doreen, a female secondary school teacher currently...
pursuing a degree programme)

“Teaching is a low status job... when based in rural schools, we are ridiculed by the villagers because they see that we have financial problems and we go around borrowing money from them to the extent that they advise their children not to become teachers...” (43 year old Paulo, male primary school teacher)

“As for the status of teaching as far as people in the village view it, it’s because we live among them, as such they don’t differentiate us from themselves, that’s why they take teaching as a low status job... We drink with them.... Sometimes we ask for financial help from them, we buy their maize on credit...” (Banda, Male secondary school teacher)

This finding is consistent with findings from the OECD countries, which suggested that teachers themselves view the profession as having a much lower status (Wylie, 2000) limiting its professional status. However, this view was not universally held by the teachers interviewed. Another nine teachers argued that teaching in itself is a high status profession but the low pay and poor working conditions that teachers have continuously faced have made the profession lose its status. A further four teachers were able to point out that things are improving for the better in teaching, alluding to the possibility in the rise in the profession’s status. As Promise, a 33 year old male secondary school teacher highlighted:

“...sometimes you hear people in minibuses saying ‘look at the houses for teachers, they have [TV] dishes ... Those ones I think have other sources of income because as far as I know, a teacher cannot manage to buy a [TV] dish,’ things like those. So it’s the mentality that people have grown up with about teaching. And to them they think that maybe we don’t get enough money/salary [to afford such items]”

Although career progression for the ideal professional careers does not necessarily entail moving from one job to another or from one position to another but maintaining the same job title for some time (Kanter,1989), it is evident that the studied teachers looked forward to moving up the organisational hierarchy. This was to compensate for the loss of both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards associated with professional careers. It was therefore common to find both male and female teachers describing their career progression in terms of going up one or more steps up the hierarchy, with some changing job titles and hence responsibilities as they go up the
ladder. A 43 year old Amy and 55 year old Annabel explained how they had moved from one grade to another and were currently holding managerial and leadership positions earned through organisational hierarchy based promotions.

“I started as a secondary school teacher [at] Grade I, in 1997... In 2003 I was promoted to Grade H and [I headed] various secondary schools until 2010... [when], I was promoted to Grade G (P7). I have served at Grade G for about four years now and that is when I shifted from Secondary Directorate to Directorate of Inspectorate and Advisory Services. So I came to this office as a principal education methods advisor...” (43 year old Amy, female, education).

“I started as a secondary school teacher at a diploma level ... in 1979, then after being in the system for some time and after bringing up my children I decided to go back to study towards a Degree from 1995 to 1997. Whilst at Diploma level, I ...headed schools.

After my Degree I went back to teaching [where] I was also appointed as a deputy head teacher and later on as a head teacher. I have headed a number of schools within [the city]. Later on, I applied and attended the interviews for the post of District Education Manager fortunately I was among the six they were looking for...” (55 year old Annabel, manager).

Male teachers also described their career progression as associated with moving in hierarchical positions and they all looked forward to such hierarchical movements as a measure of success. This element of moving up the hierarchies in teaching, therefore limits the extent to which the teaching profession can be described as a professional career.

Unfortunately, as presented in Chapter 6, promotion opportunities were reported to be limited. A majority of interviewees reported being at their current position for over four years which is a benchmark minimum number of years a civil servant ought to be at a particular grade before being considered for a promotion. These were clearly frustrated showing their expectation to rise up the organisational hierarchies, contrary to the idea in professional careers. Box 7.2 below shows some of the respondents both men and women that had stayed at one position for more than the benchmark of 4 years.
Box 7.2: Extracts showing respondents that had stayed at one grade for more than 4 years

“It is quite frustrating to stay at a low salary grade. There is low motivation in teaching. Other civil servants have allowances on top of their monthly salary…” (30 year old Apatsa, female secondary school teacher, has been at current grade for 8 years).

“I became a primary school teacher in 1995. I have been teaching for 21 years now at one grade with no promotion…” (43 year old Pilirani, female, currently teaching at a secondary school whilst holding a primary school teaching grade)

“I started ... as a temporary teacher in 1997, then I went to a training college in 2004 where I qualified ... as a (T2) primary school teacher since I had a lower secondary school certificate. Since then, I have been holding the entry level grade... despite teaching for a total of 19 years, but 12 years as a qualified teacher” (40 year old Liness, female primary school teacher).

“I have been working for 19 years. I have just been recently promoted from the entry level…” (43 year old Paulo, married, male primary school teacher)

I have been working as a Grade I secondary school teacher for 10 years now. I have not been promoted” (33 year old Promise, male Secondary school teacher)

This is consistent with previous studies that have shown that in teaching, there are limited opportunities for upward mobility (Kelleher, 2011), contrary to the nature of professions where whether one is rising upward or not should not matter.

Malawi has large rural areas, which means that more teachers are needed to serve the rural population. The Malawi government has embarked on various policies aimed at ensuring that schools in rural and remote areas have adequate teachers (The World Bank, 2008). For instance, under particular training programmes, teachers were expected to be willing to accept to work in rural schools at least for five years before they can ask to be moved to an urban based school. The defunct Open Distance Learning programme (ODL) also specifically targeted recruiting local people as teachers, where candidates were asked to show evidence that they are from a particular local area which they indicate to be where they will go to teach after training.

After the ODL programme was stopped in 2015/16 academic year, the training adverts are still putting willingness to teach in rural primary schools as a condition for the teachers’ deployment after training. Teachers deployed to teach in rural
primary schools are also given a rural allowance although this is considered to be low. Thus, ability to be geographically mobile including ability to move to rural, remote areas is a critical component for both initial recruitment and promotion in teaching.

Yet as the respondents reported, rural areas mostly do not have adequate social amenities to enable living a life of a professional. The working conditions in these remote schools are also poor and most schools lack good facilities for teaching and learning. This is consistent with a finding by The World Bank (2008.p.3) which focused on teachers for rural schools in five African countries including Malawi, when it pointed out that “teachers often express concerns about the quality of accommodations; the working environment, including classroom facilities and school resources; and access to leisure activities and public facilities in rural areas.” Yet, positive work environment is a key characteristic of a professional career. This therefore demonstrates that teaching career in Malawi is less professional.

When designing the study, a deliberate decision was made to sample schools from both rural and urban areas. One of the reasons behind this was the assumption that teachers in urban based schools will have more career advancement opportunities than those based in rural areas. The findings confirmed this to be true, but this is with respect to getting opportunities for self-advancement. All the respondents revealed that teaching in rural schools is associated with limited prospects for advancement through acquiring new educational and professional qualifications. As pointed out in Table 7.2 above, acquiring new qualifications is important in career progression of teachers, whether through personal effort or through government bodies’ educational plans. Yet, in rural areas, opportunities for improving qualifications are limited in comparison to urban areas where teachers have access to further education and training facilities.

Additionally, for those professional development opportunities that are coordinated by government bodies, teachers in remote, rural areas find it difficult to access these opportunities, due to bureaucratic obstacles as well as when personal links are used to access them. Failure to improve qualifications by these rural based teachers makes them fall short of Ingersoll and Merrill’s (2011) description of those with
professional careers. Even in instances where teachers decide to study for a non-teaching career whilst working, being based in or close to urban areas places them at an advantage over those based in remote areas. For instance, Gracious reported that before joining teaching, he had wished he trained as a journalist but he did not have funding to meet the expenses. At the time of the interview, he reported that he was to start attending weekend classes for a journalism course, which was offered within the city where he was based. This means that he will be able to study for his dream career whilst maintaining his teaching job. This is not possible for those based in rural areas.

Furthermore, requirement for geographical mobility to effect deployment and promotion decisions also creates problems for trailing spouses, who cannot easily move to other locations due to the careers of their spouses. If we turn the discussion to the extent to which teachers’ careers could be considered protean, the findings suggest presence of some protean career elements. These however, relate only to the use of agency.

Teachers used agency to provide direction to their careers, mainly through acquisition of additional educational qualifications. This was the case for 15 out of 31 female teachers who had started as primary school teachers but now are teaching in secondary schools. Another two women who were currently in managerial positions, had used agency to get to their current positions, having started off as secondary school teachers. Individual cases of female teachers who used agency to advance in their careers are presented in section 7.3.2. However, there is no evidence of a second assumption of protean careers, namely that teachers have an option to freely choose to move in and out of employment with an aim of combining work and family responsibilities. The teachers’ career orientations may therefore not be fully described as protean. Moreover, agency is not only associated with protean careers (Kanter, 1989).

This discussion therefore has shown that there is limited empirical evidence to support the view that the teachers pursued professional careers. This is because teaching in Malawi is saddled with various challenges like low pay, low status, underqualified staff which then makes teachers look forward to hierarchical
progression to compensate for the loss in status of the profession. Similarly, although there are elements of protean careers in relation to use of agency in acquisition of new educational and professional qualifications which aided their promotions, the protean career construct is still limited in explaining the careers of the interviewed women teachers.

7.2.2 Evidence for traditional organisational, protean and kaleidoscope careers in banking and insurance

The findings presented in this section suggest that women’s careers in banking and insurance were traditional or protean and kaleidoscope only to a limited extent. Firstly, the expectations in terms of careers pursued by the respondents in banking and insurance organisations related to the traditional, organisational hierarchy dependent path with upward mobility as the main focus. Although performance and qualifications were becoming relevant, length of service and therefore loyalty to the organisation continued to play a crucial role in career progression.

Additionally, the careers of 28 out of 33 men and women interviewed progressed through distinctive levels of an organised hierarchy mainly involving at most one or two organisations. Women and men in managerial positions alluded to this traditional career path in their description of how they rose to their current positions. The interview extracts presented in Box 7.3 below show how traditional career elements manifested in women’s careers by referring to career progression in terms of additional responsibilities, like managing a team, heading a department and gradual increases in pay and promotion up the organisational hierarchy.

**Box 7.3: Extracts showing elements of traditional careers in banking and insurance organisations**

“I have gone through all the clerical positions in banking, I also have worked in each and every department in the bank...now I am the team leader...” (42 year old Happiness, female, 12 years of service in the local bank, married and has 2 dependent children).

“I am a manager...I joined the bank in 2000. I have held four positions so far namely, clerk, supervisor, senior supervisor then manager...” (38 year old Mary, female, Middle level manager, 16 years of service, the local bank, married, 2 young
“...I went through [Management Trainee programme] for three years starting from the clerical post... then I was trained as a supervisor. After the 3 years I started getting permanent posts, firstly as the credit officer for this branch then I was promoted to the position of senior credit officer. Thereafter, I was promoted to operations manager for a branch... I was then transferred to the head office’s operation department as the regional processing manager... and then I also got another promotion as...operations manager for the bank at the head office...I was later sent to Botswana to work as head of operations for the bank’s subsidiary for one and a half years. I am currently the branch manager....” (34 year old Aggie, female 11 years of service in the multinational bank, single, no child).

“...I joined the company in 1983 in the accounts department with a qualification in finance working as an accounts clerk.... then I was promoted to become a supervisor. In 1999 I became department manager ... responsible for group businesses and individual businesses... I am currently the operations manager” (Nangozo, a 53 year old female middle level manager in a multinational insurance company, 31 years of service, married, no dependent child).

“After secondary school education, I [studied] business administration after which I got a job at [this] bank as a clerk in 1998 ... I have been moving from one position to another and currently I am the treasury manager...” (Chanju, female, 18 years of service, manager, multinational bank, single mother of one child).

Therefore, these respondents still looked to the organisation for career progression. This type of progression reflects the linear career progression common in the mainstream traditional career development literature (Levinson, 1978 and Super, 1957 and 1980). In 9 out of 11 cases, the women in banking and insurance organisations at mid and late career stage reported progressing through rising up the organisational hierarchy. Comparatively, both of the two men at mid and late career stage reported progressing in their careers hierarchically. This is consistent with Tlais (2014, p. 2868), who argued, in relation to a study of Lebanese women managers that “women managers, regardless of age, marital status or position within the managerial hierarchy, demonstrated an acceptance of [traditional careers].”

Although there was no clear bench mark in terms of years of service before one is promoted in banking and insurance, as is the case in teaching, there were other women who felt they had been at one position for a longer period and that they were not being considered for a promotion. This showed their expectation to rise up the organisational hierarchies, consistent with traditional career expectations. At least 3 women shared Takondwa’s sentiment below:
“I joined [the company] in 1996, as a secretary. In 2006 I changed jobs from secretary to client services consultant. I have been in the current position for eight years...There haven’t been any chances for a promotion... I was asking my boss this is other day, ‘what do you look at to promote somebody because I think I have overstayed at this position and there is nothing that is coming up’ he [just] said that we have taken note of that, we will come back to you.” (Takondwa, a 43 year old female respondent, the multinational insurance company).

Despite exhibiting the highlighted elements of traditional careers, the careers of women described above may not be described as purely traditional careers due to them not fully aligning themselves to the ideals of traditional careers.

Similarly, the findings suggest limited empirical support for protean careers which assumes the possibility of being able to move in and out of employment in banking and insurance with an aim of combining work and family responsibilities. By being able to move in and out of employment due to family responsibilities, Happiness had exhibited elements of a protean career. Happiness, resigned from her banking job to accompany her husband who was going for further studies to the United Kingdom for 4 years. She later returned to her full time job. However, leaving a job was possible for Happiness because she was either going to get financial support through her husband’s scholarship or get another job whilst abroad. Within Malawi, people do not have the luxury of voluntarily leaving a job, as exhibited by the experiences of the majority of women interviewed.

Teleza exhibited kaleidoscope career attributes in response to an unsuitable work environment, by being able to move in and out of employment. Teleza started her career as a Public Relations Officer in a multinational bank. Whilst working there, her immediate manager was forcing her into a sexual relationship in exchange for progression and other favours. With the hope of putting a stop to these unwelcome advances, Teleza changed jobs within the same bank, into mainstream banking where she was going to have a different manager. This shows that Teleza was able to “repackage ...her abilities and knowledge to fit into...uncertain work environment…” (Tlais, 2014, p.2861).

Unfortunately, due to the high position of the manager in public relations department, his influence was extended to the manager in the banking section.
Coupled with the fact that she did not enjoy pursuing a career in banking but preferred a public relations career, she resigned and stayed out of employment for close to a year. Teleza then re-joined employment in a different organisation but pursuing a career in public relations and is currently one of the top managers in the multinational insurance company. This is an element of kaleidoscope career, showing the willingness to move in and out of unsuitable work environments under certain circumstances, consistent with main stream literature on kaleidoscope careers, (for example, see Cabrera, 2009 and Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006).

Additionally, despite the organisational and institutional challenges presented by the employment contexts as discussed in Chapter 5, some of the women in banking and insurance were still able to rise up the organisational ladder. This was possible through dedication and hard work exhibited through working long hours and persistence in effecting good performance. Some of them also upgraded their qualifications whilst working which earned them either an increase in pay or facilitated a future promotion.

This independent approach to careers by women is consistent with Tlais (2014) who in the context of Lebanese women managers argued that this shows how women are in charge of their career progression within organisational structures. Thus in being compelled by their individual goals to get to higher positions, some of the respondents exhibited elements of the protean career.

The elements of protean and kaleidoscope careers identified notwithstanding, the careers of women in banking and insurance organisations cannot be fully protean or kaleidoscope as the other underlying principles of protean careers have not been satisfied. As we argued in Chapter 3, protean career model assumes acting out of free choice which is hardly the case for the studied women whose careers exhibited some protean or kaleidoscope career elements. Thus, there is limited empirical support for these women’s careers taking the protean and kaleidoscope career orientations.

Section 7.3 below, assesses the extent to which the developed analytical framework - makeshift career is a better framework for explaining the respondents’ careers. As developed in Chapter 3, makeshift careers are careers that develop as women
combine continuous and full-time work with significant family responsibilities at the same time. Central to this argument is the point that employment/institutional constraints such as expectations to work long hours and during unsocial hours, to be geographically mobile, gender biases in recruitment and meeting other promotion requirements inter alia shape women’s careers. This also applies to the family challenges such as attitudes of spouses, child care, and domestic chores’ burdens inter alia. As the experience of the interviewed women shows, they have to make sense of these institutional and family challenges and make compromises between them whilst moulding their career. The makeshift career is a product of that sense making process. Men on the other hand do not face similar tensions, at least not as frequently or in the ways that women do.

7.3 Women’s sense making of tensions emanating from work and family: Evidence of Makeshift careers in Malawi

In order to understand how the interviewed women construct meanings and manage competing tensions emanating from work and family, this section firstly focuses on institutional factors and how women made compromises when faced with institutional challenges impacting on their career. The second part of this section discusses individual careers, highlighting how agency has helped respondents shape their careers.

7.3.1 Institutional factors

In terms of how institutional factors impact on women’s careers, three themes have emerged related to the ways in which the women make compromises and readjust certain steps in their careers, compromises being a major element of makeshift careers. These are compromises relating to (i) geographical mobility, (ii) working hours, and (iii) promotion requirements.

Despite the traditional career features inherent in the studied industries, as well as being the expected career route among the respondents, the actual careers of the interviewed women are characterised by the complexities of juggling the two spheres and making compromises in the process. This makes a makeshift career conceptualisation a better framework for understanding women’s careers than the
traditional, protean and kaleidoscope career models. In order to ensure a joined-up discussion, I present the evidence of makeshift careers from the two industries side by side.

To begin with, the focus is on the compromises made related to geographical mobility in terms of whether to relocate or not for promotion or better job opportunities. This was more of an issue of concern firstly in the banks, which by nature of their business, have branches throughout the country including the rural areas. As such, geographical mobility formed an integral part of the hiring and promotion decisions in banks. Selection interview questions that gauged job applicants’ ability to be geographically mobile were common.

Geographical mobility was also a significant factor in promotions in banks. As a result, women with family responsibilities had to make compromises regarding where to work, showing less willingness to relocate for better job opportunities or promotion as well as working away from their husbands. It was clear they could not accept to be relocated and their husbands were not in a position to follow them either. The experiences of Joyce illustrates this point clearer. Joyce, a 35 year old middle level manager in a local bank had been working in a different organisation in another city before getting married. After getting married, she found another job in the city where she and her husband are currently working. At the time of the interview, she indicated that it would be difficult for her to move and leave her family behind arguing that she is still a “family woman”. This implies that she was not ready to let her career decisions affect her family in any way. She also expressed doubt at a possibility of her husband following her to another place if she was to find a much better job.

From the data, out of the 24 women interviewed in banking and insurance, 11 were married. From these 11 women, at least three clearly indicated that they were in the current locations because they were following their husbands. At the same time, they were not in a position to relocate following a promotion or better job opportunity as their husbands were not in a position to follow them, but had to move if the husband’s career required it. Thus, these can be described as trailing spouses, as presented in Table 7.3. Coupled with the dual earner status of most of the women
interviewed, this becomes a challenge for those women that can be described as trailing spouses.

