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Ethnicity and Differential Career Success

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Submitted for PhD

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Abstract

Despite evidence that the representation of minority-ethnic employees in the workforce is improving, many are concentrated at lower organisational levels and experience more difficulties reaching senior positions than their majority-ethnic (i.e. white) colleagues (ONS, 2011). The percentage of minority-ethnic individuals entering the workplace is continually rising (ONS, 2011) meaning differential career success is a topic of increasing importance. However, thus far, very little research in organisational psychology has focused on ethnicity (Cox, Nkomo & Welch, 2001; Kenny & Briner, 2007). Therefore this thesis presents three studies designed to enhance our knowledge of minority-ethnic career experiences and the processes that contribute towards differential career success.

All studies took place in a large U.K. public sector organisation. The first study compared the causal attributions that minority-ethnic (n=20) and majority-ethnic (n=20) managers made when recalling significant positive and negative career experiences during semi-structured interviews. In the second study, template analysis was used to examine the interview transcripts for career experiences identified as important for career success by minority- and majority-ethnic managers. An important difference between the groups was their perceptions of informal organisational processes. Researchers have argued that political skill may enhance individuals' power and control over informal processes (e.g. Ferris, Davidson & Perrewé, 2005) and have also suggested, but not yet tested, that minority groups may be disadvantaged in developing these skills (Ferris, Frink & Galang, 1993). Therefore, study three built on the findings of study two, and tested the 'political skill deficiency' hypothesis, by determining whether minority-ethnic employees (n=114) rated themselves lower on political skill than majority-ethnic employees (n=197), and whether this was associated with differential career success.

Overall findings suggested that there were important differences in the way minority- and majority-ethnic managers made sense of their career experiences. Minority-ethnic employees' lower ratings of political skill were also associated with differential career success. Implications of these findings and practical initiatives to address differential career success are discussed in the final chapter, as well as directions for future research.

Chapter One: Introduction

The differential career experiences of minority-ethnic[1] individuals have been described using a number of metaphors. The term 'glass ceiling' was first applied to the career progression of white women to represent a subtle, yet impenetrable barrier that prevented their advancement to management positions (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). For minority-ethnic groups, this expression has since been modified: the term 'concrete ceiling' denotes a barrier that is denser and less easily shattered, which restricts entry to both middle and senior management (Catalyst, 1999; Moore & Jones, 2001). The 'sticky floor' has been used to describe pay inequality once promoted (Booth, Francesconi, & Frank, 1998) as well as 'snowy peaks' where a mountain represents an organisation's workforce; *"At the base of each mountain you find large numbers of women and ethnic minority workers whereas at the summit you find a small amount of white, middle class men"* (Phillips, 2003). Regardless of the metaphor, minority-ethnic employees experience differential career success in comparison to majority-ethnic workers. This chapter outlines the predicament of minority-ethnic individuals in the workplace, the state of ethnicity research in U.K and U.S. organisational psychology and presents the motivation behind the current research.

1.1 Minority-Ethnic Individuals in the Workplace

Minority-ethnic individuals comprised 11.5% of the U.K. working age population in 2010 (aged 16-64: ONS, 2010a). Evidence suggests that their representation in the U.K. workforce is improving, with the employment rate of minority-ethnic individuals rising from 50% in 1991, to 61% in 2010, a greater increase than for majority-ethnic individuals, whose employment rate was 70% in 1991 and 73% in 2010 (ONS, 1991, 2010a).

[1] Throughout the thesis, the term 'minority-ethnic' is used to refer to non-white ethnic groups who reside in white-majority populations such as the U.S. and U.K. Majority-ethnic refers to the ethnic group that comprises the majority of a population. In this thesis the term is used to denote White British individuals.

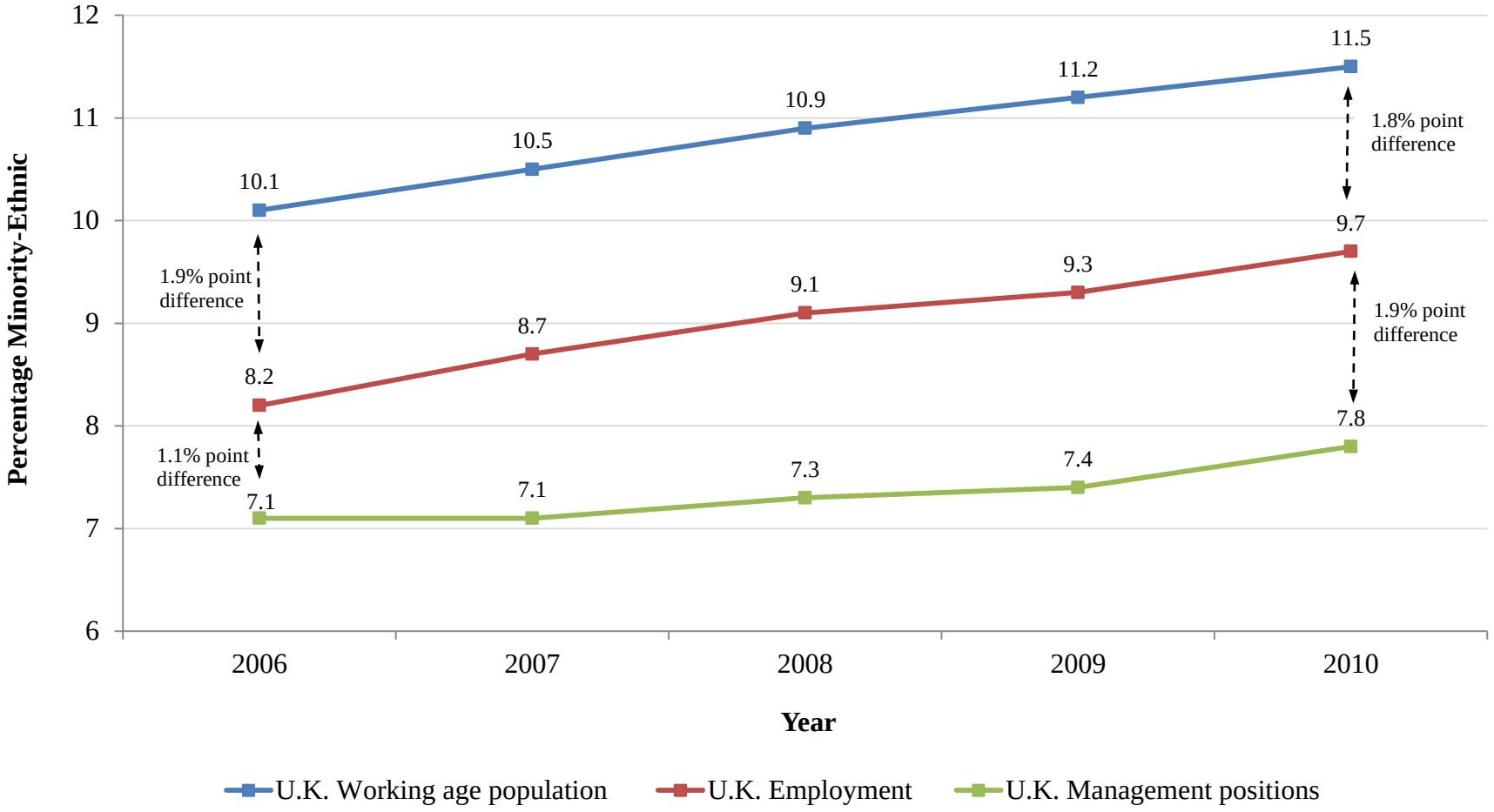
An analysis of U.K. Labour Force Survey data (ONS, 2011) between 2006 and 2010, (conducted by the researcher), is presented in Figure 1.1. It shows that in 2010 those minority-ethnic individuals in employment made up 9.7% of the U.K. workforce. Importantly, it also reveals that the gap between the percentage of those who are minority-ethnic in the working age population and those in employment is decreasing, albeit slowly, with a .1 percentage point difference between 2006 (1.9% gap) and 2010 (1.8% gap).

1.1.1 Seniority

Despite improving employment figures, minority-ethnic employees are often concentrated at lower organisational levels. Figure 1.1 shows that whilst 9.7% of those in employment were minority-ethnic in 2010, their representation in U.K. management positions was just 7.8%. Furthermore, although there has been a steady increase in minority-ethnic individuals in management positions (e.g. 7.1% in 2006 and 7.8% in 2010), the gap between those in employment and those in management positions has actually widened from a 1.1% gap in 2006 to a 1.9% gap in 2010. Examining the reasons for this differential career success is therefore becoming increasingly important and is the focus of this thesis.

Statistics for other European countries are not widely available because monitoring ethnic data is not commonly practiced in many European member states. For example, ethnic monitoring is a contentious issue in Germany due to World War II and is unlawful in France due to the republic being founded on the equality of all citizens and their freedom from being distinguished by race or religion (Wrench, 2003). However, figures from the U.S. indicate that the career success of minority-ethnic individuals is not just a concern for the U.K. In 2008, minority-ethnic workers in the U.S. comprised 34% of the total workforce, but held only 15% of senior federal positions and 12% of executive and senior level positions in the private sector (EEOC, 2008a, 2008b).

Figure 1.1.Minority-Ethnic Representation in the U.K. Workforce

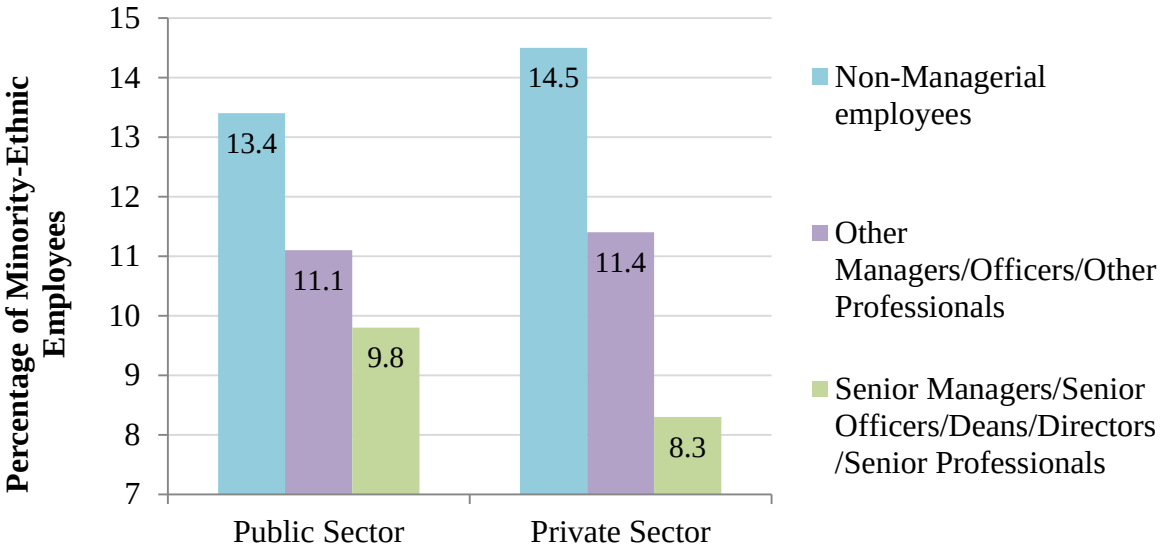


Source: U.K. Labour Force Survey Data (ONS, 2011)

1.1.2 Progression in the Public and Private Sectors

Public sector organisations are often cited as offering greater opportunities for minority-ethnic employment and progression than the private sector (Heath, Cheung, & Britain, 2006; RFO, 2008). For example, in 2010 the percentage representation of minority-ethnic individuals in the U.K. Civil Service (18.4%: ONS, 2010b) was almost twice as high as their percentage in wider U.K. employment (9.7%: ONS, 2010a). Furthermore, almost a third (31.7%) of all minority-ethnic employees in 2010 worked in public administration, education and health, which are areas dominated by the public sector (ONS, 2010a). However, this figure was only slightly higher than the percentage of majority-ethnic employees in the same occupation group (30.5%: ONS, 2010a). In addition, a benchmarking survey across 76 organisations presented in Figure 1.2, suggests that in 2010 representation of minority-ethnic individuals in non-management positions was in fact higher in the private sector (14.5%) than the public sector (13.4%: Opportunity Now, 2011).

Figure 1.2 Minority-Ethnic Representation in Public and Private Sectors in 2010 (Benchmarking Analysis: Opportunity Now, 2011)



Despite greater representation at lower organisational levels however, Figure 1.2 shows minority-ethnic employees comprise 8.3% of senior managers in the private sector compared to 9.8% in the public sector, suggesting differential career success

may be more distinct in the former. Nevertheless, a decrease in minority-ethnic representation through the hierarchies of both sectors is apparent.

An increasing number of both public and private sector organisations have raised concerns over differential career success. For example, the NHS report that minority-ethnic doctors face significant barriers to their career progression (NHS, 2009). A review into equality and diversity in the Police Force also estimated that it will be the year 2022 before the representation of minority-ethnic officers in senior ranks reaches seven per cent (Neyroud, 2011). In a corporate responsibility report, Lloyds TSB (2010) state that in 2010, minority-ethnic individuals comprised 6.3% of their employees, yet just 2.4% of their senior managers. These reports demonstrate that organisations acknowledge and are concerned by differential career success; they also highlight the need for effective, practical interventions.

1.1.3 Pay Discrepancies

Not only do minority-ethnic employees experience differential levels of organisational seniority, pay discrepancies are also apparent. A report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2007) found that minority-ethnic employees earned at least ten per cent less than majority-ethnic employees when controlling for occupation and educational background between 1991 and 2001. Pay discrimination was most likely amongst minority-ethnic individuals who had followed managerial or professional career paths. Black African and Bangladeshi men earned up to 25% less than their white colleagues in managerial and professional occupations. This figure was over 15% for women from these two groups. Similar research by the U.K. Cabinet Office also concluded that *all* minority-ethnic groups are disadvantaged in terms of pay compared to whites in comparable circumstances (Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, 2003). This predicament for minority-ethnic workers has been described as "an invisible apartheid separating modern Britain" (Hampton, 2007).