This finding also shows that women, in general, may have less freedom than men to be geographically mobile. This finding therefore confirms the existing literature which has shown that “married women are much less likely than married men to report being willing to move for improved job opportunities for themselves...” (Harvey, 1998, p.311). Thus apart from the requirement to fulfil organisational expectations, the women interviewed also had to fulfil family obligations, at the same time, contrary to the traditional career which assumes separation of the two spheres. It is also contrary to a protean career orientation, which assumes choice to prioritise one over the other.

Women also made efforts to work in same locations as their husbands. The interview I had with Susan revealed the efforts she made to ensure that she was moved from a district in the Northern part of the country so that she works in the same city as her husband, located in the southern part of the country, about 671.5 kilometres away.

“During the [job] interview, they asked me if I was okay with working in the rural areas. ... I said [yes] ... Then after recruitment, I started negotiating with the HR manager that I could not work in [Rumphi], as it is far and she said no, so... I started as a bank teller, worked there for three to four months...[then] I applied to transfer from Rumphi to Zomba, ... I was following my fiancé by then ... and he was based in Blantyre so I thought Zomba and Blantyre are close ... therefore easy to commute... I had to lie to let them move me from Rumphi to Zomba...marriage was not a valid reason for one to move... Later on I was lucky to find someone to swap with... I moved to Blantyre and she moved to Zomba...” (A 30 year old Susan, manager, multinational bank)

Susan’s quote, illustrates that the respondents were made to make compromises and arrangements on their own when faced with conflicting demands imposed by their work and family factors. As such, they cannot be said to be in a position to be able to prioritise work over family roles or vice versa as perceived by traditional career theorists. Luckily, the compromises that Susan made by moving around bank establishments in order to be close to her husband did not have a direct negative effect on her career prospects. As discussed later, the female teachers who followed
their spouses were not as lucky as Susan as following their husbands proved to limit their career progression opportunities.

As Susan’s quote above shows, in most cases, employers do not do much to help ease the pressure that women face from two conflicting spheres, despite most women being in dual earner families. In that case, objectives for achieving organisational productivity, which ensures that the organisation has staff located in all places, tend not to take into account the individual family factors. Employers are thus insensitive to the needs of the dual earners, by requiring employees to relocate without taking due consideration of the fact that they are in dual earner households.

Just like banks, in teaching, schools are also spread across the country reaching the most remote areas. As a result, being geographically mobile was also an issue in teaching, where the government’s current education plan identifies as a challenge “the lack of female teachers [in rural schools which] has a detrimental impact on female students... [and] the dominance and conduct of male teachers are a serious concern ...” (GOM,2008,p.19). The government thus targets recruiting more female teachers and sending them to rural based schools. As a result, female teachers are faced with the need to make compromises with respect to being geographically mobile. This saw other female teachers not being able to relocate following their promotion to avoid being separated from their family members as they were trailing spouses. For instance, a 45 year old Marriam, a female primary school teacher, after serving for 20 years had been promoted to the third grade of PT2 in 2013.

However at the time of the research interview, almost one year after being offered a promotion, the respondent’s promotion had not been confirmed. Even when I returned to the school for additional interviews in 2016, Marriam was still at her old school. This is so because she was yet to report for duties as she is expected to relocate to another district, located about 163 kilometres away from her current duty station. Promotion in teaching, just like in banking or insurance organisations, is only confirmed if one reports for duties at the required duty post. Yet, relocation was not an option for Marriam due to her family responsibilities. She explained:

“I have not yet reported for duties. I am supposed to go to Mangochi but [I am] married. [I] followed [my] husband [to this district]. [Ministry of
Education] is expecting me to relocate and work in Mangochi [from Chiradzulu where my family is] this means that we are disturbing the family”

Thus in public teaching, being a trailing spouse affected women’s career progression due to no provisions for internal promotion within the same school or education district. This means that when a teacher is promoted there is no opportunity to choose to remain in the same school or education district but they have to go and report where vacancies are as determined at central government level. This then implies that when a female teacher is promoted and has to relocate, the husband is expected to follow.

In cases where women are trailing spouses, this is almost impossible. Yet as Table 7.2 shows, 11 out of 20 married women teachers were trailing spouses.

Table 7.2: Trailing spouses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total respondents</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Banking And Insurance</td>
<td>Total teaching</td>
<td>Banking and insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married/wido w/divorced/widower</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents as trailing spouses</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuter partnerships</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner as trailing spouse</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those that have always worked in the same city/district as their spouse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unverified</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some women were faced with decisions to follow their husbands to their new working stations, which in the process limited their own career prospects. For instance, Zione, who is a qualified teacher but now is working as a Primary School Education Advisor attained through promotions has served the teaching profession for 27 years. Zione was at the third level of PT2 grade at the time of the interview and highlighted that she has delayed in her progression in comparison to men she started working with who were now tutors in training colleges. Zione attributed this delay to her inability to stay at one place for a long time as she kept following her husband to different work districts, guided by her catholic belief that she is supposed to be with her husband.

Another respondent Maggie, who is currently working as a head teacher under an administrative arrangement at a CDSS also reported that she was going to follow her husband, who was a primary school teacher upon being deployed to another district even though that meant that she will work as a mere teacher in the new district. She argued:

“Yes it may be like that because you know this time if you live apart, far away from each other with this deadly disease [(AIDS) it can be risky]. I know men, sometimes they are not to be trusted but I don’t mean that I don’t trust [my husband] (50 year old Maggie, female secondary school teacher, Acting Head teacher).

Working as a head teacher under an administrative arrangement, gave women like Maggie exposure and experience that is valued during interview promotions to higher positions in teaching. For Maggie, relinquishing her position for family reasons therefore may not be good for her career.

Although 45.2 percent of the married women interviewed were trailing spouses (see Table 7.4), none of the married men in both industries reported being a trailing spouse. This contributes to the existing literature which so far shows that it is mostly women who are trailing spouses, consistent with the traditional patriarchal male-breadwinner model (Bruegel, 1996). Additionally, this finding shows that it is not only in societies where women pursue protean careers (when faced with conflicting pressures) where most of them would be trailing spouses. Evidence presented in this study suggests that in societies that expect and have professional women pursuing
continuous and full-time careers, societal expectations (or religious beliefs), still make women to follow their spouses wherever they go as they pursue their careers. Thus, despite all the 31 married women interviewees being in dual earner families with 29 of these being in dual career families, they were still expected to be trailing spouses.

Men faced with the decision to relocate could more easily relocate following better job prospects. For instance, Victor (36 years old) reported that he was initially working in a city in the Northern part of Malawi. After getting a new job in the multinational bank, which expected him to relocate to a city in the Southern part of Malawi located about 580.5 kilometres away, he initially relocated alone and was in the new city for four years, after which his wife managed to get a transfer.

This shows that it may be more common for a man to leave his family behind whilst he settles on a new job somewhere else than is the case for women. Apart from geographical mobility, the other theme being considered is compromises related to the requirement to work long hours and expectations for travel. As discussed in Chapter 6, respondents in banks and insurance organisations reported to have long working hours. This made it difficult for respondents, especially women to combine working long hours and family responsibilities especially care for young and sick children as Susan’s quote below shows. Yet at the same time, she could not resign as that was going to reduce family earnings for taking care of the same sick child. She explained:

“… My son … has a brain damage … I had used all my leave days…My supervisor asked me to take unpaid leave so I was just down and I thought that I should just quit my job and look after my baby... “There were times [when] I got tired [with combing work and child care] and wanted to quit, [my husband said no arguing that] nowadays it’s not easy for one person to support the family and with the baby that we have, he needs a lot of money so relying on money from one pocket, it will not work...” (A 30 year old Susan, manager, multinational bank)

Hence, women like Susan are not in a position to quit working when faced with work-family conflicts as protean career conceptualisation assumes. Similarly, they are not in a position to prioritise work over family roles as is assumed by the traditional career theorists, but have to make compromises between these two
spheres. This is consistent with studies that have shown that career women may have “joint allegiance to traditionally incompatible ideologies (in this case family and career), they may experience greater tensions and have more complex emotion and identity management than women who prioritize one aspect over another. Moreover, they also may find that having “choice” requires sense making in ways that women...who must rely on familial or subsidized child care do not face” (Buzzanell et al., 2005,p.263).

Similarly in insurance, Sandra, a 40 year old top level manager, who is currently the general manager of the multinational insurance company recalled the compromises she had to make in juggling career and care of her young children. Sandra did not completely leave full time employment at the time when her employment responsibilities, which involved frequent travel, conflicted with her child care responsibilities as per the assumption of protean theory. Instead she moved to another full-time job with less expectation for travel. This did not involve leaving employment entirely (protean) or the corporate structure (kaleidoscope) but just changing jobs. Hence pursuing makeshift careers as opposed to traditional or protean careers. Sandra explained:

“My previous job... involved a lot of travelling and it was very demanding. Since at that time I had a very young child, I had to change jobs within the organisation to a job that involved less travelling. I had to search and see what I really wanted from my life at that point. It was the responsibility that I have towards my children that mattered... Now that my children are older, I can easily travel but I make sure that I align my trips with my husband’s business trips as his job also involves travelling...”

In contrast, men did not report any problems associated with working long hours and family responsibilities. As the managers reported, they in fact benefitted from women’s inability to work long and unsocial hours as men accepted assignments taking place in the evening, which the women could not do for example. Furthermore, as presented in Chapter 6, most of the men had wives engaged in informal employment and hence more flexible, giving more time to men to dedicate to their careers. Men who had used the working hours to attend to family responsibilities could easily work outside the working hours to complete any outstanding work, something that was not always possible for women. Thus, men
interviewed did not have to make any compromises regarding challenges to do with long working hours.

Another compromise that women made was regarding meeting promotion requirements including deciding when to upgrade their qualifications that would earn them promotions. This was more common among teachers due to not having viable child care options in their absence and where in most cases, upgrading qualifications required them to be residential or near the training institutions premises. Chipiliro explained:

“"I could not upgrade my qualifications to enable me move from being a primary school teacher to a secondary school teacher. When my husband died, he left me with 4 children, the first born was only 10 years and the last one was very young. I had asked my relations to help with taking care of the youngest child so I could go for upgrading. They refused, arguing they also go to work… I could not even ask my parents because they go to the farm daily as such could not take care of my children. So I accepted that I could only rise in the primary school teacher hierarchy which unfortunately has been slow.” (46 year old Chipiliro primary school teacher teaching at a CDSS)

A 57 year old Annabel recalled how she delayed enrolling for a degree programme until when her children were older, arguing that:

“"As a mother I felt that in my absence, my kids might not be raised as [I would] expect [them to be] that’s why I felt that may be let me raise them up first before proceeding with my education”

Thus, there are certain phases in life when the family role is more demanding for women, so much so that it is difficult to invest more time in improving the professional skills that will help in career advancement contrary to the assumptions inherent in Kanter’s professional careers where workers will do as much as possible to invest in their skills for maintaining and gaining higher status in the profession, whether through promotions or gaining reputation in their own right regardless of the hierarchical position they are holding.

Decisions made by women like Chipiliro, Sandra and Annabel may be based “on a social construction of childhood according to which children need special care by
their mother at home to be supported comprehensively as an individual being” (Pfau-Effinger, 1998,p.153). In fact, a 40 year old Anne who was pursuing a teacher upgrading course during the research period regretted leaving her two year old child in the care of her older daughter and her husband to pursue her degree. She explained:

“I am worried with my daughter’s language acquisition, she is acquiring words which are not good… [If I were there] I could have controlled this.”

Again, this was not an issue of concern among married male teachers who were upgrading during the time of the interview. In total, there were four married male teachers who were upgrading their qualifications and therefore stayed away from their families during term time. From these four, two described their spouses as “house wives”. The other two had their spouses engaged in either part time formal work or in informal employment activity (running a small business). This suggests that male teachers did not have to worry about child care issues in their absence, whilst undergoing training.

7.3.2 Individual careers and agency

This sub-section discusses the individual careers of men and women interviewed. In this regard, it firstly presents where men and women are in terms of their career stage based on years they have been in employment. Secondly, it discusses how men and women used agency to prevent being stuck or to move out of stuck positions. Table 7.3 below shows that 34 out of 79 respondents, both men and women were in early career stage having worked for 1 to 11 years. From the total of 55 women interviewed, 21 women were in early career stage. From this total of 21 women, eight women worked in teaching and 13 women worked in banking and insurance. From the total of 23 men included in the analysis, 13 men were in their early career stage, with six men being teachers and seven were working in banking and insurance organisations. Additionally, a majority (nine) of these men in early career stage were still single and as such were sole earners in their households. The remaining four, were in dual earner households, with their wives also engaged in formal employment.
Further, 18 out of 79 respondents, both men and women were in their mid-career stage, with years in employment ranging from 12 to 20. From these 18, five women were working in education, all of whom reported not doing well in their career. Four of the five had managed to change grade once automatically following an upgrade in qualification which resulted in them moving from being primary school teachers to secondary school teachers.

Although they had all recently attended promotion interviews, they reported not having been successful and three of these had been at the current position for more than the minimum requirement of four years. Comparatively, five male teachers also reported being in this stage and three of them reporting to be progressing. Six women at this stage worked in banking and insurance organisations, all of whom reported to be progressing. Similarly, the two men from banking and insurance who were at this stage, all reported to be progressing.

Again, a total of 27 out of 79 men and women were in the late career stage, having been in employment for 21 years or more. From this figure, 18 were women in teaching, from which seven reported to be progressing. Another four were men in teaching, all of which were progressing. In banking and insurance, a total of five respondents, all women, were in the late career stage, with three reporting to be progressing. The data further revealed that a total of 18 out of 34 women in mid and
late career stages reported having a progressing career. These had an average of 23.9 years in permanent employment. Comparatively, 9 out of 11 men in mid and late career stages reported progressing in their careers at the point of the research. The men with progressing careers had an average years of permanent employment of 21.4 years.

This finding suggests that women were not progressing as fast as men. This is consistent with existing studies that have shown that women receive fewer promotions and that it takes more time before they are promoted than men (Hooper, 2016). This difference in number of men and women with progressing years also illustrates the fact that although both men and women may be exposed to similar organisational challenges, these tend to disadvantage women more than men.

Yet women additionally face challenges on the family front. This results in women making compromises in managing the tensions emanating from the family and work front unlike men and thereby limiting their career prospects. Moreover, men may be able to use more agency in shaping their careers when faced with institutional challenges than women who may additionally be saddled with family challenges.

Consistent with findings in other studies in non-western countries (Tlaiss and Kauser, 2011; Tlaiss, 2013b), this study found that despite the compromises that women make, a good proportion (52.9 percent) of the women in mid and late careers still managed to have progressing careers despite the cultural values, societal expectations and organizational/ institutional, attitudinal and structural barriers that they encounter. This was possible due to using agency to enact and manage their careers. For instance, there is evidence of more women respondents using agency to deliberately change jobs and organisations in search for better opportunities. In this case, 12 out of 24 women interviewed in banking and insurance pursued careers that involved one or two movements across organisations or industries.

This shows that women actively seek opportunities when in a position to do so and are prepared to change jobs if the immediate work environment does not provide them with that opportunity. Therefore, women who do what they can to counter the socially and culturally endorsed organisational or institutional barriers may be able to pursue successful careers. For instance, in banking and insurance organisations,
there were 11 women in mid and late career stages, from which nine reported to be progressing. From these nine at least six of them had enacted their progressing careers in more than one organisation.

The career experiences of a 47 year old, Janet, highlights the importance of agency. Janet was first a secretary and reported being affected by the male corporate culture in her first workplace, which did not support her in improving her educational qualifications despite other workers before her, mostly men, being supported financially. This is consistent with another African based study which argued that Kenyan women faced discrimination in career development opportunities (Ali, 2011).

This notwithstanding, through her own effort and support from her spouse, Janet was able to move out of a potentially non-progressing career as a secretary in her early employment years. Janet is currently pursuing an occupational career in human resources management and is one of the managers in the local bank. She has been making upward movements across at least four different organisations. Thus, through individual agency, women like Janet were able to progress like the Arab women managers in Tlais’s (2013) study despite “still facing the macro, socio-cultural and meso-organizational barriers and constraints” (Tlaiss, 2013, p.763).

Similarly, 53 year old Maria changed specialism from banking to secretarial in order to avoid getting stuck in a lowest banking grade in the local bank. She argued that during the period before adopting democracy in Malawi, women would take longer than men to be promoted even though they were high performers. Similarly, Teleza as discussed before, changed jobs when faced with sexual harassment from her immediate boss, which was affecting her promotion chances. Through use of agency by moving out of that job, over the years, Teleza has been able to rise and is currently part of top management in the multinational insurance company.

Some participants in this group also found that barriers to advancement can be overcome by persistence and hard work which has been evidenced by for instance juggling three things for some of the women i.e. working, family responsibilities and studying to upgrade qualifications. Some thought it was due to being visible (through
good work) to those responsible for promotion. A 38 year old Mary explained how she had managed to get to a managerial position:

“I think ... it’s [due to] my exposure to head office units as I have been in training college for five years...where we were training bankers... And again my involvement in a core banking system [project]. I was in the implementation team right from start so I have an overall understanding of the system from the operational perspective to the extent that I was going around to different bank branches and head office units, teaching other staff [about] this system. I taught even the CEO himself about this system. But also ... I was studying... and that also just worked for itself.”

Joyce, a 35 year old female manager in the local bank also showed strong agency by having to move from a higher position in a smaller insurance company to a lower position in a bigger bank. This decision was more of a strategic decision for achieving other, better positions in the near future in comparison to other smaller organisations that she had or could have joined at a more senior position. Further, this is also considering that a big organisation like the local bank may also offer better pay, than the previous more senior job she had.

In teaching, individual agency was also critical for moving out of potentially stuck careers. This was mostly portrayed by self-development, which in the past enabled men and women gain automatic promotions upon acquiring new qualifications. A 42 year old Doreen, one of the women in teaching who was at the late career stage, highlighted the importance of individual agency in moving out of stuck careers or even preventing getting stuck in the first place. Even though this has since changed, upgrading qualifications gave respondents a push in the right direction in their career:

“There are some promotions that you as an individual……seek yourself [for instance]……when you upgrade your qualifications... sometimes [promotion] is automatic...but these days, it’s difficult because they are ...saying that there are no vacancies.”

Other male and female teachers could easily have been stuck were it not for using agency to move out. For instance, Pilirani (43 years old), despite serving as a primary school teacher for 21 years at the lowest grade, had not been promoted. She
was not successful in any of the three promotion interviews that she attended within the 17 years she worked as a primary school teacher. She then upgraded her qualification to enable her teach at a secondary school.