1.2 Ethnicity in Organisational Psychology

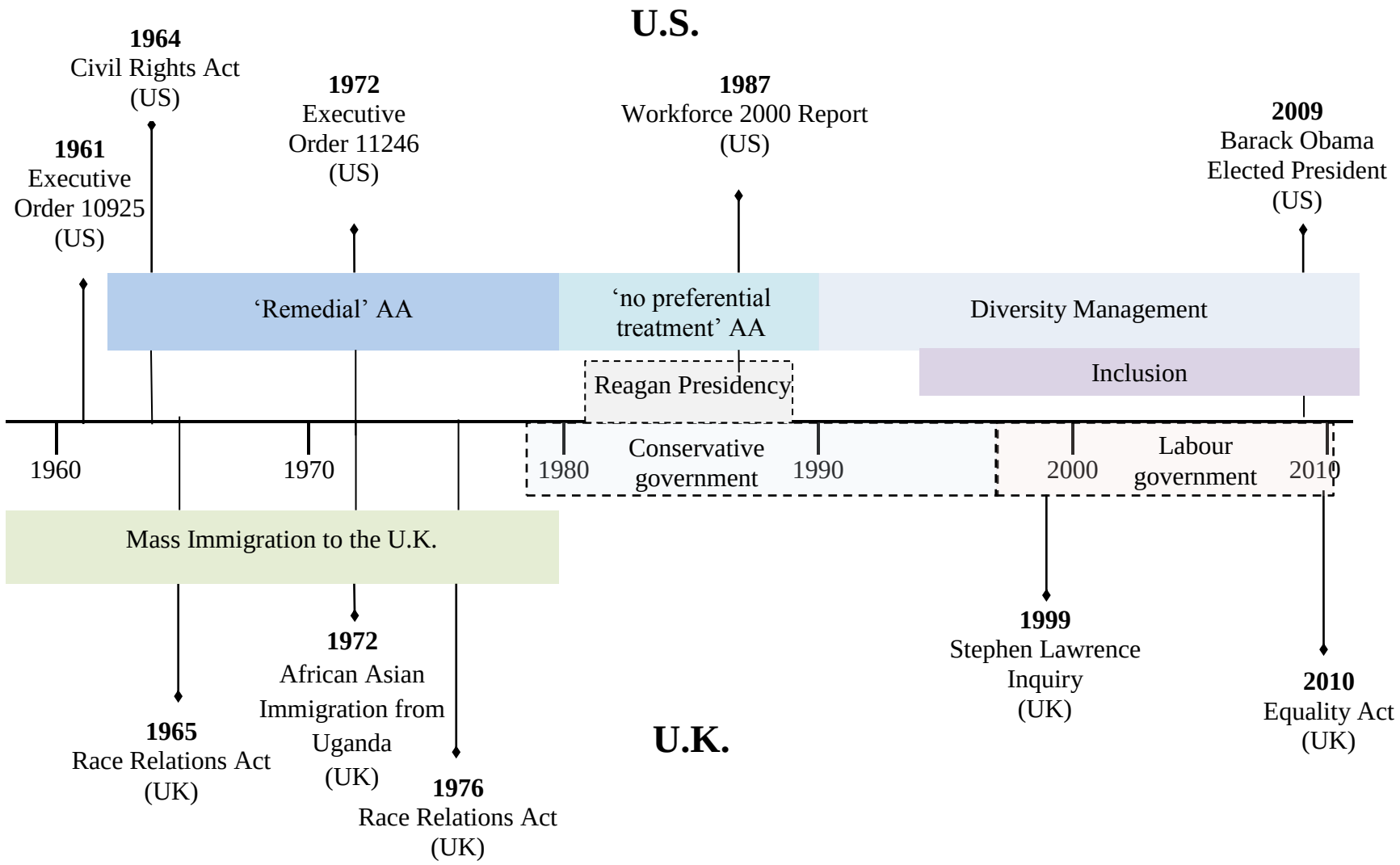
The statistics reported thus far indicate that differential career success is an important concern for organisations. The existence of a range of reports from organisations,

governing bodies and equality groups (e.g. Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, 2003; NHS, 2009; RFO, 2008) suggest that organisations have recognised the practical need to address differential career success. However, thus far, organisational psychology has yet to properly engage with these concerns.

Research from an organisational psychology perspective enables a greater understanding of careers at an individual level, thereby creating an evidence base to enable practical applied interventions to address differential career success. However, thus far, the role of ethnicity in organisations has been researched largely by social psychology, sociology and management disciplines, even though it is an area that sits squarely within the realm of organisational psychology. This thesis therefore adopts an organisational psychology perspective to examine the differential career success of minority-ethnic employees.

In general, there has been a lack of research on ethnicity in organisations (Nkomo & Cox, 1990). As well as methodological difficulties in researching ethnicity (see chapter three for a discussion), the restricted development of ethnicity research is likely due to key social and political factors. This section provides an overview of these in relation to the evolution of firstly U.S., and secondly U.K. organisational ethnicity research. A timeline is presented in Figure 1.3 where key events in the U.S. are provided along the top of the timeline and those from the U.K are provided along the bottom. Figure 1.3 also shows the trends in research that are discussed below, these are presented in shaded bands across the top of the diagram.

Figure 1.3 Timeline of Key Events for Ethnicity Research



Note. AA – Affirmative Action

1.2.1 Ethnicity in U.S. Organisational Psychology Research

The lack of research investigating the impact of ethnicity in the workplace has been the topic of several reviews (Cox & Nkomo, 1990; Proudford & Nkomo, 2006; Roberson & Block, 2001). Most notably, Cox and Nkomo (1990) reviewed the research published in 20 leading organisational behaviour, psychology and human resource management academic journals between 1964-1989, to assess the quantity and type of ethnicity research that had occurred in the U.S. They identified just 201 articles during this time that focused on race or minority group effects. Importantly, many of these articles originated from a sociological perspective, with only four of the 20 journals having a psychological focus. Yet, whilst there has been a general shortage of ethnicity research, the number of articles has increased and in a later review, Cox, Welch and Nkomo (2001) found a further 128 articles had been published between 1992 and 1998. The fluctuation in the number and type of articles produced can be attributed to changes across three time periods which are discussed below: 1960-1980, 1980-1990 and 1990s onwards.

Post-Civil Rights Research in the U.S.: 1960-1980

Whilst psychological research in the 1950s examined race, personality and attitudes of discrimination (e.g. Adorno, Frenkel-Bruswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Allport, 1954), the 1960s U.S. Civil Rights movement prompted a considerable increase in studies of ethnicity in the workplace (Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Daus, 2002). In their review of U.S organisational behaviour research between 1964 and 1989, Cox and Nkomo (1990) identified that studies examining ethnicity peaked in the 1970s, with 11.7 articles per year, compared to only 3.6 per year in the late 1980s. As can be seen on Figure 1.3, this is likely due to the introduction of equal opportunity legislation: Executive Orders 10925 in 1961 and 11246 in 1972 and the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This legislation encouraged organisations to adopt 'remedial affirmative action', that is, to take positive steps to redress any past discrimination. This included targeted recruitment, employee and managerial development programmes and the use of racial recruitment quotas, putting pressure on

organisations to comply in order to shield themselves from litigation (Heilman, Block, & Lucas, 1992; Kelly & Dobbin, 1998).

U.S. organisational psychology in the 1970s and early 1980s therefore focused on meeting the technical requirements of legislation with the use of affirmative action programmes and there was a considerable emphasis on selection and assessment (Ashkanasy et al., 2002; Thomas & Ely, 1996). Key research areas during this period were test validation, focusing on adverse impact and differential validity, hiring discrimination and rater bias (e.g. Bartlett & O'Leary, 1969; Dipboye, 1985; Hunter, Schmidt, & Hunter, 1979; Kraiger & Ford, 1985).

Changing Approach in the U.S.: 1980-1990

In the 1980s, the Reagan administration (1981-1989) attempted to restrict the enforcement of existing antidiscrimination laws, which created the perception that equal employment was no longer a pressing issue (Cox & Nkomo, 1990; Kelly & Dobbin, 1998). U.S. ethnicity research therefore declined, but also shifted focus; whilst the emphasis remained on selection and assessment, research turned to highlighting the benefits of equal employment opportunity, rather than being driven by upholding legislation. For example, Cox and Blake (1991) reported six arguments for improving diversity in organisations: cost, resource acquisition, marketing, creativity, problem solving and organisational flexibility.

Research also began to emerge in organisational psychology that criticised the remedial form of affirmative action (Burstein, 1992; Kelly & Dobbin, 1998). For example, Heilman et al. (1992) found that individuals who participated in affirmative action programmes received no career benefits once in an organisation, had reduced self-confidence, and were also more likely to be perceived as less competent than their colleagues (Heilman, 1994; Kravitz & Platania, 1993). The combination of this type of research, the changing government policy and a focus on the benefits of diversity meant organisational ethnicity research began to focus on the 'no preferential treatment' form of affirmative action, where no preference was given to individuals based on their demographic group membership (Burstein, 1992). This

adjusted form of affirmative action and a report produced by the U.S. Department of Labor called Workforce 2000 (Johnstone & Packer, 1987), which outlined the expected demographic changes in the U.S., (i.e. a growth in the minority-ethnic working population), led the way for an alternative approach referred to as 'diversity management'.

Diversity Management in the U.S.: 1990s Onwards

Diversity management focuses on workforce characteristics in formal and informal organisational practice, rather than remedying past wrongs (Ivancevich & Gilbert, 2000). Although some suggest that diversity management is just a rebranding of affirmative action (e.g. Kelly & Dobbin, 1998), there is an increased focus on competitive benefits. A key aspect that differentiates diversity management from the earlier affirmative action framework is that it recognises that diversity can contribute positively towards an organisation, rather than being a problem that needs to be solved (Ashkanasy et al., 2002). The cornerstone of the diversity management perspective is the business case for diversity. This agenda is considered to be driven by enhancing diversity to obtain business advantage, such as productivity (Litvin, 2006; Noon, 2007).

Whilst the emphasis of U.S. organisational psychology research on ethnicity has remained on selection and assessment, it has begun to broaden its reach. Research areas have included the effects of ethnic diversity on job attitudes, absenteeism, innovation and problem solving, reflecting the emphasis on the benefits diversity can provide organisations (Avery, McKay, Wilson, & Tonidandel, 2007; Cady & Valentine, 1999; Lovelace & Rosen, 1996; Niemann & Dovidio, 1998). Perhaps because of the election of Barack Obama in 2009, the first minority-ethnic president of the United States, there has also been an increase in research examining ethnicity and leadership (e.g. Chin, 2010; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Despite the increase of such studies in recent years, there remains a shortage of ethnicity research, and this is particularly apparent in U.K. organisational psychology, which is discussed next.

1.2.2 Ethnicity in U.K. Organisational Psychology Research

Reviews of U.S. ethnicity research have focused on wider organisational behaviour, so whilst they can demonstrate there has been little research on ethnicity, it is difficult to determine the exact contribution of organisational psychology. However, in an important review of U.K. ethnicity research, Kenny and Briner (2007) have reviewed 2,611 articles between 1952 and 2005 across the specific field of organisational psychology. They identified that, of these 2,611 articles, just 53 were concerned with ethnicity in British organisations. Furthermore, only 31 had ethnicity as their primary focus. Table 1.1 provides a breakdown of these studies by topic area and importantly for this thesis, just two articles examined ethnicity and careers. Table 1.1 also shows that the number of articles has increased in the last two decades, with 22 articles being published in the 1990s and 16 published between 2000 and 2005. Although U.K. ethnicity research has been guided by the U.S. research agenda, there have been unique socio-political influences that have guided its trajectory. These are discussed here in relation to the three periods identified in U.S. research: 1960s-1980s, 1980s-1990s and 1990s onwards.

Table 1.1 Articles and Topics of U.K. Organisational Psychology Ethnicity Research

	Date					
Research Area	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000-2005	**Total**
Selection and Assessment	3	0	3	8	10	**24**
Equal Opportunity/Diversity	0	0	1	4	1	**6**
Training and Development	1	1	1	1	0	**4**
Careers	1	0	0	0	1	**2**
Other	0	2	2	9	4	**17**
Total	**5**	**3**	**7**	**22**	**16**	**53**

Note. Data adapted from Kenny & Briner (2007)

U.K. Organisational Psychology Research: 1960-1980

In comparison with the U.S. there were fewer research articles on ethnicity in U.K. organisational psychology between 1960 and 1980. In their review, Kenny and Briner (2007) identified just eight published articles. Although mirroring the U.S research agenda by examining selection into occupations, U.K. research during this time was more heavily influenced by changing patterns in immigration. For example, several studies focused on selection into roles that attracted post-war migrants, such as Black Caribbeans into the healthcare sector (e.g. Bannister, Slater, & Radzan, 1962; Crookes & French, 1961; Haward, 1960).

As can be seen in Figure 1.3, race relations legislation was introduced in 1965, however, unlike U.S. legislation it did not set out legal requirements for affirmative action. The 1965 Race Relations act focused on making racism in public places unlawful and ensuring equal access to public places such as restaurants or public transport. It was not until the introduction of the 1976 Race Relations act, which established the Commission of Racial Equality, that there was a greater focus on discrimination in employment. Specifically, the act made it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of colour, ethnic, racial or national group.

There were also shifts in immigration that occurred during the 1970s, as changing immigration laws brought a flow of people from Bangladesh and India to the U.K (Hatton, 2005). This included over 28,000 African Asians being admitted to the U.K. in just two months, after being expelled from Uganda by the dictator Idi Amin in 1972 (Geddes, 2003). However, the effect of this immigration and the newly introduced legislation only became apparent in U.K. research in the early 1980s.

U.K. Organisational Psychology Research: 1980-1990

After the introduction of the Race Relations act (1976), U.K. research in the 1980s attempted to discover objective evidence for social psychological factors, such as individuals' prejudice and discrimination. For example, Brown and Willis (1985) examined discriminatory attitudes in police recruits. Whilst U.S. ethnicity research

was dominated by the study of African Americans (Cox & Nkomo, 1991), U.K. research responded to the demographic shifts that occurred in the 1970s by studying participants from Bangladeshi and Pakistani backgrounds (e.g. Robertson & Kandola, 1982; Stafford, Jackson, & Banks, 1984).

Similar to the influence of the Reagan Administration in the U.S. a change in U.K. government in 1979 brought an ideological change; whilst following legislative requirements was deemed important, the emphasis was on organisations deciding how best to promote equality, driven by economic efficiency (Dickens, 1999). As with the U.S., the emphasis on the 'business case for diversity' meant research in the 1990s adopted a diversity management perspective.

Diversity Management in the U.K.: 1990s Onwards

There has been a significant increase in articles from U.K. organisational psychology since 1990. Kenny and Briner (2007) identified that 38 articles on ethnicity in British organisations were published between 1990 and 2005 in organisational psychology (see Table 1.1). Although the focus has remained on selection and assessment, research has also examined factors such as organisational culture (e.g. Wilson, 2000), training and development (e.g. Ogbonna, 1998) and job satisfaction (e.g. Clark, Oswald, & Warr, 1996).