During the research interview in April, 2016, Pilirani had served a further four years post her Diploma whilst at the lowest grade of a primary school teacher as promotions are no longer automatic following a qualification upgrade. She was however teaching at a secondary school. Promotions were then advertised and she applied for consideration. Pilirani was invited for interviews and she was successful.

She was then offered the new grade in October 2016 and got confirmed in July 2017. She started receiving her new salary in November, 2017, almost a year since she was promoted. Nevertheless, this typifies using individual agency to move out of stuck positions. If Pilirani had not upgraded her qualifications, she may not have had the opportunity to move out of the stuck position, let alone become a secondary school teacher.

Similarly, 40 year old Anne started as a qualified primary school teacher in 1994 as a T3 grade teacher as she qualified with a junior secondary qualification. She then decided to rewrite her MSCE, which she did twice to obtain good grades, which enabled her to be considered for teaching at a CDSS in 2007. In the same year, she got a scholarship to study for a Diploma in education, which then earned her an automatic promotion to become a qualified secondary school teacher. After teaching for a few years, she then applied again for a degree in education. Were it not for individual efforts in improving her qualifications, chances are that she would still be teaching in primary school. This finding is consistent with previous studies on other non-western societies like Lebanon (Tlaiss, 2014) and United Arab Emirates (Tlaiss, 2013b) concerning the importance of women’s individual agency and their determination in overcoming inequality and discrimination and pursuing successful careers.

Male teachers also used agency to progress. John (39 years old), like Pilirani was also teaching in secondary school whilst at a primary school grade after upgrading his qualifications. He had been promoted once before upgrading his qualification in
his 16 year-long service and was also hopeful that his new qualification obtained in 2014 was going to be a good stepping stone to progressing further.

In general, men were able to use agency more than women to counter any challenges emanating from the employment contexts as they were not faced with as many situations where they were expected to make compromises in their careers as was the case with women. There is also more scope to use individual agency in banks and insurance organisations than in teaching. This is so because in banks and insurance organisations, there are more opportunities for training through educational loans and grants. In contrast, funded teaching training opportunities are associated with funding and bureaucratic challenges.

7.4. Conclusion

This chapter aimed at assessing the extent to which the makeshift career conceptualisation provides an appropriate and illuminating framework for analysing the careers of the women included in this study. The data presented suggests that the interviewed women’s careers were only to a limited extent traditional (both organisational and professional) or protean and kaleidoscope. The studied women neither prioritise family responsibilities over work, nor do they necessarily pursue linear careers. They also do not have the opportunity to move in and out employment and depended on corporate structures for their careers. These women worked mostly full-time and continuously, despite their family responsibilities. As such, their careers to a larger extent, exhibited elements of the proposed makeshift career conceptualisation and less of traditional or protean and kaleidoscope careers.

The chapter has also illustrated the importance of individual agency in shaping careers. It has shown that movements from one job or organisation to another, as well as from one specialism to another, are part of the ways that women engage in to counter the challenges working against their career progression be it attitudinal or structural, which in certain cases may be exacerbated by masculine biases. These highlight a strong individual agency that women showed in order to make their careers better when the employment contexts could not guarantee any progress. The
chapter has also argued that men were able to use agency more than women, as they did not have to make as many compromises as the women did.

The next chapter discusses the key research findings, highlighting what the findings mean with respect to the existing literature on women’s careers and family responsibilities.
CHAPTER 8: Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This study sought to conceptualise the careers of women working in formal employment in a developing country context. This chapter discusses its key findings in relation to the studies’ research questions and the existing literature on women’s careers. The discussion is organised around the makeshift career concept developed in Chapter 3, proposed to address the limitations of existing career concepts in explaining the women’s careers in contexts like Malawi. The makeshift career concept proposed may, however, have relevance beyond developing countries like Malawi.

The review of traditional careers in chapter 3 revealed that employees are assumed to be pursuing continuous and linear careers, undisturbed by family responsibilities because of a clear household division between those responsible for paid work (mostly men), and those responsible for unpaid work (mostly women). In this perspective, those with paid work responsibilities always prioritise work and careers (Worthington et al., 2005). This approach is male-biased based around a male breadwinner (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). As demonstrated both by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and by findings in Chapter 7, Malawian women are responsible for both paid and unpaid work with no opportunity to prioritise either work or family roles. Therefore, the traditional career theory is limited in explaining the women’s careers in Malawi and similar contexts.

The protean career assumptions are equally inappropriate as the career actor is assumed to have the choice to move out of employment for child care reasons (Cabrera, 2009). From this perspective, women have alternatives when faced with requirements to work long hours, to travel frequently and meet tight datelines alongside their unpaid work. As argued in Chapter 3, such alternatives are at most applicable in contexts that allow reduced working hours or have a high prevalence of part time work. The theory also assumes that the career actor is sufficiently independent to make choices among various alternatives and most importantly is free to choose to work or not (Hakim, 2006).
But women mostly make constrained choices (Corby and Stanworth, 2009) and the protean career theory is limited in explaining careers of women who do not have access to working arrangements other than full-time and who are also constrained in their choices about their careers. In searching for further reasons why more women leave employment and why both men and women are “rejecting standard corporate careers,” (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006p.xii), the kaleidoscope career theory was proposed. This posits that reasons other than child care make men and women move in and out of employment and these include a search for authenticity, balance and challenges across the life span (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006b; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006a; Mainiero and Gibson, 2017). Those pursuing kaleidoscope careers are discarding the typical careers that are determined by and within organisational or corporate structures (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006b), yet in practice, careers of most people are still dependent on organisations.

Further, many workers, especially in developing societies, have limited job options and a majority focus on maintaining a job that enables them to provide for their families rather than meeting the higher order needs associated with authenticity, balance and challenge. Thus kaleidoscope career theory is also limited in explaining women’s careers in Malawi and similar contexts. It is on the basis of these limitations of existing career theories that the makeshift career concept was proposed as a better framework for understanding the careers of women in the studied sectors. This concept considers that women with family responsibilities may still have to work continuously and mostly full-time, are not able to move in and out of employment or to pursue other working arrangements and have limited job options while still depending on corporations to enact their careers. In this case, both the family context and the employment context contribute to makeshift careers.

This chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part discusses the findings presented in Chapter 5 on how the family context contributes to the makeshift careers. The second part discusses findings presented in Chapter 6 on how the employment context leads to very different forms of workplace inequalities and highlights the factors that contribute to makeshift careers. Lastly, the implications of the makeshift careers and individual agency are discussed, drawing on the findings presented in Chapter 7.
8.2 Family context and makeshift careers

8.2.1. *To what extent are women contingent or permanent members of the labour force in Malawi and what contribution do they make to family income and resources?*

The findings suggest that in Malawi women, just like men, are permanent members of the labour force even when they have family responsibilities. Unlike in traditional careers, the interviewed women did not prioritise work over family responsibilities and unlike protean and kaleidoscope career theories, they did not have the opportunity to opt out of employment due to child care or in search of a proper mix of authenticity, challenge or balance. Instead women faced the dual responsibilities: paid work and family responsibilities.

This is exemplified by the women’s positive work orientations, evidenced by their continuous careers, their long term labour force participation and their long tenure with their current employer. They worked continuously and full time, for 40 hours per week or more (although most of the teachers had shorter formal working hours), even though most were mothers. Nevertheless unlike in the traditional model, their family challenges still impacted their careers, despite working continuously and permanently. Their earnings were claimed to be very important to their families. Thus their economic position was not sufficiently strong to be able to choose not to follow the corporation’s determined careers.

These findings indicate the need for a new conceptualisation of careers and the evidence collected on the family context provides support for the proposed makeshift career conceptualisation. Although the income earned through women’s careers was beneficial to their families, the family context was found to be not always supportive of women’s careers. For a majority of the women, their careers were often less prioritised and were also only mostly supported if not challenging the household status quo. The moment their careers might challenge the status quo, the women reported receiving limited or no support from their spouses. Not only did they often have to accept to be trailing spouses but they also could not easily relocate for their own career progression, thereby also limiting their own careers. Support was mainly provided when they let their spouses influence their career decisions and direction.
Thus many of the women respondents were still expected to plan their careers around that of their spouses. Women in developed societies also face challenges in reconciling work and family responsibilities and have to make constrained choices (Crompton and Harris, 1998) but their choices and decisions are different from those of the Malawian women. For instance, in the UK context, women tend to have “discontinuous careers or periods of part-time work” (Lewis, 2010, p.355) due to the need to fulfil family responsibilities. In Australia, part-time employment is also a common approach used by women with dependent children (Rose et al., 2011). In Netherlands, most of the employed women also work part-time. However, the interviewed Malawi women cannot be described as contingent or temporary members of the labour market, contrary to mainstream economics literature which tends to assume that all women participate less in employment due to child care reasons (Rubery, 2014), an option not available to Malawian women.

Women’s increased employment in OECD countries has been mostly associated with part-time work (OECD, 2001; Fagan and O’Reilly,1998; Rubery et al., 1999b; Crompton, 1997, Smith et al., 1998; Rubery et al., 1998b) particularly that among mothers (OECD., 2005). In addition, many mothers withdraw from the labour force in the first 2 to 3 years following child birth (OECD., 2005). This limits the extent to which women in OECD countries can be considered permanent members of the labour force and instead may be contingent members, pursuing discontinuous careers (Solera, 2009; OECD., 2005; Lewis 2010) with their participation dependent on the presence of dependent children.

There are some exceptions such as Portugal and Finland and also among the higher educated women in most OECD countries. Unlike many women in OECD countries, women in developing countries have limited access to other forms of work arrangements like part-time working as this appears to be less established in the labour market (ILO., 1993) particularly among African employers (ILO., 1993). The Caribbean and Latin America have some part-time work arrangements and in the Middle East and North Africa, a few countries offer part-time work in the public service, but remain unenthusiastic about such arrangements. The prevalence of part-time work in Asia is also limited (ILO., 1993).
Two major reasons may account for the lower prevalence of part-time work in developing countries. Firstly, part-time pay is too low in a context where a full-time job salary is in itself also inadequate for subsistence. As Smith et al. (1998) note, most people employed part-time in OECD countries have access to additional income through a spouse or another household member who is employed full-time or through financial transfers like a pension or a student grant. In some OECD countries, the state may provide some substitution for the loss in earnings when working part-time although this tends to be limited to single parents (Rubery et al., 1998b) or to the unemployed. Only in Sweden are there opportunities to use generous parental leave pay to top up part-time earnings. The welfare state and safety nets in developed countries are much more established than is the case in the developing countries where these do not exist or are limited (Karamessini, 2014).

In developing contexts like Malawi, social protection is underdeveloped, making working part-time not a worthwhile option. Where part-time job options are available, like in the academia and the health profession, these are taken in addition to a full-time job (Muula and Maseko, 2006) or because of lack of full-time job opportunities. Thus, in developing countries, people only work part-time because more work is not available and not by choice (Bóo et al., 2009). In developing countries even where part-time work exists, working full-time is valued among married women with children more than their counterparts without children, because it increases household income, “consistent with an interpretation of working part-time as luxury consumption” (Bóo et al., 2009, p.1).

The second reason relates to child care arrangements. A major reason why mothers in developed countries often work part-time is due to challenges with child care. In developing countries, as the Malawian women studied exemplify, domestic workers or family members help working women with child care responsibilities. Although the study shows that domestic workers may become unaffordable for some women in future, their present access to either family or cheap labour support with child care and domestic work explains the ability of the interviewed mothers to work full-time and continuously.
This element therefore is critical in understanding the ability of Malawian women to pursue makeshift careers involving full-time and continuous work. Additionally, the study’s findings imply that in Malawi, wage levels are not compatible with the traditional male breadwinner model where men take primary responsibility for meeting the financial needs of their families, with women providing the caring services to their family members (Pfau-Effinger, 1998). Both men and women have been jointly responsible for family provisioning as discussed in Chapter 2 and this is consistent with the findings presented in Chapter 5, contributing to makeshift careers among the interviewed women.

The interviews revealed how women’s incomes are vital to the economic survival and wellbeing of their families, as is the case in other Sub-Saharan African countries like South Africa where most households are fully or partly reliant on women’s earnings with high feminisation for instance in the South African labour market since the mid-1990s (van der Westhuizen et al., no date). In Malawi, like other developing contexts, there is a high incidence of poverty and a high dependency ratio; hence the more people engage in paid work per family, the higher the household monthly income per person. Consequently, the dual breadwinner model is prevalent, making women’s careers not to fit the traditional career description.

However, while conditions do not support the thriving of male breadwinner model, (Pfau-Effinger, 1998), there is also limited institutional or cultural support for the dual breadwinner family model (GOM., 2014d). This is evidenced by limited state support as, ideally, dual breadwinner models are associated with child care services being provided or subsidised by the state (Pfau-Effinger, 1998). This runs contrary to the notion that a new “reproductive bargain” (Pearson, 2014, p.34) is necessary to achieve gender equality, with the state playing an active role in lessening the burden on women through provision of care services (Rubery 2015b). The development of welfare policies deliberately aimed at matching the erosion of the male breadwinner in favour of the dual breadwinner model has enabled Scandinavian countries to move closer to a gender equal dual breadwinner model (Crompton, 1999; Ellingsæter, 1999).
Also, the continuous full-time female employment pattern in Malawi is not associated with significant changes in the sharing of domestic roles, which remains traditional. Consequently, women’s participation in paid employment increases women’s work burdens (Pearson, 2014). Furthermore, although coming from dual breadwinner families, working women, especially mothers in banking and insurance organisations studied, still face significant challenges in reconciling work and family responsibilities, exacerbated by limited and gendered access to leave, long working hours, work pressures and requirements for geographical mobility (discussed in detail below).

The promotion systems in both sectors treat the worker as an individual with no allowance for the need to maintain dual earning. This shows that although the dual breadwinner family model characterises the situation of the interviewed women in Malawi, this has not resulted in the expected changes in their family division of labour, contributing to the makeshift career where women have to do both, with limited room to prioritise one over the other. Thus there is a mismatch between the dual breadwinner family model and the division of family labour.

Additionally, these findings mean that the structural factors (namely political and family) neither give incentives to the thriving of the male breadwinner model in Malawi, nor provide support for the dual breadwinner families. This contributes to the thriving of makeshift careers. Yet, elsewhere, like in southern Europe (Spain, Italy and Greece), the traditional model of the division of family labour characterized by the supremacy of the male breadwinner figure is consistent with a relatively low employment participation of women (Minguez, 2005), or women give up working altogether. The structural factors in these countries have thus been developed in a way that enables the survival of the male-breadwinner model (Minguez, 2005).

Where the male breadwinner model is declining (Crompton, 1999) like in Britain, France and Norway, this has been supported by the introduction of flexible work arrangements including part-time working, reduced hours of working and career breaks, although these have been mostly taken by women than men (Crompton, 2001).
In these cases, the move is towards what has become known as the one-and-a-half earner model (Ciccia and Bleijenbergh, 2014) which is currently dominant in the Netherlands. Thus in general, the switch from a male breadwinner model needs to be accompanied by a “restructuring of the state provision, transformation of the labour market and changes in families and households,” (O’Connor’s et al., 1999, p.2). Although developed countries vary in the level of assistance given to parents for combining paid work and unpaid work including child care (Crompton, 2001), in the Malawian context, there has been almost no change in support provision.

As discussed above, in Malawi there is no opportunity to work reduced hours and earn meaningful income and full-time work is necessary for family survival. However, women’s careers are not prioritised and only receive support if men’s careers are prioritised. As discussed further below, this pattern is supported by employment policies that promote long working hours and only provide maternity not paternity leave following child birth. This disjuncture between the existence of a dual breadwinner model and the limited state and employer support for dual breadwinning is a key feature of the Malawi context requiring women to manage the conflicting tensions emanating from both the work and family context through developing what I have conceptualised as the makeshift career.

8.2.2 What are the expectations placed upon women with respect to the family and community roles they are expected to fulfil and what resources and support are available to them with respect to child care and other family responsibilities

In answering this question, Chapter 5 explored the child care arrangements used by the interviewed women, the support they had with domestic work, spousal attitudes and wider social expectations of women’s roles. Domestic workers and family members were found to provide support with domestic work and child care enabling the women, despite having family responsibilities, to be permanently in the workforce, contributing to the makeshift career orientation. For some time, the national labour law in protecting domestic workers’ rights has not been strictly applied and therefore many were paid below the minimum wage and worked long hours. Domestic workers also rarely organised themselves or participated in trade unions.
This limited protection has made it easier for women in formal employment to combine paid work and unpaid work as domestic assistance was relatively affordable. These arrangements have reduced social pressures for change resulting in limited policy debates on child care and care for the sick and the elderly. The available pro-gender policies and legislation focusses primarily on gender quotas in recruitment and promotion, non-discrimination (GOM, 2012b; GOM., 1994) and gender based violence (GOM., 2011; GOM., 2014f) rather than care policies. Trade unions have also not advocated improvements in paid maternity leave or breastfeeding rights for working mothers.

However, currently, there is an increased uneasiness about the increase in the minimum wage that also applies to domestic workers, and pressure to extend the labour laws to domestic worker employers. This is a response to the ILO’s Domestic Workers Convention, 2011(No. 189) which came into force in 2013, extending basic labour rights to domestic workers around the globe (ILO., 2013). Women in formal employment are now concerned about the affordability of domestic workers as indicated by discussions in social media. Recent newspaper reports also show that some civil servants regard the revised minimum wage for domestic workers to be high considering the low pay that civil servants themselves receive (Nkhulembe, 2017).

The study also found that women from low socio-economic status families were finding it difficult to retain domestic workers and most teachers were relying on family members for support, which may not be sustainable. While not in any sense advocating less protection nor lower pay for domestic workers, what this research reveals is the need for a more coordinated gender equality policy. Efforts to uplift one group of women may bring undesirable effects on another group of women. Improved working conditions for domestic workers makes it difficult for women in formal employment to afford them and therefore raises new problems over how to combine paid and unpaid work. There is a need for proper policy reflections on this to prevent serious implications on women’s future employment behaviour.
Despite having support with child care and domestic work, the women interviewees felt they still had to perform certain tasks themselves and their spouses also had expectations over what tasks their wives should do themselves rather than delegate to domestic workers. These ranged from cooking, cleaning the matrimonial bedroom, helping their children with homework and taking children to under-five clinics for routine check-ups or when sick.

Additionally, the women were also socially expected to participate in community based activities spending more time than men. Similar observations were made by Aborampah (1999) in relation to women’s roles in funeral celebrations of the Akan of Ghana, where women are considered key to providing the support network for the bereaved. Similarly, Mphande (2014), also writing in the context of Malawi, noted that providing support to the bereaved in any form demonstrates communal responsibility towards the bereaved family.

As (Mlenga, 2016) notes, in some ethnic groups in Malawi, attending a funeral is compulsory. Women perform all the kitchen-related functions as well as other functions like sleeping in the funeral vigil room (Mphande (2014). These wider roles are typical of women’s community life in developing contexts as Falola and Amponsah (2012) noted in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. Their counterparts in developed societies do not necessarily have to play this community role, due to greater individualisation and to the availability of market substitutes for services that women in developing contexts provide on behalf of their communities. These expectations contribute to the making of makeshift careers, as women are expected to fulfil these roles even when they are in full-time employment.

Additionally, the reviewed literature on work-life balance places the main emphasis on child care (Crompton and Lyonette, 2006; Lewis, 2001a), implying that professional women with access to reasonably cheap childcare are less likely to have problems with managing work and family responsibilities. Contrary to this dominant view, the present study has shown that it is not just affordable child care that matters in managing the work-and-family interface.
Spending time with children is valuable but spousal attitudes and community expectations also determine what women should do. These are equally important factors in understanding women’s makeshift careers in developing economies.

8.2.3 To what extent are women supported or hindered by employment practices in fulfilling their dual roles in work and the family and is the support they receive provided through formal or informal practices?

In response to this question, the study identified both formal and informal practices in employment contexts that enable women to combine employment and family responsibilities. Of utmost relevance in this discussion is maternity leave. The study’s findings provide empirical evidence for the first time that Malawian women in the private sector perceive the maternity leave provision to be inadequate for them to comply with the WHO recommended period of six months for exclusive breastfeeding. There are also no breastfeeding regulations in employment contexts and a shorter exclusive breastfeeding period can be attributed to a short maternity leave, as exclusive breastfeeding for six months is difficult when a mother is entitled to only 8 to 12 weeks of maternity leave with no breastfeeding regulations in place. Yet, these issues are not often or openly discussed in Malawi. Social media discussions have dwelt on mothers sharing concerns about leaving a very young child to return to work as well as coping strategies with shorter maternity leave.

Failure to breastfeed exclusively has been associated with women’s choices including not wanting to appear old fashioned (Masiye, 2017). However, as my study has shown, this is incorrect as the interviewed women wanted to spend more time with their infants and continue breastfeeding as long as possible, but they were prevented by short maternity leave, long working hours, lack of breastfeeding facilities in their workplaces and challenges in bringing a child to work for breastfeeding purposes even if breastfeeding facilities and breaks were available. Therefore, there is need for revision of legislation and introduction of workplace policies that support breastfeeding. The study also found that the workplace culture in banking and insurance, provided limited support for combining work and family responsibilities.
In other developing societies like Indonesia, the absence of supportive workplace cultures has made many working-class women leave formal sector employment following marriage and motherhood for informal sector work where it is easier to combine with family responsibilities like child care (Ford and Nurchayati, 2017). Those who remain after having children often relied on family networks and domestic workers for childcare. Yet, work interruption, (common among women in western societies) and movement to informal sector employment (evidenced in Asia-Pacific countries like Indonesia), is not an option for Malawian women due to limited formal employment opportunities and unrewarding informal sector employment. In any case, moving to informal sector work is detrimental to women as globally, there is a strong link between informal employment and poverty and careers hardly exist in such precarious work environment (Mannila, 2015). Women moving to informal employment also counters the gender equality agenda in formal employment.

8.3 The Employment context and makeshift career

8.3.1 How do different employment contexts support or hinder careers of women in formal employment in Malawi?

Just like the family context, the interviewed women’s employment contexts has also contributed to the makeshift career orientation. The employment contexts, demanded a lot of time from staff regardless of their family situation, geographical mobility was an important requirement for recruitment and promotion decisions and organisations remain an important feature in enacting careers. In order to discuss how the employment context contributed to workplace inequalities and consequently makeshift careers, this section discusses findings relating to the following five areas:

- use of merit in joining a career and the intersection of gender and class
- undervaluation of women’s work
- gender-based discrimination
- occupational segregation
- opportunities for work-life balance
8.3.1.1 Use of merit in joining a career and the intersection of gender and class inequalities

This research found that the Malawi government has developed various policies aimed at reducing different types of inequalities in teaching for example through the 50:50 selection policy by gender and the quota system to reduce district-based inequalities. Additionally, as presented in Chapter 6, the study found that there is merit-based recruitment and promotion in teaching, evidenced by clear stipulation of criteria in open adverts enabling more people, to access information about training and promotion. As presented in Chapter 2, public sector employment provides secure jobs for its employees and it is the main employer of women (Riddell, 1992). Additionally, through provision of subsidised teacher training and loans and bursaries for those students in need, employment prospects for the poor were boosted. This has widened access to training, thereby potentially reducing inequalities. This specific engagement with inequalities is not found in the banking and insurance organisations.

However, the findings also show that inequalities based on the intersection of gender and class still persist in both sectors. In teaching, the basing of human resource decisions on merit is not bad in itself but the way merit is determined tends to be exclusionary. Use of merit can be non-discriminatory only when or if there is a level field in terms of people’s ability to meet the merit-based recruitment and promotion requirements. Yet, this is not the case as women and those from not so good schools (mostly the poor, with women being the most affected) fail to achieve the required educational qualifications to join teaching.

This is also as a result of inconsistencies due to the implementation of public policies aimed at reducing inequalities at the same time as austerity policies were being adopted by the state. Thus, the government’s apparent good intentions aimed at reducing gender- and class-based inequalities in teaching are not fully translating into equal opportunities in practice, as these policies are hindered by austerity measures in response to freezes in donor aid and inconsistent donor funding.
The budget constraints have resulted in fewer teachers being trained per year despite high demand for training and the need for more teachers. It has also resulted in delays in employing and paying teachers. These have had important implications on firstly the poorest people, and secondly on women, just like European austerity programmes have had negative impacts on the mechanisms aimed at reducing inequality (Cavero and Poinasamy, 2013; Poinasamy, 2013). In the Malawi case, those women and the poorest (most of whom are also women) who relied on teaching for a secure job in a context of underdeveloped formal employment, have been affected by these developments. The increasing financial challenges that the public sector in Malawi is going through, is thus making it difficult for people to join the public sector, with disproportionate impacts on women and the poor who have in the past found security of employment in teaching.

So although the public sector does not formally promote workplace inequalities, failure to train and employ more teachers as well as pay them timely, reproduces inequalities. This is consistent with similar studies in a European context that demonstrate the effect of a reduction in public sector employment on women’s jobs (Rubery et al., 1999b). It is also consistent with findings on the impact of European Union’s financial crisis and austerity policies on gender equality efforts (Karamessini and Rubery, 2014; Rubery 2015a; Berik, 2016; Villa and Smith 2014). Karamessini and Rubery (2014) and Villa and Smith (2014) note that the austerity measures adopted by the EU may lead to the loss of past improvements in gender equality and weaken commitments to reduce gender equality. Similarly, the current austerity measures in Malawi, may mean reversing progress already made and limiting further progress towards reducing gender and class inequalities through public sector employment in industries like education.

Although previous studies have assessed the effects of recruitment freezes in the public sector in developing countries including Africa when adopted as part of the IMF prescribed public sector adjustment policies (SAPs) during the 1980s (Marinakis, 1994; Riddell, 1992), these assessments were not gendered, thereby assuming similar effects on different groups of people.
Yet the SAPs themselves were often designed under a male-breadwinner bias in some developing countries like Latin America (Beneria et al., 2016) or were gender blind (Waylen, 2000; Brydon, 2013; Elson, 1995b; Elson, 1995a) “which leads to male bias” (Elson, 1995a, p.165). Other studies on SAPs have been gendered. For instance, an ILO. (1998) study on the consequences of SAPs in the Asia Pacific region showed that women had higher unemployment rates than men between mid-1980s to early-1990s. This current study, by adopting an intersectionally-sensitive approach to exploring inequalities, sheds light on the possible gender and class-based inequalities resulting from austerity-induced recruitment and promotion freezes and delays in payment in public teaching in a developing economy context, further widening the literature base.

Additionally, the findings suggest that those based in rural areas have limited opportunities in upgrading their qualifications, which may help in speeding up their promotions. The intersectionally sensitive approach therefore helped to illuminate on the different opportunities available to teachers based in rural and urban areas and the impact this has on careers. In contrast, in banking and insurance, the findings suggest that human resource practices are not entirely meritocratic and involve informal methods including word of mouth recruitment, secret succession plans and supervisory recommendations for promotion. Informal approaches to identifying recruits have been found in other studies to be discriminatory, mostly against women (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Sommerlad et al., 2010) and especially those from poor backgrounds who cannot afford to meet costs associated with training.

The poor women are also more likely be affected as they are less likely to have a good MSCE plus the required professional qualifications. Additionally, particularly in the local bank, there were also inequalities observed based on the intersection of gender, regionalism and class as more people from the Northern region, who are also mostly better educated and less poor than people from the other regions were highly represented in the local bank, when compared to their share in the overall population.

Further, increasing performance criteria for promotion and bonuses result in pressures to work long hours, thereby make combining paid and unpaid work more
difficult as found in existing literature (Crompton, 2001). Working long hours may lead to ‘presenteeism’ (Simpson, 1998, p.387). The focus on merit-based promotion associated with working long hours regardless of family roles has implications for women’s careers, as demands at work are often incompatible with expectations about their responsibilities as wives and community members. As a result, women make compromises, such as not putting in more hours, in line with the makeshift career proposition. This may be detrimental to their careers, but the interviewed women still did not leave employment, as assumed in protean careers.

8.3.1.2 Undervaluation of women’s work

There are two features of work undervaluation: “women being paid less for the same level of efficiency within the same job” and “women being employed in jobs or occupations that are themselves undervalued” (Grimshaw and Rubery, 2007, p.7). In this study, due to equal pay for equal jobs principle in place in Malawi, the first feature of undervaluation is not much of a problem as both males and females at the same grade are paid the same. However, it is the second feature, which was evident. For instance in teaching, women teachers mostly taught in infant classes, associating women teachers with nurturers rather than educators, as found in other studies (Kelleher, 2011; Mallozzi, 2014).

Unfortunately this may affect women’s promotion chances. Additionally, overall pay in teaching is low. Although not yet a female-dominated profession, it is easier for women to join teaching than banking and finance and it also offers more opportunities for reconciling work and family responsibilities. However, the overall low pay in teaching may undervalue the contribution of teaching and specifically the contribution of women in the economy. In the local bank, the main problem for women’s pay was their concentration in lower skilled jobs. However in the multinational bank and in the multinational insurance company, women were mostly in sales and customer service jobs and there was evidence of undervaluation.

Although the selling of insurance policies is an important function in insurance, the pay that the sales staff received was largely commission based and their continued employment depended on how many insurance policies they sold. There were also
limited opportunities for progression in the sales jobs hierarchy and sales staff were not prioritised in professional development including access to insurance qualifications in the multinational insurance company. Moreover, the evidence of gender segregation, with more women in sales jobs, suggests that both organisations are still guided by stereotypes in hiring certain people for particular jobs. However the local insurance company did employ more women in finance-related jobs, but progression was also limited, as priority was given to those with insurance related qualifications.

This finding is consistent with other studies based on other developing economies like Asia (OXFAM Issue Briefing, 2016), where also women’s work is undervalued and receives less pay. The assumption in kaleidoscope careers is that when women are facing different sorts of discrimination, including in the lower value often attached to women’s work, they would leave the corporation. However, despite women’s work being either low skilled and routinised or undervalued and despite this leading to the persistence of gender inequalities, the women studied did not leave employment due to the income needs of their families, consistent with the makeshift career conceptualisation.

**8.3.1.3 Gender based discrimination**

Although employees in banks and insurance enjoy relatively higher pay and status than in teaching, the research suggests that gender-based discrimination is on a larger scale than in teaching. Unlike in teaching, there are no deliberate positive selection policies in recruitment and selection and coupled with reliance on informal methods of recruiting and promoting employees, gender-based inequalities persist. This finding is not new as extant literature on both developed and developing economies show that recruitment and selection decisions are not gender neutral (Curran, 1988; GOM, 2012a; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Headworth and Nelson, 2016; Bezbaruah, 2015).

Contrary to other countries where females comprise around half of the financial services workforce (Bezbaruah, 2015), females in this sector in Malawi continue to trail males. At the global level, the increase in women employed in the service sector
including financial services has been attributed to the increase in the significance attached to feminine attributes associated with the sector “such as teamwork, caring, serving and communication” (Bezbaruah, 2015, p.2). This does not seem to have had an effect on Malawi’s financial services. Nevertheless, in the multinational insurance company, its corporate culture has helped in achieving gender equality at the top most level of the hierarchy although gender disparities exist at the other managerial levels.

Further, the study demonstrates that women faced indirect and direct forms of gender discrimination in promotion. Consistent with what Headworth and Nelson (2016) found for women in the legal profession in America, the disparities first observed in recruitment are made worse by lower rates of promotion. As pointed out above, most of the organisations studied still consider willingness to work long hours an indicator of commitment and hard work, critical characteristics used in promotion. Yet some of these women have family responsibilities and as such had to make compromises where required, consistent with the makeshift career conceptualisation.

Specifically, the requirement for relocation following recruitment and promotion in both teaching and banking discriminates more against women than men, resulting in women becoming trailing spouses, consistent with earlier studies that have shown that more women than men are trailing spouses (Harvey, 1998). This also shows lack of support for dual career households as employers treat each worker as an individual and there is no support for enabling geographical mobility without women in dual career households experiencing more problems. Thus, employers still expect staff to be geographically mobile, independent of their family situation. The incompatibility of these expectations with dual breadwinner families is not considered and the only outcome is discrimination against women who are perceived as not as geographically mobile as men. This works to sustain the proposed makeshift careers as women end up making compromises and losing out on career prospects.

Additionally, the lack of transparency in succession plans to effect promotion means that certain people may be discriminated against, resulting in inequalities, often gender based. This is consistent with Mainiero and Sullivan’s (2006b) argument that
women face discrimination in the workplace, with limited options for career advancement. Yet, the interviewed women did not leave the workforce when faced with discrimination, providing evidence for the proposed makeshift career orientation.

### 8.3.1.4 Occupational segregation

The findings also demonstrate the existence of occupational gender segregation with women mostly occupying lower positions. This may imply that managers perceive women as less competent in some jobs especially managerial positions in all the studied organisations except in the multinational insurance’s top management level. This result is consistent with Zevallos (2013) who argued that although not always intended, work tends to be segregated by gender in most organisations. Thus despite their competences, many female employees have limited chances of moving up the organisational hierarchy (Schwanke, 2013).

In banking and insurance, vertical segregation is maintained via “the internal (organisational) labour market” whereby “men and women may initially be recruited at a similar occupational level, but whereas men proceed upward through a career structure, women do not” (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990, p.34). Progress through internal labour markets in the studied banks and insurance organisations is controlled by a number of factors including personal links, achievement of targets which is associated with working long hours, work experience, job-related qualifications and ability to be geographically mobile, whether locally or internationally. My research revealed that some of the interviewed women had problems meeting these requirements for advancement.

The findings in Chapter 6 also suggest that in teaching, vertical segregation can be looked at from the angle that men and women may be differentially recruited into vertically ordered categories within the same occupation. The findings concur with studies that have shown that men and women are recruited into different positions in teaching (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990; Sperandio, 2014). However, in the specific context of Malawi, teaching exemplifies a profession where women, despite not dominating the primary teaching domain, predominate in the (lower status)
teaching of young children in infant classes of primary schools with limited opportunities for promotion whereas men predominate in senior classes in primary schools and in secondary schools where, although limited, opportunities for promotion are better than for infant teachers. This has significant effects on inequalities between men and women. Again, despite women occupying lower positions, this did not make them leave the workforce, as assumed in kaleidoscope career theory, contributing to the shaping of makeshift careers.

8.3.1.5 Opportunities for work-life balance

Despite teaching being associated with low pay and limited control over the planning of careers, the findings suggest that it provides good opportunities for combining work and child care and allows some control over work schedules, especially for those in urban secondary schools. This is consistent with the observation by Tausig and Fenwick (2001) that control over work schedules increases perceived work-life balance. In contrast, due to long working hours and lower flexibility in work schedules, the women in banks and insurance experienced more challenges combining work and child care, especially following maternity leave. These findings extend the mostly Western-focused literature on work-life balance by providing experiences of different groups of women in a developing country context. Nevertheless, despite challenges in their work-life balance, the women in banking and insurance did not leave employment at any point, consistent with the makeshift career conceptualisation but contrary to protean and kaleidoscope career conceptualisations.

8.4. The makeshift career and individual agency

8.4.1 How do individual women in formal employment make sense of the tensions emanating from the employment and family context factors and how does this sense making shape their careers?

The findings in Chapter 6 suggest that as women work in different employment contexts, they are faced with different organisational and institutional constraints that may challenge their career prospects. At the same time, as presented in Chapter 5,
they face challenges emanating from their family roles. However, only two of the interviewed women had stopped working at some point in their career and both had since returned to the workforce. One important outcome is that my findings do not support the assumptions in existing career models that women are opting out of the workforce in high numbers to stay home with children.

The majority of the interviewed women do not have an opportunity to withdraw and have to work full-time and continuously whilst at the same time fulfilling family responsibilities. They are neither able to prioritise careers over family as assumed by traditional career theories (Super, 1957; Levinson, 1978; Levinson, 1986) nor to move out of employment as protean career theories assume (Hall, 1996; Cabrera, 2009). Therefore, the proposed makeshift career conceptualisation, which takes into account the need to work full-time and continuously irrespective of family responsibilities is more relevant in explaining women’s careers. This concept provides for the first time to my knowledge, a relevant framework for analysing careers of women in formal employment in a developing economy’s context, where most women do not leave the workforce as a response to child care problems or for any other reason for that matter as posited by protean and kaleidoscope career concepts.

Furthermore, the findings in Chapter 7 show that, women’s careers are enacted by making sense of both the institutional and family constraints. Consequently, women have to make compromises when faced with institutional challenges, without necessarily choosing one over the other, a key element in the makeshift careers concept. Of significance in this discussion is a compromise women make relating to geographical mobility. As presented in Chapter 6 and 7, movement from one place to another following recruitment and promotion is a key feature in the studied employment contexts. In certain instances, this relocation involves moving to rural and remote areas. Teaching in rural schools is also associated with limited prospects for acquiring new educational and professional qualifications necessary for career progression, due to limited access to further education and training facilities. Additionally, this limits chances for their spouses to also get a transfer to the same location at the same time. More women thus tend to follow their spouses around and at the same time, find it difficult to have their spouses follow them when their own
career prospects depend on it. This implies that the career success of the women who are trailing spouses in both contexts studied revolved around their spouses’ career. This means that women’s careers are not a priority even though they cannot be discontinued or interrupted due to family financial concerns.