Although the introduction of diversity management brought with it an increase in the number of published articles in organisational psychology, authors have questioned the 'business case' argument for diversity, particularly in the U.K. (Dickens, 1999; Noon, 2007). Kandola and Fullerton (1994) argued that evidence for proposed organisational benefits, such as a better public image and greater productivity was either yet to be identified or hard to obtain. Noon (2007) outlines several flaws in the business case argument: Firstly, whilst long term organisational strategy is important for minority groups, it is less appealing for managers who may be more concerned with using diversity to enhance short term productivity and therefore overlook long term diversity objectives. Secondly, if diversity is economically driven, then equally, arguments can be made *against* the need for diversity. Thirdly, the perspective has

overlooked the social justice and moral obligations of organisations to ensure that all their employees have equal opportunity.

These criticisms have been particularly apparent in the U.K., which may reflect specific social and political changes. For example, the 1999 Stephen Lawrence inquiry, an investigation into the murder of a Black British teenager, highlighted institutionalised racism within the UK Metropolitan Police. This encouraged organisations to review their diversity agendas to ensure equality, rather than focussing on competitive advantage. A change in government in 1997 also led to enhanced links with the European Union, meaning strengthened equality laws and an emphasis on fairness in the workplace. For example, the recent Equality Act 2010 promotes the use of positive action which, whilst it does not advocate the use of selection quotas like affirmative action, it does ensure that all groups have the same access to opportunities within organisations, such as training and development.

These changes coincide with a growing trend in the wider diversity literature of 'inclusion' (Oswick, 2010). Whilst diversity and inclusion are similar concepts, diversity research has concentrated on the composition of organisations, whilst inclusion focuses on leveraging that diversity and using it as a resource, enhancing involvement, engagement and integrating diversity into organisational processes (Roberson, 2004). Although research remains focused on the competitive advantage that diversity may offer and inclusion has not yet been widely embraced within the ethnicity literature, this emerging agenda is likely to change the direction of future ethnicity research. There has also been an increasing emphasis placed on corporate social responsibility, encouraging organisations to go beyond minimum legal requirements and take greater responsibility for creating a diverse workforce (Matten & Moon, 2008). Due to the social and legislative changes that have occurred in the U.K. in particular, it is likely that future research adopts a more values-led, social justice approach, concerned with organisational experiences of minority-ethnic employees and their treatment beyond selection, organisational entry and performance evaluation (Dickens, 1999; Noon, 2007).

1.2.3 Rationale for Ethnicity Research

Over the course of its development, organisational psychology research in the U.S. and U.K. has provided three motivations for conducting ethnicity research in organisations:

1) The first is the social justice or morality argument, which is based on the belief that everyone should have equal access to employment, equal pay, as well as being free from discrimination within organisations. Research that examines how minority-ethnic individuals experience organisations can identify how they may be disadvantaged and help provide practical solutions to remedy any unjust treatment.

2) The second, linked to the first, is legal requirements to ensure equal opportunity. For example, the U.S. Civil Rights Act (1964) and U.K. Equality Act (2010) set the minimum standards of treatment by organisations, making it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of colour, ethnic, racial or national group. There have been several high profile legal battles in recent years. For example, in 2008, Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Tarique Ghaffur, the highest ranking Asian Muslim Police Officer in the UK, claimed he was side-lined and discriminated against in his role, due to his race. He settled out of court and received £300,000, although the case is on-going (Laville, David Pallister, & Williams, 2008). Besides high profile cases, the Employment Tribunal Service (2010) reported that from 2009 to 2010, they received 5,700 claims for racial discrimination and the average compensation awarded by tribunals was £18,584. Ethnicity research can help identify which practices may be discriminatory, such as adverse impact in performance assessment (e.g. Ryan, Ployhart, & Friedel, 1998) and therefore help organisations avoid financial penalties.

3) The third reason for conducting ethnicity research is to identify how organisations can utilise a diverse workforce for competitive advantage (Benschop, 2001; Cox & Blake, 1991; Kandola & Fullerton, 1994). Organisations that promote diversity may be more attractive to minority-ethnic groups, meaning that they are able to draw from a broader talent pool (Kochan

et al., 2003; Robinson & Dechant, 1997). Minority-ethnic employees may also feel less attached to organisations that fail to have a diverse demographic profile (Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992a) and therefore enhancing diversity can reduce turnover and absenteeism rates and cost to the organisation (Cox & Blake, 1991). Research also suggests that diversity can lead to improved innovation and problem solving capabilities in senior teams (Cady & Valentine, 1999; Van der Vegt & O Janssen, 2003).

Although the research in this thesis has implications for legal defensibility and enhancing organisations' competitive advantage, this PhD research was primarily motivated by a moral or social justice standpoint.

1.3 Summary and Focus of this Thesis

This section provides a summary of the predicament of minority-ethnic individuals in the workplace, the existing research, and presents how this thesis addresses some of the key gaps in existing literature. The main points being addressed are research from an organisational psychology perspective, taking research beyond selection, the importance of research on managers, the research context and the use of qualitative and quantitative methods.

1.3.1 Organisational Psychology Perspective

Minority-ethnic individuals experience differential career success in U.K. organisations. As discussed in section 1.1, U.K labour force statistics demonstrate that although minority-ethnic representation in employment is improving, minority-ethnic employees are less well represented in management positions and suffer pay disparities compared to their majority-ethnic counterparts. Organisations have recognised this predicament, yet academic research has not yet provided a sufficient evidence base to inform practical solutions.

Organisational psychology can offer an important insight into how ethnicity affects workplace experiences, and enhance knowledge of how minority-ethnic individuals navigate their careers. However, ethnicity is an under-researched area of

organisational psychology. Although the number of research articles has increased, there remains a lack of knowledge about how ethnicity affects organisational experiences (Cox et al., 2001; Kenny & Briner, 2007).

Given the predicament of minority-ethnic individuals in the workplace, the focus of this thesis is to investigate factors that contribute towards the differential career success of minority-ethnic individuals from an organisational psychology perspective. By focusing on ethnicity, this thesis provides research to an important, but currently limited area of organisational psychology.

1.3.2 Beyond Selection

The reviews by Kenny and Briner (2007) and Cox and Nkomo (1990) highlight that the large majority of organisational psychology research has focused on selection, such as examining test validity and bias in recruitment and testing procedures (e.g. Hunter et al., 1979; Kraiger & Ford, 1985). Although there has been an increase in ethnicity research examining topics such as leadership and job attitudes (e.g. Chin, 2010; Clark et al., 1996), there remains less knowledge of how ethnicity influences individuals' experiences after selection. However, it is testament to the success of the existing research on ethnicity that this thesis is now moving away from the selection stage. By investigating differential career success, this thesis therefore contributes to research on ethnicity by examining the experiences of individuals past the stage of organisational entry.

1.3.3 Managers

One method of understanding more about the experience of minority-ethnic groups in the workplace is to study minority-ethnic managers; something existing organisational psychology research has yet to place emphasis on (Cox et al., 2001). Cox (2004) suggests that this is due to the small presence of minorities at management level and the reluctance of academic journals to accept publication manuscripts with smaller sample sizes. Nevertheless, according to Kenny and Briner (2007), studying minority-ethnic managers is important because they are simultaneously in a privileged position due to their skills, qualifications and

organisational status, and a less powerful and privileged position because of their ethnicity. This thesis therefore examines the career experiences of managers, which provides important insight into how ethnicity influences organisational experiences and how those individuals have managed their careers beyond the selection stage.

1.3.4 U.K. Setting

Much of the existing research on ethnicity has been conducted in the U.S. Whilst there are broad similarities in the social, political, legal and economic systems between the U.S. and U.K, historical and demographic differences mean that how individuals experience ethnicity and how ethnicity is regarded in society may be different. The U.S. has a distinct societal and historical context, including a history of slavery, the 1960s civil rights movement, and different patterns of immigration, which mean that seemingly comparable groups can have very different backgrounds. For example, findings from studies of African Americans may not necessarily apply to Black Africans or Black Caribbeans in the U.K. Population data also shows that the distribution of groups differs between the two countries. For instance, in the U.K. the largest minority-ethnic group is Asian (5.9% ONS, 2011) whereas in the U.S. it is Hispanic (16.3% of the population: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

It is important that the social, political and organisational needs of the U.K., such as recent equality legislation, are not overlooked. There is also the risk that diversity researchers will draw on U.S. research to make assumptions about U.K. organisations (Proudford & Nkomo, 2006). As such, there is arguably a need to add to research by developing a better understanding of ethnicity in organisations outside of the U.S. context. Therefore this thesis focuses on differential career success within a single public sector organisation in the U.K.

1.3.5 Organisational Context

By conducting research in a single organisation, this thesis also enables a greater understanding of the influence of ethnicity in the workplace. Although U.K.-wide labour market statistics reveal a pattern of differential career success, it remains unclear as to whether this is actually reflective of minority-ethnic employees'

experiences. This thesis restricts the research to a single organisation, so their experiences can be interpreted within that organisation's culture, climate and structure.

1.3.6 Mixed Methods

Due to the prevalence of selection and assessment research in organisational psychology, there has been a focus on measuring group differences (e.g. black vs white) on single concepts, such as test performance (e..g. Hunter et al., 1979). Therefore methods adopted in existing organisational psychology research have been overwhelmingly quantitative (Cox, 2004; Cox & Nkomo, 1990; Kenny & Briner, 2007, 2010). The importance of various social, cultural and other contextual factors has been discounted (Kenny & Briner, 2007). However, qualitative methods, such as life histories and the critical incident technique, may be more useful in terms of developing a rich understanding of minority-ethnic employees' workplace experiences (Bell, 1990).

In order to address these limitations, this thesis uses a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. The use of qualitative methods enables a rich understanding of the workplace experiences of minority-ethnic employees, which can be interpreted in relation to the organisational and societal context. Whereas, quantitative methods allow key findings from qualitative studies to be developed, tested and generalised to a wider sample.

1.4 Evolution of this PhD

This section describes how the current research evolved, before the structure of this thesis and an overview of the studies are provided.

1.4.1 Original Proposal

The original research proposal for this PhD focused on replicating a previous doctoral project. The existing project examined the leadership potential of women in a financial organisation (Koczwara, 2006). This PhD was therefore going to focus on

the leadership potential of minority-ethnic employees. The proposal set out three studies:

a) To examine whether managers explain leadership behaviour demonstrated by majority- and minority-ethnic subordinates differently, using attribution analysis.
b) To examine the attributions made by minority- and majority-ethnic managers for their own leadership potential.
c) To compare actual behaviour of minority- and majority-ethnic candidates during an assessment with observer ratings for their performance.

1.4.2 Changing the Focus of the PhD

In the first six months of the PhD it became clear that although leadership potential was a valuable research area, of greater importance was how minority-ethnic individuals got into positions where they could be considered leaders in the first place. This conclusion was reached in two ways: Firstly a review of the literature established that there was a lack of ethnicity research in organisational psychology. This demonstrated that little is known about how minority-ethnic employees progress in organisations. Secondly, the researcher held discussions with senior managers, and the diversity support forum as well as examining statistics from the host organisation. This highlighted that the percentage of minority-ethnic employees decreased with each increase in hierarchical level (see chapter three for organisational statistics). This indicated that it was not just leadership potential that would be of interest, but how minority-ethnic employees progressed throughout their careers. Therefore the focus of the PhD shifted to differential career success, which was examined using three studies.

1.4.3 Three Studies

Study One

Having re-scoped the research topic, the researcher felt it was important to understand the career experiences of minority-ethnic individuals and how they made

sense of their own careers. Therefore, an adapted version of the original study b) was conducted. Twenty minority-ethnic and 20 majority-ethnic managers were interviewed about their career experiences. These interviews were analysed for the causal attributions managers made about positive and negative career experiences and the groups were compared statistically.

On completion of this study, the researcher then went on to examine the attributions made by managers for others' career progression potential (i.e. an adapted version of the original study a). However, it became apparent that there were not enough managers who supervised sufficient numbers of minority- and majority-ethnic subordinates in order to discuss subordinates with high/low career success potential. Therefore, the study was not viable within the host organisation. This is one of the key difficulties of conducting career research with minority-ethnic employees and is discussed further in chapter three.

Study Two

When extracting attributions from the managers' transcripts, the researcher decided that, as well as examining the patterns of attributions, it was important to understand the content of what was being said. Therefore, in order to gain a greater insight into the career experiences of minority-ethnic managers, the second study of this thesis became a template analysis of the experiences that were perceived to impede or enhance career success.

Study Three

An important finding from the analysis in study two was that minority- and majority-ethnic managers seemed to have different perceptions of the informal processes of the organisation and the use of behaviour that could be perceived as political. Therefore, the third study in this thesis is a quantitative questionnaire study (N = 311), which tests a hypothesis from existing literature that relates to the level of political skill in minority-ethnic employees.

1.5 Structure of this Thesis

Before introducing the studies, a review of the literature and methodological perspectives is required. The thesis is therefore presented as follows:

Chapter Two introduces the theoretical perspectives and research on career success and ethnicity, their limitations and the literature on causal attributions.

Chapter Three introduces the organisational context of the research and discusses the implications of studying ethnicity in organisations. It also discusses the epistemological stances traditionally used in ethnicity and psychology research and provides a justification for the pragmatic approach used in this thesis.

Chapter Four presents the first study, which examines the causal attributions minority- and majority-ethnic managers make about key career events.

Chapter Five presents the second study, which uses a qualitative methodology to explore the career experiences of minority- and majority-ethnic managers, to establish perceived experiences that enhance and impede their career success.

Chapter Six uses a quantitative questionnaire methodology (N =311) to build on some of the key concepts from study two. Specifically, it tests the 'political skill deficiency' explanation, an untested hypothesis from the organisational politics literature (Ferris, Frink, & Galang, 1993).

Chapter Seven discusses the implications of the findings from these studies in relation to research and practice. It also considers the limitations, avenues for future research and presents key conclusions.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature on career success and research on ethnicity in organisations. It begins by defining career success, differential career success and the terminology used throughout the thesis regarding ethnicity. Presented next is a review of different theoretical perspectives and research associated with 1) career success and 2) ethnicity in wider organisational research. The limitations of these approaches are discussed before introducing the three studies that examine differential career success in this thesis. Finally, based on the limitations of the existing theoretical perspectives, the value of causal attributions for understanding differential career success is presented.