This finding concurs with other studies that show that “married women are much less likely than married men to report being willing to move for improved job opportunities for themselves...” (Harvey, 1998, p.311). Elsewhere, the challenges associated with a dual-career family have led women to leave employment (Cabrera, 2007). In such contexts, some women stopped working due to relocation of their spouse’s job. Other women quit their own jobs because their own jobs required them to move but they were not able to do so due to their husband’s jobs (Cabrera, 2007). But in contrast to this extant literature, challenges with geographical mobility have not necessarily made the majority of the interviewed women leave the workforce at a certain point but often, this has been associated with forfeiting their own promotion and promotion prospects, with a minority of cases opting for commuter partnerships.

Additionally, although having trailing spouses is a global phenomenon, the experiences of trailing spouses in developing contexts differ from their counterparts in developed countries. In western societies like the UK, it is mostly those wives who work full-time and in managerial jobs with higher incomes who are able to overcome the impact of being a trailing wife on their career. They are able to retain their jobs owing to the ease of commuting which is facilitated by good public transport system or ability to invest in a second car (Bruegel, 1996). This is a luxury among most of the interviewed women.

In Malawi, the transport system is privatised and hence tends to be expensive and un-reliable for use over a long distance and on a daily basis. Also, the high living costs against low pay for most of the trailing spouses make it difficult for them to manage one car, let alone two cars to facilitate commuting. For the two women in commuter partnerships in this study, the respondents themselves or their spouses did not commute every day, due to costs and risks involved. In Chapter 5, the findings also demonstrate that women were supported in their careers by their spouses but this support was conditional. Male spouses were supportive of their partners’ careers only when the women’s careers were makeshift and their support tended to wane.
when women challenge the status quo by crossing gender boundaries, thereby risking social disapproval, through for instance making independent decisions to upgrade educational qualifications which requires time away from the family home.

This makeshift career concept has three major interrelated implications in understanding careers of women especially in developing contexts. Firstly, employers need to consider that work and family roles intersect in the women’s career life and employers if cognisant of this aspect, might be able to identify how best to help women with their careers, rather than using it to discriminate against them. Secondly, the makeshift career idea requires a new culture of change to be embraced in organisations. There is need to foster a culture that recognises that family and work roles intersect to shape the career experiences of men and women rather than maintaining a culture that considers work and family to be separate factors in the lives of men and women, in line with traditional careers assumptions. The makeshift career approach also recognises that family life aspects sometimes get in the way of work. Recognising this reality can help organisations to still attract and retain qualified staff, without the negative approach that their family responsibilities are detrimental to the organisations’ objectives.

Therefore, putting in place mechanisms to ensure a proper reconciliation of work and family responsibilities would be a step in the right direction and would enable companies to do more to tap the skills of those with family responsibilities. Although teaching offers opportunities for work life balance, the banks and insurance organisations could do better. As the findings suggest, it is difficult to get approval for time off even to rest and those with a high potential to request for time off, mostly women, are less likely to be offered a job. Putting in place mechanisms for ensuring that women, especially those with young children, can still spend quality time with their children is a good starting point. Giving women equal access to employment is essential to the achievement of social justice in a society in general and specifically procedural justice in the organisations studied which is concerned with the “perceived fairness of the means that are used to make decisions” (Sweeney and McFarlin, 1997, p.83) in recruitment and selection for example. Therefore, not employing a well-qualified and talented woman because she will ask for time off for child care reasons in future goes against these principles. Further, if the organisations
studied could move beyond using outdated norms, such as requiring long working hours, full geographical mobility, and no flexibility in time off for family responsibilities in making promotion decisions, this could contribute towards achieving social justice and gender equality in the studied organisations than is the case now and this will ensure that organisation are able to retain well talented women (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006b).

Thirdly, the work environment is by default designed to cater for men which makes it difficult for women to join and succeed within it. Organisations that take into account the proposed makeshift career orientation stand a chance of enjoying employees’ good will and may therefore avoid losing out on talented staff especially at higher levels who tend to have more options after becoming more experienced and having acquired new skills obtained through training supported by the organisation. It also helps in avoiding lawsuits as employers who discriminate against women are being held accountable by the legal system in Malawi. The constitution of Malawi guarantees the right to equality and non-discrimination and together with the Employment Act and the Gender Equality Act, individuals who suffer from any kind of discrimination can seek relief through the courts.

Elsewhere, organisations are battling with legal cases on gender-based discrimination (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006b). In Malawi, such cases have also been on the rise since adopting democracy. In September 2017, media reported a case where a female lawyer in the Malawi army applied for leave for judicial review on what she felt “was unfair redeployment from her post ... and that it was unreasonable for the Army to redeploy her based on suitability, and the redeployment process itself” (Nyasa Times Reporter, 2017). Among other reliefs that the plaintiff sought was that the decision made by the commander to relocate her from Lilongwe to Salima “is illegal, discriminatory [and] tantamount to harassment and endangerment” (Nyasa Times Reporter, 2017). Although she lost the case, this was considered the first case of its kind as the defence force management rarely gets engaged in lawsuits

with its staff. It also highlights that women are beginning to question their employers’ actions and decisions.

Also, a review of cases presented before the Malawi Industrial Relations court shows that lawsuits hinging on gender-based discrimination have been increasing over the years: cases have ranged from being dismissed from a public organisation because of failure to accept a transfer due to a woman’s care responsibilities (see Makawa v Admarc\(^{49}\)) and being dismissed from a private secondary school job because the female employee’s husband who was also a teacher at that school had resigned (see Kaunda v Tukumbo girls Secondary School\(^{50}\)). If employers are not sensitive to the makeshift career orientation of women, continued discrimination of women on that basis can only make matters worse.

8.4.2 What is the role played by women’s individual agency in constructing their careers as they respond to organisational, institutional and family factors?

The study’s findings suggest that despite the compromises that women make, most women in mid and late career stages had progressed in their careers. This is consistent with findings in other studies in non-western countries that find that women are still able to progress in their careers despite the various challenges they face (Tlaiss and Kauser, 2011; Tlaiss, 2013b; Tlaiss, 2013a). Consistent with Tlaiss’s, (2013b, p.763) emphasis on the importance of “women’s agency at the micro-individual level and their attempts to construct careers and be successful” in the context of women managers in the United Arab Emirates, our findings also identified agency as key to success in the proposed makeshift careers. Since little is known about careers of women in non-western societies (Tlaiss, 2013b), this study extends this limited literature base, by considering the nature of careers of women in non-western setting and how agency is used to navigate the socio-cultural and organisational constraints impacting on their career prospects.

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\(^{50}\) IRC 11 of 200591 of 2005 [2006] MWIRC 8 [26 January 2006]
8.5 Conclusion

This chapter set out to discuss the study’s main findings in relation to how careers of women in Malawi are shaped, taking into account both family and employment context factors. The most important implication of the study’s findings is that contrary to the extant literature, women in Malawi are not able to prioritise work or family roles and vice versa at a particular time and must deal with these constraints simultaneously, thereby requiring a new conceptualisation of careers. Two further key findings can be highlighted.

First there has been very limited adjustment in both the employment arrangements and in family roles and social norms to the reality of dual breadwinning, such that it is primarily up to individual women to address the tensions between these two areas of responsibility and make compromises. Leaving it up to individual women risks the wastage of talent as well as adding to the stress of women’s working and family lives.

Second, the forms of inequality found within the two employment contexts take very different forms and vary by both gender and class and in certain cases region, suggesting the need for detailed qualitative research to fill the knowledge gap on women’s career experiences in Malawi, Sub-Saharan Africa and developing countries more broadly. The next and last chapter provides the study’s recommendations and conclusions highlighting the study’s limitations, its theoretical and practical contributions, directions for future study and overall conclusions.
Chapter 9: Recommendations and Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter starts by considering the study’s limitations before identifying its theoretical and practical contributions and reflecting on its implications for future research directions. The chapter concludes by summarising the study’s key findings.

9.2 Limitations of the study

As Saunders et al. (2016) points out, it is important for researchers to recognize and reflect on the limitations of their research and to consider if these have any major repercussions on the results’ interpretations. Two main limitations should be considered. First, as the study used a qualitative design in order to achieve a detailed understanding of women’s careers in two Malawian industries, it has not generated results suitable for statistical generalisation which is concerned with the “prevalence of particular views or experiences [or] the extent of their location within particular parts of the sample, about which wider inference can be drawn” (Lewis et al., 2014, p.351).

Nevertheless, as argued in Chapter 4, this study may still allow for theoretical generalisation to similar contexts (Lewis et al., 2014; Mayring, 2007; Yin, 2014; Symon and Cassell, 2012; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Furthermore, the data from this study has been used to provide insights into the applicability of existing career models in a developing society’s context (Lewis et al., 2014). The outcome has been the proposal of a new conceptualisation- “makeshift career”, which appears to be more relevant for describing women’s careers in developing economies.

Secondly, the study was designed in 2013 without comprehensive labour market information. Midway through the PhD programme, the results of the 2013 Malawi Labour Force Survey became available, providing detailed statistics on the country’s labour market situation for the first time (GOM., 2014d).
This helped to deal with most of the baseline data challenges experienced at the beginning, making it possible to achieve the study’s aim within the confines of the data available. Despite these limitations, this study still provides valuable theoretical and practical contributions.

9.3 The research’s theoretical and practical contributions

As Tlaiss (2013b) and Sullivan (1999) argue, there is sparse literature on women’s careers in developing contexts, and that which exist is biased towards the Asian context (Baird et al., 2017; Tlaiss, 2013a; Tlaiss, 2013b). There is particularly limited research on how employment and family context factors interact to contribute to career experiences of women in formal employment in most Sub-Saharan African countries (Mokomane, 2014), that can be considered informal security welfare regimes (Gough et al., 2004). This study contributes to this limited literature base, by focussing on the careers of Malawian women, thereby extending and contextualising the ‘new’ careers literature. Therefore, the present research embodies a rare chance to stress the distinctiveness of the career-related experiences of Malawian women and how important these findings are in terms of both theory and practice.

9.3.1 Theoretical contributions

Firstly, the experiences of the interviewed women in relation to how paid work and family responsibilities are combined, were found to be highly context specific. These results caution against the generalisation of findings based on North American and European research to Sub-Saharan African contexts, without considering differences in cultural and labour market contexts. The study also recognises that the interviewed women shape their lives in a gendered culture that defines men and women differently in the homes and organizational contexts. Taking into account the contributions of both these arenas at the same time is critical in understanding the nature of careers of Malawian women in formal employment.
Although the makeshift career concept has been derived from and helps in explaining the careers of Malawian women, it could potentially explain women’s experiences elsewhere. Briscoe and Hall (2006, p.16) suggested the need for further studies to generate rich theories for improving our knowledge of “continuing and emerging career varieties... to capture the diversity of today’s careers and the consequence of assorted career orientations.” They further point out the need for developing career constructs to enable full understanding of careers in all cultures, which are not limited to western and Anglo cultures which dominate the current literature. Similar arguments are also made by Sullivan (1999) and Sullivan and Baruch (2009) and Tomlinson et al. (2017) have recently reiterated the need for new views and concepts to help explain how careers are enacted over the life course. This study is therefore a step in the right direction in filling this research gap, by both specifically focussing on a developing country and by identifying the career experiences of women with family responsibilities, who work continuously and mostly full-time, against a background of existing career theory which focusses on “independent and free career agents” (Tomlinson et al.,2017,p.1).

Secondly, although class and gender have received significant consideration in research, much of the research focus is on the individual effects of these characteristics than on the intersection between them. Class remains a characteristic that is relatively understudied and studies focusing on the effects of class operating together with other characteristics are limited if not absent (Berry, 2012). At the same time, although gender-based inequalities may be considered unacceptable, class-based inequalities are still widely held to be reasonable, often being seen as the negative consequences of “meritocratic practices” (Berry, 2012, p.244) used in recruitment and promotion. Basing human resource management decisions on merit is not problematic in itself but the way merit is determined in many cases tends to be exclusionary. This is due to a lack of a levelled field that allows all people according to ability to meet the merit-based recruitment and promotion requirements. As Rubery et al., (1999, p. 74) noted in the European context, more “reliance on fair structures and systems to determine recruitment and promotion” should be the focus in the equality agenda rather than just on performance and the individual.
Furthermore, where the merit criteria for promotion are not transparent or even deliberately structured to exclude some groups, or where recruitment and selection methods are inconsistently applied, the most likely result is discrimination. The identified class-based inequalities also intersect with gender to shape inequalities; with more women from low socio-economic status households being less able to acquire the relevant qualifications to enable them to join the studied industries. In the specific context of the local bank, gender, class and regionalism also intersect to reproduce inequalities. By taking an intersectionally sensitive approach to the analysis of inequalities in the studied industries, this enabled understanding how different groups of men and women were affected by various practices that contribute to inequalities in different employment contexts. If an intersectionally sensitive approach was not adopted, differences among men or among women themselves would not have been considered, thereby ignoring the possibility that there may be important disparities among men or women themselves (Hankivsky, 2014).

The other contribution relates to the use of Acker’s inequality regimes framework in understanding inequalities in public and private sector organisations studied. The framework among others, identifies organising processes that produce inequalities. In its original focus, Ackers theory was concerned with organisational contexts exemplified by private sector organisations where organisational processes and practices are shaped by the organisation itself. In public sectors, policies and practices are shaped by the state, which has multiple objectives. Additionally, the management of the sector is driven by state budgets or state-based systems of administrative or bureaucratic procedures rather than the organisation’s specific practices, controlled directly at the organisational level, which is the focus of Acker’s framework. In this case, public sector equality policies are affected by budget deficits, which therefore reduces the opportunities for especially women and those from low socio economic status groups to join teaching for example. These are then still exposed to discriminatory promotion practices, which are made worse by limited availability of funded jobs and promotion processes that fail to take into account the actual performance on the job.
Although Healy et al (2011) applied Acker’s framework in order to explain why inequalities exist even in public sector organisations, which are supposed to be concerned with promoting equality, this has mostly been in the context of decentralised public sector entities. Acker’s inequality regime framework is therefore more relevant in studying the inequalities in the private sector and more decentralised public sector entities and is limited in its applicability to studying a highly centralised and bureaucratic public sector context like the one studied.

Lastly, this research has focussed on a country where human resource processes are rarely systematically researched and documented for both practical and academic purposes. Although there is growing research relating to human resource processes in the public sector in Malawi (Kayuni and Tambulasi, 2007; Dzimbiri, 2008; Dzimbiri, 2016; Muula and Maseko, 2006; Chitsulo et al., 2014), there is still limited literature on private sector organisations particularly for the finance and insurance industry. This current study contributes to extending this limited localised literature base.

**9.3.2 Practical contributions**

This study has important practical implications for employers, public policy makers and individuals.

**9.3.2.1 Implications for employers**

The findings provide valuable insights regarding respondents’ evaluation of recruitment, selection and promotion processes and practices and how some of these disadvantage some people. For instance, the informal external recruitment method used in banks appears to allow the exclusion of women and those based in remote rural areas as access to job information is limited.

To counter this exclusion, the study recommends the use of formal methods. Although it is considered expensive and time consuming to go through the process of advertising and screening applications (Armstrong, 2010b), use of the right job specifications may help in attracting the right employees whilst making sure all
potential applicants have access to the job information. Additionally, given the importance of family in the lives of Malawian men and women and how it influences specifically women’s career decisions, organizations need to seriously consider the effect of their recruitment and promotion policies on gender equality. Offering an individual a job or promotion based on their ability to be geographically mobile has the potential to contribute to gender inequalities. In this case, the study recommends that the decision to offer a job should not be based on their ability to relocate.

Requirements for geographical mobility need to take into account family factors particularly for women, who are unlikely to have willing trailing male spouses. Furthermore, as the study has shown, inconsistency in selection, especially in banks and insurance companies, whereby some are interviewed and others are not, is discriminatory. There is need for organisations to be consistent in processes and practices so as to be seen to be giving all an equal chance. Non-transparent promotion methods and secretive succession plans are also potentially disadvantageous to women. Therefore, this study recommends making job information available to all those who meet the minimum qualifications for the higher position, thereby giving everyone a more equal chance of being considered for the promotion. These recommended actions can assist employers, through their Human Resource departments in improving how these Human Resource processes are implemented, such that they do not contribute to the persistence of inequalities.

9.3.2.2 Implications for government and public policy makers

The study has also made public policy relevant contributions. It has been acknowledged recently that most sector plans in Malawi are not clear on strategies to address gender disparities (GOM, 2012a). The findings of this study may thus inform policy and strategies for reducing gender inequalities that come as a result of how recruitment, selection and promotion are done in the public service. The study has shown that requirements for going into primary teaching have become stricter, due to more people passing their MSCE and limited infrastructure to accommodate the increasing demand for training. By reflecting on the role of the austerity state in contributing to class and gender inequalities, the study has highlighted the importance of government as an equal opportunities employer, such that any
budgetary constraints faced by government have detrimental effects on the equality agenda. The study suggests the need to intensifying efforts to increase resources for training to meet the demand and to prioritise providing funded jobs at different levels in teaching. This policy would not only reduce gender and class based inequalities but also address the teacher shortages.

Similarly, this study points to lack of implementation of the 2012 gender equality bill provisions, by not following the gender quota’s requirement especially in promotion in teaching. These findings therefore help in exposing that the legal provisions for promoting gender equality are not being followed. Additionally as the evidence suggests, meaningful progress in advancing women’s careers is unlikely if their private life roles are not considered. The findings should thus help in directing policy makers’ interests towards care issues in Malawi, by illuminating how these affect the lives of women in formal employment. For instance, the study highlights the inadequacy of the current maternity leave especially for women in banks and insurance who have to work long hours after the maternity leave. Overall, issues to do with care need to start to inform policy debates and workplace collective bargaining as these may present even stronger family and welfare challenges in the near future.

9.3.2.3 Implications for individuals

The study has identified how agency is key in employee’s career progression. There is need for the education system to inculcate this attribute in individuals to make them aware of the need for strategic actions in planning and developing their own career paths. Additionally, some of the work-family challenges that women face are due to the expectations placed upon them by themselves, their spouses as well as the society at large.

As more and more women are becoming educated and entering formal employment, there is need for re-socialisation of men and women to recognise the need for women, just like men, to have the time to focus on their jobs. This could be possible through promoting gender equal social norms and expectations in young people, which is slowly gaining momentum and could change the expectations placed on
women in future, thereby reducing the work-family conflicts that some women experience now. Additionally, there might be a need for women to consider sharing of domestic workers in order to reduce costs as well as inequalities among women.