2.2 Defining Career Success

Research has typically drawn a distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic career success. Extrinsic career success relates to publicly observable, objective measures of situations or status (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005, p. 179). The most commonly used measures of extrinsic success include salary, salary growth, number of promotions and grade or hierarchical level (e.g. Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005; Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, & Graf, 1999). In contrast, intrinsic career success is concerned with the subjective evaluations individuals make about their careers and the values they place on factors such as salary, progression, mobility, access to training and development and so on (Arthur et al., 2005). Common measures of intrinsic career success include job and career satisfaction (e.g. Aryee, Chay, & Tan, 1994; Nabi, 2000).

This thesis examines both intrinsic and extrinsic career success and therefore adopts Seibert, Crant & Kraimer's (1999, p. 417) definition that incorporates both, by defining career success as **"the positive psychological or work-related outcomes or achievements one accumulates as a result of work experiences".** However, the main focus of this thesis is *differential* career success, referring to the lower levels of career success achieved by minority-ethnic individuals. For the purposes of

this research, differential career success is defined as ***racial or ethnic differences*** **in the positive psychological or work-related outcomes or achievements one accumulates as a result of work experiences.**

2.3 Terminology in Ethnicity Research

This section discusses the various terms used in research on ethnic or racial diversity and how their use has changed over time. Specifically, the use of 'race' is discussed before introducing definitions for the terms used in this thesis: 'ethnicity' and 'minority-ethnic'. Terminology used by organisations to refer to non-white groups is also discussed.

2.3.1 Race

The term 'race', was originally used within scientific research in the eighteenth century to denote a stable category, based on physical and biological markers, such as skin colour (Banton, 1998). Accordingly, individuals were grouped into different 'races' such as European, or white, African or black, Chinese, or yellow; and Asian, or brown (Banton, 2001; Mason, 2000). However, critics of the term suggest it has only served to reinforce hierarchies between groups, where 'white' has often been regarded as superior to other 'races' (Proudford & Nkomo, 2006). Furthermore, it has been argued that the categories based on 'race' are arbitrary and are socially constructed rather than based on any biological characteristics (Montagu, 1997). Therefore, although the term pervades in society, particularly within legal discourse, the concept of 'race' has been discredited by many academic researchers (Mason, 2000; Richardson, 2006) and its use is therefore avoided in this thesis.

2.3.2 Ethnicity

The term 'ethnicity' refers to people who share a common cultural heritage, where groups are distinguished by cultural markers such as language or religion. For example, whilst 'race' may categorise British African and British Caribbean groups as 'black', the term 'ethnicity' allows acknowledgement of their different cultural backgrounds. Although the term is seen to reflect the social construction of group

categories, Yanow (2003) notes that ethnic groups are often associated with particular biological characteristics, such as skin colour. In much of the organisational research, the terms 'race' and 'ethnicity' have been used interchangeably or even combined, where 'racioethnicity' represents both physical and cultural differences (e.g. Cox, 1993; Roberson & Block, 2001).

Although there are on-going debates about the appropriate use of these terms (Jenkins, 2003), this thesis adopts the term 'ethnicity'. This is because the term acknowledges that groups are socially constructed by individuals both within and outside social categories. 'Ethnicity' is particularly relevant in a U.K. context, where common group categories are combinations of nationality, skin colour, religion and culture. In this thesis, ethnicity is therefore defined as **"group differences based on shared ancestry, traditions and categorisation by those within and external to the group" (Kenny & Briner, 2007, p. 439).**

2.3.4 Minority-Ethnic

The umbrella terms 'ethnic minority', BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) and BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) are widely used in organisations to refer to groups other than the ethnic majority, or white group. The use of these phrases has been criticised, for instance, in some organisations non-white groups may not be in the numerical minority. The terms also assume that non-ethnic-minority individuals fall into a single group, they therefore fail to recognise ethnic differences between white groups such as individuals with Polish or Irish backgrounds in the U.K. (Mac an Ghaill, 1999; Richardson, 2006).

Although these terms are problematic, they reflect a desire from organisations to draw distinctions between the majority (i.e. white) and visible minority groups, who are traditionally less well represented in organisations and suffer greater levels of discrimination. On a practical level, these broad distinctions enable organisations to understand how non-white individuals fair in organisations and develop HR policy to redress any differences. If specific ethnicities are only represented by one or two individuals within organisations, more specific ethnic group categorisations may

make policy development and interventions unfeasible in terms of cost, resources and identifying impact.

Reflecting this, organisational research on ethnicity has adopted the term 'minority-ethnic' which is regarded as a grammatical improvement on the more common practitioner terms (Richardson, 2006). This term signals that a distinction is being made with the majority-ethnic and acknowledges that 'ethnicity' is something all individuals possess. **Therefore in this thesis the term 'minority-ethnic' is used to refer to non-white ethnic groups who reside in white-majority populations such as the U.S. and U.K. 'Majority-ethnic' refers to the ethnic group that comprises the majority of a population. In this thesis the term is used to denote White British individuals.**

It should be noted that when referring to existing research studies in the following review of the literature, the terms used within each specific article or book will be reported. For example, a study on 'African American participants' will be reported as such, rather than being modified to 'minority-ethnic participants'.

2.4 Structure of the Literature Review

This literature review presents the theoretical perspectives and associated research that is relevant to differential career success. It is structured in three broad sections: theoretical perspectives from career success, theoretical perspectives on ethnicity in wider organisational research and research on causal attributions.

1) Theories from Career Success Research

The first section examines theories that are from career success research. There has been significant attention paid to understanding the factors that influence career success in majority-ethnic samples. For example, a meta-analysis of predictors of career success identified 140 articles and found 26 factors that influenced extrinsic (salary, promotion) and/or intrinsic (career satisfaction) success (Ng et al., 2005). However, within the meta-analysis, only 13 of the 140 articles examined race or ethnicity. Therefore, the first two theories from career success, that are discussed,

individual differences and **human capital theory**, have little evidence from minority-ethnic samples. Although there has not been a great deal of ethnicity research from these perspectives, where applicable, findings from relevant ethnicity research are discussed. The third theory discussed in this section, **Social Capital Theory**, does offer a greater number of studies that consider ethnicity. Research on ethnicity and two areas of social capital research, networking and mentoring, are therefore examined.

2) Theories on Ethnicity from Wider Organisational Research

As well as career success theories, there are other theoretical perspectives from organisational psychology, organisational behaviour and social psychology that are relevant to how minority-ethnic employees experience organisations and careers. Much of this research on ethnicity has traditionally drawn on socio-cognitive theories. Discussed first are **Social Categorisation Theory** and the **Similarity-Attraction Paradigm,** which have been used to understand how minority- and majority-ethnic groups interact in organisations. Although few studies have expressly identified links with 'career success', research associated with their relevance to career outcomes is presented. A growing body of research is also focusing on power relations in organisations and how these may affect concepts identified in other areas of research. Therefore theories that adopt a **power perspective** are discussed towards the end of this section.

3) Causal Attributions

After reviewing the limitations associated with the existing career success and ethnicity theories, research on causal attributions is presented. This is because causal attributions provide an important insight into how minority-ethnic employees make sense of their career experiences and are the focus of study one in this thesis.

2.5 Theories from Career Success Research

This section introduces the three most common theoretical perspectives used in career success research: **Individual differences, human capital theory** and **social**

capital theory. Where available, ethnicity research is discussed in relation to each theory.