9.4 Directions for future research

This study employed a qualitative, in-depth case study approach in order to collect rich data to understand the careers of women in a developing economy context, an area which is under researched. However, the study was limited to two industries and there are two main employment-related areas that warrant further wider studies in Malawi to allow for statistical analysis and generalisation. Firstly, differences in attitudes towards maternity leave were found in the two employment contexts, with women in teaching mostly satisfied with the maternity leave length and the women in banking and insurance mostly reporting the maternity leave length to be inadequate. There is therefore a need to explore further the opinion of women in private sector organisations regarding the adequacy of the maternity leave.

Further, none of the studied employment contexts had breastfeeding policies. In contexts where these exist and are properly implemented, they may enable women returning to work after maternity leave to continue with breastfeeding for the recommended six months. This is confirmed by a quantitative study conducted by Heymann et al. (2013) involving national policies on breastfeeding breaks in the workplace in 182 Member States of the United Nations. A large nationally-representative sample focussing on different elements of breastfeeding policies would be helpful in gauging the relevance of this in a developing context and how best they could be developed and implemented. With respect to the family context, due to the importance of domestic workers in enabling women’s makeshift careers, there is also a need for a qualitative in-depth study that assesses further, the extent to which domestic workers are currently affordable to different groups of women and whether sharing of domestic workers might help in reducing costs and inequalities among women. Further empirical studies should also focus on assessing the relevance of the proposed makeshift career concept in explaining women’s careers in
other developing economies and indeed in developed economies where work patterns characterised by working full-time and continuously are the norm. Since working part-time also involves compromises, the makeshift career concept can also be applied in such contexts to see the extent to which it can explain women’s careers. The more case studies are used to check the relevance of this makeshift career conceptualisation, the better the framework will be in providing an alternative career concept for explaining women’s careers.

9.5 Conclusion

This thesis set out to conceptualise women's careers in a developing country context, based on the experiences of women in formal employment drawn from two industries in Malawi, and taking into account both family and employment context factors. This pluralistic consideration of the family and employment context was important as the study's results have indeed shown that both these contexts bring forward important elements that operate simultaneously at every stage of a woman’s career. These have important implications for how women’s careers in Malawi are enacted. In this regard, the study has come up with a number of key findings.

Firstly, the findings suggest that Malawi is characterised by a hybrid gender regime in the sense that although the dual breadwinner is the norm, it is at the same time very gender-traditional in terms of social attitudes and in the sense that women retain full responsibility for unpaid work in a welfare and employment context that provides very little support for an effective reconciliation of both spheres. Thus the women interviewees, most of whom were mothers, worked full-time and continuously (although the teachers had shorter formal working hours) and portrayed positive work orientations. This emphasised the importance of their income for their families’ sustenance, due to low incomes and high poverty levels coupled with high dependency ratios.

This is contrary to both the traditional career theory assumptions that full-time and continuous employment is associated with male breadwinners who can prioritise work over family roles due to the clear gender division of household labour. This employment behaviour of the women interviewees also differed from a protean or kaleidoscope career orientation, as they had limited options to move in and out of
employment according to either childcare needs or to pursue alternative career experiences. Thus, the existing career theories are limited in conceptualising the careers of women in Malawi and similar contexts.

Therefore, in order to understand the careers of women in Malawi and in similar contexts, it was important to consider the effect of both the employment and family context factors operating simultaneously on the lives of women working in formal employment. As the study has shown, the careers of women in Malawi and other women in similar circumstances and contexts, therefore can better be explained by a different framework-the makeshift career that takes into account compromises in both work and family spheres, depending on the circumstance, but not involving moves in and out of employment.

Secondly, there is limited support for the dual-breadwinner model under which women work full-time and continuously. The employment contexts have not been adjusted to assist women in properly reconciling work and family responsibilities. Employers in some of the private sector contexts discriminate against women in recruitment, selection and promotion in part because they are concerned about interference from their family responsibilities. Women are seen as making too many requests for time off for family responsibilities but employers expect long hours of work despite the prevalence of dual earner households. This discrimination is facilitated by a lack of transparency and openness in recruitment and promotion systems that restrict access by both gender and social class. In teaching there is less overt discrimination but problems arise from both budgetary restrictions that undermines some of the government efforts to increase women’s representation, particularly affecting those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Institutional arrangements, such as promotion interviews that do not focus on job performance but competence in English also disadvantage women teaching infants.

Also, employers in both sectors still expect staff to be geographically mobile, independent of their family situation. The incompatibility of these expectations with dual breadwinner families is not considered and the only outcome is discrimination against women who are perceived as not being as geographically mobile as men. At the same time, women’s family context, by still retaining the traditional division of domestic responsibilities, does little to lessen the burden on women. Similarly, the
socio-cultural expectations placed upon women by themselves, their spouses and the society at large have negative repercussions on women’s careers, by making it difficult for women to combine work and family responsibilities.

These results, highlight the importance of recognizing the simultaneous impact of both employment and family context on women’s careers in formal employment in Malawi and similar contexts. Nevertheless, individual agency was found to be critical if women are to make progress within makeshift careers regardless of the hurdles presented by both the employment and family contexts. Women were able to exercise individual agency through self-professional development, moving from one organisation to another, as well as moving from one specialism to another. All these were done as ways of countering the challenges working against women’s career progression.

Contrary to the existing literature, women’s careers in these case studies are not traditional, protean or kaleidoscope. Sullivan and Baruch (2009) and Sullivan (1999) have suggested the need for studies on careers in non-western contexts. The study’s findings therefore provide the basis for broadening existing perspectives to more adequately reflect the experiences of women, particularly in the developing world. Moreover, the existing career models may also be inadequate for capturing women’s careers even in western countries and the makeshift career concept extends the range of possible career models. Therefore, the blanket approach to studying careers of women “based on studies conducted in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia, making western models the de facto “standard” against which careers in other countries are compared” (Sullivan and Baruch, p.1562) may not always work. This therefore advocates for a context based approach in order to understand the experiences of women.

Furthermore, Rodriguez et al. (2016) observed that extant literature on intersectionality as applied in work and organisations research is still nascent requiring more studies to further build this literature base. Therefore, while developing and applying a new career concept that is more applicable to developing country contexts, the research has also, through its intersectionally-sensitive analysis of two very different sectors, contributed further insights into the importance of the
specific practices within sectors, even in the same cultural context, in shaping career opportunities by both gender and class and in certain cases region.

A number of cross-case conclusions in terms of how different employment context factors shape makeshift careers have also been drawn. To begin with, merit is used in joining teaching. Yet, women and those from low socioeconomic status backgrounds find it difficult to meet the merit requirements resulting in gender and class based inequalities. On the other hand, in banking and insurance organisations, human resource practices are not entirely meritocratic as informal methods are used to recruit and promote employees, resulting in discrimination, mostly gender based. There is also undervaluation of women’s work in both sectors with for instance women teachers mostly teaching infants. In insurance organisations, women were in occupations like sales and finance related jobs, with limited career progression prospects. In banks, women worked in back office jobs, which were mostly routinised and with less status.

Gender based discrimination was also evident in all the cases studied. This was more pronounced in the banks and insurance organisations as there are no deliberate positive selection policies to guide recruitment and selection, as is the case in teaching. Promotion, which is linked to working long hours and ability to relocate, is also discriminatory against trailing wives. Additionally in teaching, failure to take into account the on the job performance for promotion decisions is discriminatory. Further, there is vertical segregation, with women mostly occupying lower positions in all the cases studied. The study has also revealed that there are more opportunities for work-life balance in teaching due to shorter formal working hours than is the case in the private sector cases, where people are expected to work even outside the official working hours.
References


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Appendix 1: Labour force participation rates and employment rates

Labour force participation rates by sex among the 15-64 year olds from 1998 to 2014 in Malawi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>88.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>86.3</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>86.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>89.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formal and informal employment of Malawian men and women aged 15 to 64 years in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment rate</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those in informal employment</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>88.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those in formal employment</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: How drivers of change influenced the Chewa culture

From the middle of the nineteenth century, four external influences contributed to the destruction of the limited dignity that the Chewa women enjoyed. These were the introduction of the slave trade, the invasion of patrilineal groups into Malawi (Hodgson, 1933, Phiri, 1983), christianity and colonization and the money economy.

To begin with, as early as 1810, Chewa chiefs started being involved in slave trade with people from the east coast of Africa (Phiri, 1983). Females were a target of slavery because they were considered to be potential wives, source of agricultural labour and potential bearers of children (Hodgson, 1933). Chewa people also engaged in war with other groups like the Ngoni at the time they were trying to counter intrusion. It is noted that the men among Chewa preferred to have as wives the women they had gotten through slave trade or war than the bona fide Chewa wives (Phiri 1983). There was also competition between a slave woman who wanted to gain favour from her shared husband by being obedient in every way possible and a Chewa woman who was not as inferior to her husband but wanted to keep her marriage in the face of competition. This, Phiri (2007) argued was the beginning of a change in Chewa women, making them lose their status and become very submissive to their husbands. It was thus being made clear to the Chewa women that given a chance, the Chewa men would have wanted all women to be their slaves (Phiri, 1983, Phiri 2007, Hodgson, 1933).

The second change was due to the foreign influence coming from patrilineal societies that came to settle with the Chewa namely the Swahili people who came with the slave trade from the East Coast around the 1840s (Hodgson, 1933). They created a big town in Nkhotakota among the Chewa and everybody in that area followed the Swahili system of taking a wife to live with the husband and not the other way round (Phiri, 2007). The second group was the Chikunda from Mozambique who came as traders in ivory, elephant hunters and refugees in the 1870s (Phiri, 2007, Phiri 1983). The Chikundas, despite being patrilineal did not influence the Chewa that much because they came in small groups and ended up
being absorbed into the matrilineal system of the Chewa (Phiri, 2007). The third group was the Ngoni who ran away from the leadership of the Zulu king Shaka of southern Africa (Phiri, 1983, Hodgson, 1933). These arrived in Chewa areas in the 1870s and defeated some Chewa people of Dedza and Dowa and settled near or with them (Kandawire, 1977). By and by, the Chewa (matrilineal) people started practicing a patriarchal type of marriage through inter marrying the patrilineal Ngonis through a system of marriage of paying bride price (Hodgson, 1933; Phiri, 2007) thereby acquiring full authority over the wife and the children (Semu 2002; Phiri 2007). Tracing of rights and duties through the father, patrilocality, and bride wealth have helped consolidate the position of men in patrilineal groups (Semu, 2002). In this case, the wife was expected to move to her husband’s village (virilocality) (Phiri, 1983). Phiri further notes that it was also the Ngonis that destroyed the religious power of women among the Chewa as women were now expected to relocate to their husbands villages (after the bride price has been paid full) upon getting married (Hodgson, 1933). There is evidence that when the Ngoni political and military power declined, the Ngoni started mixing their culture with the Chewa through the intermarriages that were taking place (Hodgson, 1933), thereby helping the matrilineal system to survive.

Relatedly, the third and most critical change in matrilineal system of the Chewa was as a result of the arrival of the missionaries during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Coupled with christianity which could not recognise women as religious leaders, colonialism added new complications by imposing its own concepts of gender-role differentiation, such as the introduction of the western concept of Mrs. (translated in the local language as wife of, which most married women use till today (Lwanda 1996). Originally the women were addressed by their fathers’ name, showing their identity using words like NaChisale (showing that she is daughter of Chisale). As Lwanda (1996) suggests, the new term of address presumed the superiority of the husband and even showed a degree of ownership by the husband at

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51 Between 900 to 1480, women had strong religious powers and had total control of the rain shrines as mediums. They also had political leadership. The female led shrine came to an end when the Chewa area was invaded by a Ngoni group which was patriarchal. The coming of the missionaries and consequently the colonial rule did not create a positive atmosphere for the restoration of the female led cult (Phiri, 2007).
the expense of a woman’s identity, since she was no longer being addressed by her father's name and/or clan name. Missionaries and western modernizing agents also compounded the situation through their lack of commitment to women’s education, (Semu, 2002). Moreover, Lwanda (1996) notes that through the “christian male chauvinism” the churches also assigned women the traditionally women-dominated roles like primary school teachers and nurses. The missionaries also changed the relationship between the husband and the wife and responsibility over children. Influenced by the Pauline view that the husband is head of the nuclear family unit, all missionaries advanced that the husband was to exercise power over his wife and also be responsible for his own children and not the wife’s uncles or brothers (Phiri, 1983).

With respect to the introduction of the money economy, the colonial era failed to strengthen women’s traditional roles in the family economy of food production and marketing, since the modernizing agents tended to focus attention on men as agricultural producers and assigned commercial marketing to them, whilst leaving the petty trade areas to women (Lwanda, 1996, cited by Semu, 2002). In the urban areas, women soon became dependent on male wage earners for a living due to the introduction of the money economy under the colonial rule. In the rural areas, there was the introduction of cash-crop production, wage labor migration, changes in property rights (especially privatization of land), which further consolidated the position of men Davidson, 1993). Since the 1930s, there is dependency on the market to meet some basic needs which cannot be fulfilled within the family economic mode of production. In order to earn cash, men relocated to look for paid work. Women then had to follow their husbands employed by the missionaries and the colonial government, showing the long history of women as trailing spouses. As such in both matrilineal and patrilineal systems, new ways of relating to women (or even control) emerged (Lwanda, 1996, Semu, 2002). In matrilineal systems, dependence on cash for paying hut tax and labour migration (Davidson, 1993) favoured men and forced women to become increasingly dependent on men economically. Consequently, the little economic autonomy that women had enjoyed (through inheriting land from their mothers which they used with their husbands (Phiri, 2007; Semu, 2002) disappeared. In any case, the changes in the family economy in terms of division of labour (as men were either working for missionaries
and British settlers away from their villages in order to produce cash income for paying hut tax and meeting other basic needs), increased the agricultural load for women, who were at the same time experiencing a reduction in economic sovereignty they enjoyed previously (Davidson, 1993). Dependence on cash income resulted in more controls on women’s labour and fertility by the patriarchy. In addition, limited employment opportunities in industrial, domestic, and clerical work has meant that, generally, more men than women have been absorbed into the labour economy (Semu, 2002).
Appendix 3 (I):  Interview Guide for Key Informants
Organisation _______________________ Position of KI__________________________

Part A: Nature of organisational processes/employer practices

1a. How many men and women do you have at different levels of the organisation?

b. How many men and women are in leadership positions? How many men and women were available for promotion recently? How many got promoted? (Explore any variations)

2. What are your organisation’s main divisions that employ professional people?
   How are these divisions dispersed and linked?

3. How is work organised in these major divisions? (Prompts: Team based, project based, individual based?)

4. Which divisions and occupations/positions are occupied by more professional women or by more professional men and why?

5. What can you say about the expectations for mobility by professional staff from one division/occupation to another?

6.a. What is the nature of employment contracts that you have for professional staff? What are the proportions of workers in: Permanent contracts? _____ Fixed-term contracts? ________

   Temporary workers? _____ Outsourced staff? _____ Other? ______

   b. What are the characteristics of the workforce in terms of: Graduates? _________ MSCE holders? _________ Ethnic and nationality orientations? _________

   Why does particular ethnic group(s)/nationality dominate over others? Are there any plans to increase the number of staff from other ethnic/nationality groups?
7a. What are the standard working time arrangements in this organisation? Are employees expected to work beyond the stipulated working hours whether at home or within the organisation? How often? During which specific periods of the year? 
b. What has been your experience with female employees with family responsibilities with regard to the working time arrangements?

8a. Is there compensation for working outside the standard working times? Is it voluntary? How is it regulated? What are the implications on those with family responsibilities? Is working long hours considered during promotions? 
b. Is domestic/international travel required? What is your experience with mothers and wives?

9.a. What are the employee qualities or behaviours that are valued and encouraged in the company? How are they rewarded?
b. Between men and women, how would you compare the ability to exhibit these valued qualities or behaviours? Can you give specific examples when these differences were observed.

10a. What are the entry qualifications into (a) clerical positions? (b) managerial and/or professional positions? 
b. What are the promotion systems that are used for these positions? Are they different? (probe: interviews, performance appraisal results, nominations by managers, willingness to relocate, personal connections, skill/professional and job related qualification, prior experience, composition of interview panels for promotions, ability to work long hours, long service, attendance records, open adverts?)
c. How would you describe the organisational structure? What are the normal career paths? How do these career paths affect men’s and women’s careers?
d. Are vacancies primarily internally filled or do they involve external recruitment? Is everybody free to apply for promotion? Do women apply for promotion? 
e. Are there barriers to mobility beyond certain points in the job structure? What causes such barriers? (prompts: Qualifications? Gender? Location of position? Ethnicity or nationality?) 
f. Which categories of women satisfy or fail to satisfy these promotion requirements?
g. Any specific systems for ensuring gender equality in recruitment and promotion?

h. To what extent do different categories of women apply for/satisfy the promotion requirements in comparison to men?

11a. What has been the nature of restructuring efforts and reforms that the organisation has gone through (Delaying? Downsizing? Decentralisation? Upskilling?)

b. What was the intended purpose? (Prompts: Cost cutting strategy, work intensification?).

c. What was the unintended implication on jobs and careers especially on women? (Prompts: Upskilling? Deskilling? Job enlargement? Job enrichment?)

d. How have the above affected employment and careers especially for women?

e. When compared to the structure that was there previously (where change is reported), what can you say about career paths so created? How do such career paths affect women’s careers?

12. Has the organisation experienced changes in working time arrangements during the past 20 years? What were the justifications for the changes (Prompts: to extend operating and opening hours? To increase productive hours and reduce overtime costs?).

13. Does the organisation support participation in social networking activities (clubs or sporting activities?) Do women participate in such networking activities? If not why? Is such social networking important for promotion? How about in ethnic networks?

**Part B: Make-shift careers among professional women**

1. How do women in your organisation manage the work-family interface at different stages of their life? Do you know what their childcare arrangements are?

2. How do processes of managing work and family interface influence careers?

3. Have some women failed to meet organisationally determined career progression requirements due to family responsibilities?

4. a. Is there evidence of women opting to pursue a different career within or outside the organisation or slowing down in their career in the process of
juggling work and family responsibilities? What happened? How do you accommodate such women?

b. Is there evidence of women reducing/changing working time because of family responsibilities?

c. Is there evidence of women leaving the organisation due to family responsibilities (eg. spouse going abroad for studies, spouse moving to another city? Problems with child care? How do you accommodate such women if they request to come back to the organisation later?

d. Do you think women’s prioritisation of certain roles at a particular point affect their advancement chances? How? Are certain positions age specific? Do you consider older women to these positions who were not available for promotion at their required age?

e. Has the organisation encouraged women to pursue certain careers in order to manage work and family responsibilities?

f. Do you have specific jobs in this organisation that women like doing due to their ability to enable them combine work and family responsibilities? What are the implications in terms of gender equality efforts in your organisation?

g. Is there evidence that women show less commitment to the organisation when they have family responsibilities?

h. What organisational practices exist that shape such make shift careers? (low pay, low status jobs, no chance for training, attending workshops/going on field trips etc?)

PART C: Organisational processes and women’s careers along a life cycle

1. How do organisational practices close down/open up opportunities for women across the life course?

2. How does the family-work interface change over the life course due to changing family roles?

3. Are there differences in progression experiences between older and younger generations of women in this organisation? (Prompts: For women that have been in employment for 20 years plus (how can you compare their progression now and during the one party era? (in terms of how quickly or slowly they have climbed up the hierarchy) why?)
4. What are the other within country differences among women in terms of their employment and career progression experiences?

**Part D: Institutional arrangements, historical legacies and cultural context and Translation into Organisational processes/employer practices**

1a. What provisions are there in your organisation for enabling women to manage work and family responsibilities?

b. How long is maternity leave in this organisation? How about paternity leave? Do you experience any problems implementing these? Are all line managers supportive of these and other practices for managing work and family? Any chances for working regular hours?

c. How would you assess these provisions?

d. Upon returning from maternity leave, how much work responsibilities are women given? Why?

e. Does the organisation have women whose spouses work in a different city/district? What is your experience of managing such staff? How do you handle “following spouse” requests? What about men in your organisation, do they always have their spouse with them?

2a. How would you assess this organisation’s efforts in making the best use of female talents?

b. How have your efforts shaped organisational processes? What could be done to help women more? Why has this not been done? What has been the effect on women’s employment and careers?

3. How would you assess Malawi’s legal framework especially that highlighting gender equality as regards promoting women’s employment with respect to informing your organisation’s efforts? Does it have any influence on your organisation’s practice/processes?

4a. What historical legacies exist in Malawi regarding gender roles and how do you think these influence women’s employment now?

b. How has the participation of women in employment evolved over time especially in your organisation for the past 20 years? What is the current situation? Have there been any changes now? In what ways?
5a. Are there any perceived differences in the career motivations/attitudes towards family responsibilities by women from different ethnic groups?

b. How have you adjusted policies/practices to accommodate the different orientations towards family and work of the individual women or do you assume that all mothers etc will have the same orientations towards careers and family?

c. In what other ways does culture inform your organisational processes and/policies?

6. What policies/processes have worked in improving women’s status in your organisation? In what ways? Which ones have failed? What can your organisation do to improve on the formal policies so that they do not disadvantage women?

Concluding thoughts

1. Please share any experiences you have had with respect to promoted women who failed to deliver as expected.

2. Please share any experiences where the promoted women delivered as expected.

3. Please share any experiences where some women with clear talents do not apply for promotion or are offered promotion but refuse?

End of Interview: Thank you
Appendix 3 (II): Interview guide for women in managerial and non-managerial positions—First phase

Part A: General information

1. Marital status: Married/living with partner; Divorced________ Widowed________ Not married________

2. What are your educational qualifications? MSCE_____ Diploma_____ Advanced Diploma________
   Bachelor’s degree _____ Postgraduate_________

3. What is your position in this organisation?_____________________

4. For how long have you occupied this position? How does this compare in relation to men or other women? Why?

5. For how long have you been working? When did you join this organization?

6. At what position were you when you joined this organization? How long did it take to move from the previous position to this one? Why?

7. How is your day spent? ______________________________________

8. Number of dependent children and their ages:______________

9. Who else requires care in your house apart from your children?___________

10. What’s your age category? a. 18-28_____b. 29-39_____ 40-49_____Over 50


   e. Yao_____ Other(specify)

Part B: Nature of organisational processes/employer practices

1a. How is your work organised? (Do you work in a Team or as an individual?)

b. How does this nature of work organisation influence your career as a woman?

2a. What has been the changes that this organisation has gone through recently? (Delaying? Downsizing? Decentralisation? Upskilling?)

f. What was the intended purpose?
g. What was the unintended implication on your job and career?

h. What is the nature of your employment contract?

i. How does this organisation’s structure affect your career path as a woman?

3a. Are you a member of a social club any sporting activity or ethnic network? If not why? What is the nature of such social clubs? Is social networking important for advancing careers?

b. Do you have a female or male mentor in this organisation/industry? What is your experience?

4a. What time do you start and finish work? Is it regular or irregular starting and finishing time?

b. Is this work schedule the same for everyone in the organisation?

c. What has been your experience with such working time arrangements?

5. Is there compensation for working outside the stated hours? Is working outside the stated hours voluntary? How is it regulated? What are the implications on those with family responsibilities? Is willingness to working long hours/outside the stated hours considered during promotions? Do you have to take work home? Or work over weekends? Does your job involve travelling domestically/internationally?

6. a. Have you been promoted in this organization before? From what position?

b. What is the promotion process/systems followed? How do you assess the criteria for promotion used?

c. To what extent do women like you easily meet the promotion requirements in comparison to men?

7. If you compare yourself to a male colleague you started work with in this industry, who took longer to move from one level to another? (Probe: why?)

8. Are there any gender considerations when promoting members of staff in this organization?

9. How do you feel about your career development opportunities in this organisation?

10. What would you say are the organizational policies and practices that affect your career advancement as a woman?

Part C: Makeshift careers among professional women
5. How do women like you manage the work-family interface at different stages of their life? How does this process influence your career?

2a. Did you at a certain point interrupt your career in the process of juggling work and family responsibilities? Did you change jobs/career/work stations? Did you stop working? Did you reduce working hours? What happened?

b. What dilemmas did you face during this time? What choices did you make?

3. Do you think your/women’s prioritisation of certain roles at a particular point affect career advancement chances? How?

4. Have you at a certain point prioritized your family over the organizational career advancement requirements or vice versa? Why? What happened? What was the effect on your career? What is the basis for your prioritisation?

5. If you compare yourself to other women, would you say that there are different experiences among women in terms of career advancement (Probe on these categories of women (older vs younger women, mothers with family responsibilities, single mothers, women outside headquarters of the organisation, women working in rural areas, women with relations in management) : Prompts: For women that have been in employment for 20 years plus (how can you compare your progression now and during the one party era?(in terms of how quickly or slowly you have climbed up the hierarchy) why

6. Are there specific positions in this organisation where women like occupying due to their ability to enable them combine work and family responsibilities?

7a. Did you at any point opt to pursue a different career/request to occupy another position within or outside the organisation in the process of juggling work and family responsibilities?. What was the consequence?

8. Do women like you find it easy to stay on in this organisation after acquiring family responsibilities? Do they change jobs within the organisation or leave? Do they change working times to facilitate work-life reconciliation?

9a. What are the childcare arrangements that you have?

b. How satisfied are you with such child care arrangements (in terms of costs, quality of services rendered, schedule/availability when required, time spent?)
10. What formal and informal practices exist in the organisation to enable you reconcile work and family and progress in your career?

11. What resources and constraints are available for you in juggling work and family responsibilities?

12. What has been the effect of your family responsibilities on your career development?
   (Prompts: how? When? What happened (what stage in the life cycle?, i.e. Marriage, child birth, child rearing, following spouse)? Would you have been in a different job? Or position/organisation?)

13. Are women assumed to be less committed to the organisation when they have family responsibilities?

14. When women pursue careers/hold positions that they think will enable them manage work and family what is the implication of this in terms of gender equality efforts in your organisation?

15. What organisational practices exist that shape the make shift careers?(low pay, low status jobs, no chance for training, attending workshops-going on field trips etc?)

16. What other factors hinder or promote career development of women?

17. How do(did) you overcome barriers?( only for women in managerial positions).

18. Does your partner help with child care and other house hold chores? What are his attitudes towards your career and gender divisions of responsibilities?

19. How has the attitudes towards gender roles between men and women changed over time with respect to what you are supposed to do as a woman? What is your cultural society’s (ethnic grouping) expectation in terms of what you are supposed to do in your family? How do such attitudes influence your career?

PART D: Organisational processes and women’s careers along a life cycle

1a. How do organisational practices close down opportunities for women across the life course?

b. How do organisational practices open up opportunities for women across the life course?

2. How does the family-work interface management change over the life course due to changing family roles?
3. What are the other within country differences among women in terms of their employment and career progression experiences?( prompts: highly educated women those with links with important people, ethnicity etc)

**Part E: Institutional arrangements, historical legacies and cultural context and Translation into Organisational processes/employer practices**

1a. What provisions are there in your organisation for enabling you and other women manage work and family responsibilities?

b. How long is maternity leave in this organisation? How about paternity leave? Any chances for working regular or reduced hours?

c. (If with children) What is your experience with maternity leave and other child care related absences?

d. Upon returning from maternity leave, how much work responsibilities were you given? Why?

e. (If married) Do you and your spouse work in the same city/district? If no what happened? How do you manage this? How does the organization assist you and other men and women in a similar situation?

j. How would you assess this organisation’s efforts as regards promoting women’s employment and career progression?

2. Do you think your organisation follows Malawi’s legal framework in terms of the practice/processes it implements for advancing gender equality agenda? (will be asked to women in managerial positions only)

How do these cultural legacies influence women’s employment now?

3. How valuable is your career in terms of financial contribution for meeting family needs in relation’s to your husband’s and other male colleagues? What is the basis for your perception of the contribution described? What are your obligations to supporting your own family financially?

4. What policies/processes have worked in improving women’s status in your organisation? In what ways? Which ones have failed?(for those women in managerial positions).

**End of interview: Thank you**
Appendix 3(III): Interview guide for men and women in teaching-Second Phase

PART A: Biographic information:

Marital status:

Educational qualifications:

Position:

Age:

Ethnicity:

PART B: Organisational processes and careers

1. How did you get your first job in this organisation? How did you get to know of a vacancy in this organisation? Was an advert placed in the newspapers/other public media? Did you go through interviews? Did you know anyone in the industry when you applied for the job? Do you think that helped you in getting into teaching? What about your colleagues? If you know, how many people were recruited at the same time as you? How many were men, how many were women?

2. Do you know the criteria they used to shortlist you?

3. What are some of the questions that you were asked during your job interview? Was there a question about where you were comfortable working? If yes, what was your response?

4. How long did it take for you to get your first job after getting your teaching qualification? What were you doing in the meantime?

5. Where did you obtain your qualifications? Did you get your highest qualifications whilst working here or before? If whilst working here, how did you meet the costs for training? How do your colleagues meet their training costs? Explain any differences.
6. What is the process/system followed for sending/allowing staff to go for paid/unpaid for training in your organisation/industry?

7. Why did you choose this job? Are your expectations being met through this job? In what ways? Do you think that this industry is a good place for women to work and develop their careers? Do you have any ideas how teaching could attract more women?

8. How does promotion process work in teaching? What are the procedures followed in effecting promotions?

9. Have you been promoted before? If yes what criteria was followed? Did they advertise internally? Explain some of the topics that are covered in the interviews for promotion? Did you go through interviews for promotion? Was it an oral interview or a test? How was the interview panel constituted?

10. If not promoted before, why? Have you applied, been turned down or just discouraged from applying/ not yet ready for promotion?

11. Have you done other jobs in teaching? If yes please provide details.

12. Would you say that your industry plans for its staff’s career progression? Explain.

13. Do you have a mentor? How did you identify your mentor? How does having a mentor help you in your career?

14. For how long have you been in the current position? What are the differences in job descriptions between your position and the one above you?

15. What positions require additional qualifications? How important is training for promotion in your organisation? Do you know anyone you can refer me to who is still at a primary school teacher grade but has a Diploma/Degree which is meant for a different grade?

16. How satisfied are you with your career? Do you contemplate changing jobs? Why? If yes why haven’t you changed jobs yet? How is the system disadvantaging/advantaging you?

17. If you compare men and women, who have higher turnover rates in teaching in your opinion? Do you have any idea why this might be the case? In your opinion, what reasons would make the other gender leave?

18. What time do you start and finish work? Is it regular or irregular starting and finishing time? Is there compensation for working outside the stated hours? Do you have to take work home? Or work over weekends? How often?
19. Despite the additional pay that rural based teachers get, why is teaching still considered as a low paying/status job in comparison to similarly graded jobs? In your opinion, is teaching a low status profession? Why?

**PART C: Family factors**

20. Do you have children? How many? What are their ages?

21. If at school or older, what are their school hours? Who looks after them after that? Who takes/picks them up from schools? Who looked after them when they were younger?

22. What are the childcare arrangements that you have? How satisfied are you with such child care arrangements (in terms of costs, quality of services rendered, schedule/availability when required, time spent?)

23. What other family responsibilities do you have?

24. What has been your experience with working time arrangements vis a vis your family responsibilities?

25. What policies/practices are there in teaching to help you with managing work and family responsibilities?

26. Does your job involve travelling domestically/internationally?

27. What are your spouse attitudes towards your going for training/upgrading?

28. Is your spouse in any type of employment whether formal or informal? How does this impact on a) your career choices b) your daily working life?

29. Have you had maternity /paternity leave when your child was born? Do you sometimes have to take time off due to family reasons- is this just your immediate or a more extended family? What family reasons have you ever asked time off for? What is the policy in this organisation on these issues? What is your experience with the policy?


31. What has been the effect of your family responsibilities on your career development at different stages of your life cycle? (Prompts: What happened (what stage in the life cycle? i.e. Marriage, child birth, following spouse)? Would you have been in a different job? Or position/organisation?)
32. Do you face any challenges in managing family and work lives? How comfortable are you in raising these challenges with your managers or colleagues? Why?

33. How valuable is your salary for your household budget? What do you spend your salary on? How about your spouse’s salary, how is it spent?
Appendix 3(IV): Interview guide for men and women in banking and insurance companies-Second phase
PART A: Biographic information:

Marital status:

Educational qualifications:

Position:

Age:

Ethnicity:

PART B: Organisational processes and careers

34. How did you get your first job in this organisation? How did you get to know of a vacancy in this organisation? Was an advert placed in the newspapers/other public media? Did you go through interviews? What kind of interviews? Did you know anyone in this organisation when you applied for the job? Do you think that helped you in getting a job in this organisation? What about your colleagues? If you know, how many people were recruited at the same time as you? How many were men, how many were women?

35. Do you know the criteria they used to shortlist you? How about the criteria for hiring you?

36. What are some of the questions that you were asked during your job interview? Was there a question about the location of your job? If yes, what was your response?

37. How long did it take for you to get your first job after getting your post-secondary qualification? What were you doing in the meantime?

38. Where did you obtain your qualifications? Did you get your highest qualifications whilst working here or before? If whilst working here, how did you meet the costs for training? How do your colleagues meet their training costs? Explain any differences.
39. What is the process/system followed for sending/allowing staff to go for paid/unpaid for training in your organisation/industry?

40. Why did you choose this job? Are your expectations being met through this job? In what ways? Do you think that this organisation is a good place for women to work and develop their careers? Do you have any ideas how your organisation could attract more women?

41. How does promotion process work in this organisation? What are the procedures followed in effecting promotions?

42. Have you been promoted before? If yes what criteria was followed? Did they advertise internally? Explain some of the topics that are covered in the interviews for promotion? Did you go through interviews for promotion? Was it an oral interview or a test? How was the interview panel constituted?

43. If not promoted before, why? Have you applied, been turned down or just discouraged from applying/ not yet ready for promotion?

44. Have you done other jobs in this organisation? If yes please provide details.

45. Would you say that your organisation plans for its staff’s career progression?

46. Do you have a mentor? How did you identify your mentor? How does having a mentor help you in your career?

47. For how long have you been in the current position? What are the differences in job descriptions between your position and the one above you?

48. What positions require additional qualifications? How important is training for promotion in your organisation? Would you say high qualifications are recognised in this organisation? Explain.

49. How satisfied are you with your career? Do you contemplate changing jobs? Why? If yes why haven’t you changed jobs yet? How is the system disadvantaging/advantaging you?

50. If you compare men and women, who have higher turnover rates in this organisation? Do you have any idea why this might be the case? In your opinion, what reasons would make the other gender leave?

51. What time do you start and finish work? Is it regular or irregular starting and finishing time? Is there compensation for working outside the stated hours? Do you have to take work home? Or work over weekends? How often?

**PART C: Family factors**

52. Do you have children? How many? What are their ages?
53. If at school or older, what are their school hours? Who looks after them after school? Who takes/picks them up from schools? Who looked after them when they were younger?

54. What are the childcare arrangements that you have? How satisfied are you with such child care arrangements (in terms of costs, quality of services rendered, schedule/availability when required, time spent?)

55. What other family responsibilities do you have?

56. What has been your experience with working time arrangements vis a vis your family responsibilities?

57. What policies/practices are there in your organisation to help you with managing work and family responsibilities?

58. Does your job involve travelling domestically/internationally?

59. What are your spouse attitudes towards your going for training/upgrading?

60. Is your spouse in any type of employment whether formal or informal? How does this impact on a) your career choices b) your daily working life?

61. Have you had maternity /paternity leave when your child was born? Do you sometimes have to take time off due to family reasons- is this just your immediate or a more extended family? What family reasons have you ever asked time off for? What is the policy in this organisation on these issues? What is your experience with the policy?


63. What has been the effect of your family responsibilities on your career development at different stages of your life cycle? (Prompts: What happened (what stage in the life cycle? i.e. Marriage, child birth, following spouse)? Would you have been in a different job? Or position/organisation?

64. Do you face any challenges in managing family and work lives? How comfortable are you in raising these challenges with your managers or colleagues? Why?

65. How valuable is your salary for your household budget? What do you spend your salary on? How about your spouse’s salary, how is it spent?
Appendix 3(V): Interview guide for key informants in Public sector organisations

This interview guide principally aims at exploring further recruitment and promotion processes in teaching. It also explores issues of leave arrangements specifically compassionate leave in teaching.

Recruitment

1. What is the process of recruiting teachers? What processes are used to select the candidates? With reference to the recent IPTE 11 (Integrated Primary School teacher education): How many males applied for training? How many females applied for training? How many males were successful? How many females were successful? If few women were successful, why? Why is the number of successful candidates very low in comparison to the number of applicants?

2. Why is entry into teaching competitive?

3. Why are there few women teachers in Malawi? Which classes do they teach, and what subjects do they teach? What plans are there to get more women into teaching? Has there been any targeted recruitment for women into teaching? Explain

4. Explain some of the topics that are covered in the interviews for selection? Are there any that women or men tend to find difficult to respond to? What is being looked for in the interview that would ensure success in recruitment as a teacher?

5. If the “50-50” policy is applied in selection for teacher training, explain how it is implemented. Is this followed? Explain.

6. What criteria was used to select the successful candidates? Were interviews involved? What kind of interviews? What is the sex composition of those selecting? How was the selection panel constituted?

7. How are teachers allocated to schools? Prompts: From my previous research work I’ve got the impression that after training, teachers will be interviewed before being posted to a teaching school as was proposed? Why? If not yet started being implemented, when will this be effected?

8. How long does it take for teachers to get into jobs after getting qualification? What determines the length of period of posting? How are they sent into schools?
Are interviews involved? Why? Since when? Do they have any control over location?

9. Are there qualified teachers that have not yet been recruited/posted into schools? Why?

10. How much does the lowest paid primary school teacher receive in terms of gross salary? Apart from the basic pay, what else do they receive?

11. How much does the lowest paid secondary school teacher receive in terms of gross salary? Apart from the basic pay, what else do they receive?

12. Despite the additional pay that teachers get, why is teaching still considered as a low paying/low status job in comparison to similarly graded jobs? In your opinion, is teaching a low status profession? Explain.

13. If you compare men and women, who have higher turnover rates in this organisation/industry? Do you have an idea why this might be the case?


**Promotion**

15. Explain the promotion systems/criteria that are used for promotion of teachers in the following categories: Primary school teachers, Secondary school teachers

16. Does the advert stipulate where the vacant positions are? (Do you have a copy of a promotion advert?)

17. Can one negotiate to remain in a particular school assuming there are vacancies?

18. From my previous research work I’ve got the impression that some teachers are doing jobs above their grade – how does that work? Are these situations common? Why do they happen? What are the chances of them being promoted and having their actual job recognised?

19. Is the promotion aimed at filling specific vacant posts or just ratifying/confirming those that are already doing higher level jobs whilst holding a lower grade? i.e. Would you say that most of those promoted are already working in a job at the higher grade?(I ask this considering that because promotions take long, I assume that some higher positions will remain vacant for some time: Who then does the jobs meant for a job holder at the higher vacant position?)

20. What are the differences in job descriptions from one grade of teachers to another: eg. PT4( L) and PT2 (Please share a copy of any two job descriptions for comparisons).

21. What is the process used to select teachers for promotion?(CV analysis, interviews?)
22. Explain some of the topics that are covered in the interviews for promotion? Are there any that women or men tend to find difficult to respond to? What is being looked for in the interview that would ensure success in promotion?

23. How are teachers interviewed for promotion? Is the interview written or oral? If it is written, who does the marking? At what levels? If it is oral, what is the sex composition of the panellist for the different interview sessions? How are these panels constituted- do they include practising teachers or are they administrators from the ministry and the teaching service commission only? Which positions use oral interviews for promotion and which ones use tests if written tests are used at all?

24. What plans are there to ensure that more women enter managerial positions in teaching?

25. How often does the Ministry promote teachers (is there standard length of time when promotions take place?) What determines the timing of the promotions (probes: is it only on the basis of available government funding?)

26. If promotions are irregular, who then does the jobs at vacant higher levels? **Prompts:** Do those in lower positions carry out jobs meant for someone at higher grade? Is there any additional pay/recognition received for doing that?

27. What positions require additional qualifications? How important is training for promotion in your organisation?

28. What is the current policy regarding promotion of Diploma holders or Bachelor of Education Primary? Do they still go to Secondary school/TTCs? Is what was proposed being followed?( i.e primary school teachers who qualify with Bachelor of Education in primary and Diplomas should be promoted within the primary school structure?)

29. I understand there is a change in policy with regard to promotions in the civil service generally which is also being applied in the Ministry:
   A. Would you narrate what is in the new policy?
   B. What was in the old policy?
   C. Which policy is better in your opinion?
   D. Do you know why the policy was changed? Explain if yes. **Probes:** Why are teachers interviewed after upgrading before going for a befitting position i.e. why are there no more automatic promotions? Since when? Is this in operation or not? Why are teachers from Teacher Training Colleges who
upgrade to degrees expected to go back and do University Certificate of Education? Who meet the costs? Any comments on the policy behind withholding salary for those under training: Has the implementation of this started?

30. What is the current policy/practice regarding teachers moving to non-teaching post within the civil service?

Training

31. What is the process/system followed for sending/allowing teachers to upgrade either at Domasi College of Education or in Universities.

Policies helping in managing work and family responsibilities

32. What time are teachers supposed to start and finish work? In practice what happens?

33. Is there compassionate leave in teaching? If yes, how is it implemented?

34. Do you handle requests for unpaid leave from teachers? What reasons are given for the requests? Under what conditions is unpaid leave given to teachers? How easy is it for teachers to return after an unpaid leave?

35. Any leave provisions for emergency family situations or to take care for a sick of child/spouse/relative?

36. How long is maternity leave? Are there requests for extension? What about Paternity leave?

NB: Please provide any policy documents/circulars that may help me understand these processes/practices.

Interview guide Teaching Service Commission

37. Does the advert for promotion of teachers stipulate where the vacant positions are? (Do you have a copy of a promotion advert that you can share with me?)

38. Can one negotiate to remain in a particular school(following a promotion) assuming there are vacancies?

39. Is promotion of teachers aimed at filling specific vacant posts or just ratifying/confirming those that are already doing higher level jobs whilst holding a lower grade? Are most of the teachers promoted already working in a job at the higher grade?(I ask this because I think that because promotions take long, then some
higher positions will remain vacant for some time. So who then does the jobs meant for a job holder at the higher vacant position?

40. In your opinion, are there any major differences in terms of job descriptions between two grades? E.g. primary school teacher at PT3(K) and PT4(L)? or a secondary school teacher at J and I?

41. Explain some of the topics that are covered in the interviews for promotion? Are there any that women or men tend to find difficult to respond to? What is being looked for in the interview that would ensure success in promotion?

42. Last time, you also told me that about 25,000 teachers were shortlisted for promotion interviews. How were these 25000 teachers interviewed? Was it through an oral interview or a test? If it is written, who did the marking? At what levels? If it is oral, how is it done? At what levels? What is the sex composition of the panellist for the different interview sessions? How are these panels constituted- do they include practising teachers or are they administrators from the ministry and the commission only? Which positions use oral interviews for promotion and which ones use tests if written tests are used at all?

43. How important is training/upgrading for promotion in teaching? To which positions?

44. What is the current policy regarding promotion of holders of Diplomas or Bachelor of Education Primary? Do they still go to Secondary schools or TTCs? Is what was proposed being followed?( i.e primary school teachers who qualify with Bachelor of Education in primary and Diplomas should be promoted within the primary school structure?)

45. Does the commission also interview newly qualified teachers before being posted into schools?

46. Does the commission interview serving teachers that have upgraded their qualifications before being promoted? If interviews are done, what was the reasoning behind the change in policy? When was this policy introduced? When did it start being implemented?

47. Why are teachers from Teacher Training Colleges who upgrade to degrees expected to go and do University Certificate of Education? Who meet the upgrading costs?
### Appendix 4: Biographical characteristics for employee respondents

#### Women and men in Finance and Insurance industry

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<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
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<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Highest Education level</th>
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<td>Gender</td>
<td>Years</td>
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Appendix 5: Background to case studies

Multinational bank: This bank opened to the public in 1995. It operates through a network of 27 branches and agencies located across Malawi. The bank also serves other African communities namely Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique. As at April 2014, its staff complement stood at 855, and the gender distribution is presented in Figure 4.1. The bank’s official operating hours are from 7:45am to 4:30 pm during the week days. On Saturdays, the bank’s official opening hours are from 8:30am to 11o’clock am. The bank also emphasises a culture of pay for performance which has been instilled across the bank’s group.

The local bank: This was established in 1971. It has a network of 29 service centres with a staff complement of 893, and the gender distribution is presented in Figure 4.1. The bank has 6 core values, one of which is employee recruitment and development, highlighting that the bank will recruit based on merit and competencies required for the job among other issues. The bank’s stipulated official working time is from 07:45am to 4:30pm from Monday to Friday. Service centres additionally operate on Saturdays, with official operating times being from 8am to 11:30am.

The Multinational insurance company: The multinational insurance company belongs to a group of companies which has its head office in London, United Kingdom. The company opened its first office in Malawi in 1954 and operated as a mutual life insurance company until 1999 when it demutualised. It currently has

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52 Document is in public domain, but the actual reference cannot be put here for confidentiality reasons
53 Document is in public domain, but the actual reference cannot be put here for confidentiality reasons
54 Document is in public domain, but the actual reference cannot be put here for confidentiality reasons
two branches within Malawi. It has 106 members of staff and the gender distribution is presented in Figure 4.1. In terms of working hours, the company’s official operating hours are from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm with lunch break at 12:00 to 1:30 pm during the week days.

**The local Insurance Company:** This is a small privately owned firm that opened in 2005. It has 10 branches and service centres in selected parts of the country. It has 52 members of staff and the gender distribution is presented in Figure 4.1. The company’s official operating hours are from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm with lunch break at 12:00 to 1:30pm during the week days.

**Education:** The public education sector is one of the major employers of women in Malawi, although in terms of actual gender distribution, male teachers are in majority at both primary and secondary levels. The 2013 estimates show that in primary schools, 59.8 per cent of the trained teachers were male and 40.2 per cent were females (GOM, 2014b). The gap is even wider at secondary school level with 72.6 per cent of the trained teachers being male and 27.4 per cent being female.

Due to the large rural population and the need to serve the whole population, most primary schools and pupils are in the rural area. Similarly, a majority of secondary schools were also located in rural areas and these covered a majority of students. Additionally, most of these schools are public schools under government and religious agencies recruiting almost 96 percent of all the trained teachers between them. This presented in Table A and B below.
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<td>Trained female teachers</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>1034</td>
<td>705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>114004</td>
<td>51795</td>
<td>76840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>93644</td>
<td>47773</td>
<td>63682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total students</td>
<td>207648</td>
<td>99568</td>
<td>140522</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (GOM., 2013)
In terms of schools hours, Table C below shows that primary school days during the research period and the revised school days as introduced on 11th June, 2016 which became effective in the 2016/17 academic year.

**Table C: Primary school days in Malawi**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Current school day</th>
<th>New School Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start</td>
<td>End</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.30am</td>
<td>10.40 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.30am</td>
<td>11.30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.30am</td>
<td>12.20am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.30am</td>
<td>12.20am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.30am</td>
<td>13.40am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.30am</td>
<td>13.40am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.30am</td>
<td>13.40am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.30am</td>
<td>13.40am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of school hours at secondary school, some of the government day secondary schools operate double shifts due to increased number of students against limited infrastructure. In this case, classes are divided into 2 shifts; morning shift which runs from 7:30 to 12 o’clock. The afternoon shift runs from 12 o’clock to 5 o’clock. In such schools, teachers can then organise themselves to have a third session as a source of additional income, called an open or night school which mainly targets mature students. In that case, the teachers who were in the morning shift will then deliver lessons to that group in the afternoon, mostly at a different place. In day schools with a single shift, classes run from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm and immediately after, where an open or night school is in operation, teachers then deliver lessons to that group.
Appendix 6: Request to conduct research

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR INSTITUTION

My name is Tiyesere Mercy Chikapa Jamali, a lecturer at the University of Malawi’s Chancellor College. I am currently doing a PhD in Business and Management with the University of Manchester's Business School in the United Kingdom. As such, I intend to conduct research in your bank alongside other financial institutions in Malawi. I therefore write to request for your permission to gain access into your organization.

My PhD aims at exploring how professional women’s careers are shaped throughout women’s life cycle in Malawi. This will help to comprehensively understand historical, socio-economic and cultural context that comprise Malawi’s gender culture which may explain current employment and career progression prospects among females. The study will also explore how different organizational contexts influence women’s career progression in Malawi by looking at different organizational processes.

Your organisation has been purposively selected to participate in this study because we think you will provide us with information about women’s career experiences in an organisational context. The research will involve face to face interviews with one person responsible for Human resource Management in your organisation as a key informant and 4 professional women with higher secondary and or tertiary education (2 at headquarters level and 2 at branch level). These four women are also expected to come from different positions in the organisational hierarchy.

Note that the respondents will not complete a questionnaire but rather I will engage with them in a discussion exploring issues around the following major themes:

1. Nature of organisational processes/employer practices and how these can shape women’s careers throughout professional women’s life cycle
2. Possibilities for shifting careers among professional women in the process of managing work and family responsibilities
3. Institutional arrangements e.g. maternity leave and other arrangements that help women manage work and family responsibilities.
4. Any historical legacies that might have contributed to current status of women in formal employment
5. Women’s cultural context and how these shape women’s careers

The importance of this study need not be overemphasised considering the Malawi Government’s emphasis on efforts towards uplifting women’s status in public life highlighted in most of its development strategies. This study therefore contributes fairly in understanding the situation of the few women in formal employment by understanding how their careers are shaped further when they make it to formal employment. Appreciating the importance of this project to the gender equality
agenda in Malawi, the government of Malawi recommended me for an award of a Commonwealth Scholarship which is enabling me pursue my PhD at the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom.

If my request is granted, I intend to visit your organisation at your convenience during week beginning 1st September, 2014. For more information, do not hesitate to contact me on the following:

tiyeserec@yahoo.com/tiyesere.chikapa@postgrad.mbs.ac.uk.

Cell numbers: 0044 7407 021 564 or 00265 888 360 612/00265 995470 663. Looking forward to your favourable consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Tiyesere Mercy Chikapa Jamali (Mrs)

PhD candidate and Lecturer
Appendix 7: Example of letter of approval to conduct research

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

MINISTER

File Ref: MoEST/ADM 7/1/10  Date: 4th September, 2014
Connected Files

SUBJECT: AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH  
IN THE MINISTRY

Honourable Minister,

I have the honour to report, Sir, that Mrs. Tyesere M.C. Jomoli, a Lecturer at Chancellor College and a Doctor of Philosophy Candidate at the University of Manchester's Business School, is asking for authority to conduct a research in the Ministry. Her area of study is exploring how professional women's careers are shaped throughout women’s life cycle in Malawi. She intends to hold face to face interviews with respondents in various categories of women in the sector.

Honourable Minister, I have no problem with the request since the applicant will bear all the costs of the exercise.

I, however, submit the request for your consideration and any direction you may wish to provide on the request, Sir.

M.P. Mawire  
SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY
Appendix 8: Consent Form

Explaining female Employment patterns and career progression in informal security welfare regimes: Using Malawi as a Case Study

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

Please initial box

1. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to any treatment/service.

2. I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded

3. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes

4. I agree that any data collected may be passed as anonymous data to other researchers

I agree to take part in the above project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of participant</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of person taking consent</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Signature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 9: Participant Information Sheet

Explaining female Employment patterns and career progression in informal security welfare regimes: Using Malawi as a Case Study

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study that aims at *exploring how professional women’s careers are shaped in Malawi* for an award of a Doctor of Philosophy degree. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Tiyeser Mercy Chikapa, Doctoral Researcher, Manchester Business School, The University of Manchester, Booth Street West, Manchester M15 6PB.

Title of the Research

**Explaining female Employment patterns and career progression in informal security welfare regimes: Using Malawi as a Case Study**

What is the aim of the research?

This study aims to understand how professional women’s careers are shaped throughout women's life cycle in Malawi. This will help to comprehensively explain historical, socio-economic and cultural context that comprise Malawi’s gender culture which may be responsible for female employment and career progression. The study will also explain how different organisational contexts affect women’s career progression in Malawi.

Why have I been chosen?

We are inviting you to participate in this study because we think you will provide us with information about women’s career experiences in an organisational context. You are allowed to accept or decline this invitation and there are no negative consequences. This study will involve 40 participants from public and private sector organisations in Malawi. Each of the participants have been selected from their organisations purposively following a specified criteria befitting the study.
For semi-structured interviews, the study will focus on professional women with higher secondary and or tertiary education. For key informant interviews, the study will target human resources managers. Tracer survey respondents will be identified through University of Malawi graduates records, where systematic sampling technique shall be employed to select eligible respondents.

**What would I be asked to do if I took part?**

In this study, participants shall firstly be introduced to the focus of the study and how they are to participate. Participants in semi structured and Key Informant interviews shall be asked open ended questions to enable them provide as much information as possible on the subject matter. Participants in a survey shall be administered a structured questionnaire via email and shall be instructed to complete answering within a specified period of time, after which questionnaires shall be sent to the researcher for further research processes. Participants shall throughout the research processes be assured of confidentiality and shall be notified of the findings of the study through reports that shall be developed.

**What happens to the data collected?**

Data collected through this study shall be securely handled by the researcher and her supervisors throughout the study. Qualitative data in form of transcripts shall be verified with respondents within a week after their participation in the study. The researcher shall then conduct thematic categorization of responses through NVivo to develop major themes emerging from the study.

Quantitative data obtained through survey shall be cleaned and analysed using statistical techniques specifically SPSS. After analysis, all raw data shall securely be stored by the researcher in her home country. Hard copy versions of information pieces in form of transcripts and questionnaire responses alongside the raw data shall be burnt a year after the final results of the study have been released.

**How is confidentiality maintained?**

The research data shall only be accessed by the researcher and the supervisory team throughout the research period. To ensure confidentiality of the respondents when conducting the research, personal information of participants shall not be linked to their responses. All participants shall be identified with the researcher's own designed identification guided by serial numbers. After the research is done, data shall be kept for no longer than one year after confirmation of the degree result. The data shall then be burnt. The data shall prior to the above be stored in a locked drawer, in the student researcher’s home which shall only be accessed by the student researcher. Data in electronic formats shall be password protected.

**What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself.

**Will I be paid for participating in the research?**

Participation in this study is voluntary, as such there will be no payment for participating in these interviews.

**What is the duration of the research?**

Approximately 45 minutes per interview for the semi-structured and key informant interviews and approximately 30 minutes for the survey instrument

**Where will the research be conducted?**

Blantyre, shire highlands education division and Central West education division in Malawi

**Will the outcomes of the research be published?**

We expect to produce at least two journal articles from the research.

**Criminal Records Check (if applicable)**

Not applicable

**Who has reviewed the research project?**

The project will be/(has been) reviewed by the University of Manchester Senate Committee on the Ethics of Research on Human Beings (UREC) responsible for the Faculty of Humanities

**Contact for further information**

Tiyesere Mercy Chikapa, Doctoral Researcher, Manchester Business School, The University of Manchester, Booth Street West, Manchester M15 6PB.

Cell: 07742294958

**Email:** tiyesere.chikapa@postgrad.mbs.ac.uk

**What if something goes wrong?**

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL’, by emailing: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk, or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093. Or locally, the Head of Political and Administrative Studies Department, Chancellor College, P.O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi by emailing pastudies@cc.ac.mw or by telephoning 01524222
Appendix 10: Excerpt of field notes
Appendix 11: Sample of how coding was done in NVivo