2.5.1 Individual Differences

Researchers have argued that individual differences are important for career success because career decisions and actions over time may be driven by core attitudes, behaviours and skills which may be influenced by personality and ability (Ng et al., 2005; Seibert et al., 1999). For example, certain personality traits may mean that individuals are better at developing relationships with key decision makers and attracting career sponsorship, which can aid success (Turban & Dougherty, 1994). Therefore this section discusses three aspects of individual differences research that have received most attention in the career success literature: **the five factor model of personality**, **proactive personality** and **cognitive ability**.

Personality: Five Factor Model

Most studies of personality and career success have utilised the Five Factor Model (FFM) of personality that encompasses five broad traits: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism (or emotional stability) and openness to experience (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). The model has been found to generalise across many cultures and remains reasonably stable over time (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1990; Salgado, 1997).

Although findings from research on majority-ethnic samples has been inconsistent, in general, there is some evidence to suggest that conscientiousness, extraversion and emotional stability are positively related to extrinsic and intrinsic career success, with emotional stability having a stronger relationship with intrinsic success. Agreeableness has been found to be negatively related to extrinsic career success (Boudreau, 2001; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007; Seibert & Kraimer, 2001; Sutin, Costa, Miech, & Eaton, 2009).

Despite interest in personality and career success in majority-ethnic research, there has been no research examining personality and ethnicity in relation to career

success. However, there has been research on group differences in personality, irrespective of career success. A recent meta-analysis using over 700 effect sizes and 44 personality instruments found only negligible differences on the Big Five between Asian, black, Hispanic and white groups (Foldes, Dueher, & Ones, 2008). The authors concluded that such differences would be unlikely to cause adverse impact in formal selection or promotion processes.

These findings indicate that differential career success should not be attributable to differences in personality between groups. However, research has also suggested that different personality traits may be more, or less valued in different roles (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007). Research on person-environment fit also suggests that minority-ethnic employees may not be given the same opportunity as majority-ethnic employees to go into roles that are congruent with their personality, leading to lower levels of job satisfaction (Lovelace & Rosen, 1996). Nevertheless, there has been little consideration of the possibility of differential treatment of minority-ethnic groups, or discrimination in the individual differences literature.

Proactive Personality

Whilst there is conflicting evidence of the effect of the Big Five, there is an increasing interest in the possible role of proactive personality in career success. Proactive personality pertains to the degree individuals identify and act on opportunities, take the initiative, incite change and persevere (Thomas, Whitman, & Viswesvaran, 2010, p. 276). In a sample of 496 majority- and minority-ethnic employees, Seibert et al (1999) found that proactive personality was positively associated with salary, promotions and career satisfaction, over and above demographic, human capital, motivational and organisational indicators. Although ethnicity was not the primary focus of the study, they did report that there was no difference in proactive personality between white (who comprised 96% of the sample) and non-white participants, which is consistent with other research (e.g. Lambert, Eby, & Reeves, 2006).

Research has found that the relationship between proactive personality and career success is mediated by factors such as networking, political knowledge and career initiative (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001; Thomas et al., 2010). Although there has been no research on proactive personality and differential career success, if being minority-ethnic affects the opportunity to build instrumental networks, or gain political knowledge, as found in previous research (e.g. Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, Zhou, & Gilmore, 1996; Ibarra, 1995), then being proactive may not be as beneficial for minority-ethnic groups. Furthermore, Hu, Thomas and Lance (2008) propose that stereotypical beliefs about certain groups may influence the effectiveness of proactive behaviour. It is therefore important that research considers how ethnicity may influence the successful implementation of proactive behaviours.

Cognitive Ability

Cognitive ability has been found to be one of the best predictors of job performance in majority-ethnic samples across many occupations (Hunter & Hunter, 1984; Schmidt & Hunter, 2004). Thus, cognitive ability positively influences job performance throughout individuals' careers and can result in individuals moving into more prestigious and higher paid roles and receiving more opportunities for promotion (Dreher & Bretz, 1991; Ng & Feldman, 2010; Wilka, Desmarais, & Sackett, 1995). Only weak or inconsistent relationships have been found between cognitive ability and intrinsic success (Ganzach, 1998; Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999). However, strong associations have been found between cognitive ability and extrinsic success, for example, Judge et al (1999) followed 354 individuals from childhood to retirement and found cognitive ability predicted their salary and hierarchical position later in life.

Ethnic group differences on cognitive ability tests have received considerable attention within psychological research for several decades (e.g. Sackett, Schmitt, Ellingson, & Kabin, 2001; Spearman, 1927). In a meta-analysis, Roth et al (2006) found that black individuals tend to score one standard deviation below white individuals in corporate settings. This has meant that examining group differences on cognitive ability has been controversial. It has also led to research 'blaming the

victim', implying that differential work outcomes for minority groups are due to lower cognitive ability, rather than external barriers such as discrimination (Nkomo, 1992).

However, research has found it is not just prior ability that leads to differential test scores, but also aspects of the testing context. For example, African Americans have been found to score higher on tests when they are given a social context, (e.g. via telephone or video), rather than when they require abstract thinking (e.g. pencil and paper: Chan & Schmitt, 1997; Schmitt & Mills, 2001). Research also suggests that motivation, test taking anxiety and the perceived threat of being stereotyped can affect test scores (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000; Schmader, 2010; Steele & Aronson, 1995).

Nevertheless, findings that minority-ethnic groups score differently on cognitive ability tests suggest that they will be less likely than majority-ethnic individuals to be selected and promoted through formal processes and therefore experience differential career success (Bobko, Roth, & Potosky, 1999). Importantly though, other groups, such as Hispanic and Asian Americans have been found to score *higher* than whites (Suzuki & Valencia, 1997). Yet, research has found that Asian groups are less likely to achieve career success compared to their white colleagues (Tang, 1993, 2000). These findings raise questions about whether cognitive ability is a direct predictor of career success for minority-ethnic employees, suggesting that there may be other factors that affect the impact of cognitive ability in the workplace.

2.5.2 Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory is the second theoretical perspective utilised in career success research, discussed in this review. The theory proposes that individuals who invest in themselves, for instance, by enhancing their education and training, will be rewarded by achieving positive career outcomes, such as increased salary (Becker, 1975, 1985; Lewis, 1954). Typical measures of human capital include level of education, educational quality, such as the prestige of the university or school attended, job tenure and amount of training (James, 2000; Judge, Klinger, & Simon, 2010). In

their meta-analysis, Ng et al (2005) found that the human capital measures of hours worked, job and organisational tenure, work experience, willingness to transfer and education level were all positively associated with salary, promotions and career satisfaction.

Research suggests that there are no differences in human capital between minority- and majority-ethnic groups. For example Igbaria and Wormley (1992) found no difference between black and white information systems workers' education attainment and James (2000) found no difference in education or training between black and white employees in a U.S. financial organisation. However, a longitudinal study examining the human capital of 6,125 male employees found that black and Hispanic employees who enter the workplace with the same educational attainment as white men had significantly lower earnings at age 40 (Tomaskovic-Devey, Thomas, & Johnson, 2005). Importantly, the gap was largest for those with the highest level of education, suggesting that minority-ethnic employees may receive differential returns for their human capital investments.

Tomaskovic-Devey et al. (2005) argue that these findings exist because (1) discrimination in the workplace prevents minority-ethnic workers translating their human capital into 'assets', such as career success, (2) minority-ethnic individuals are more likely to encounter discriminatory personnel and managerial practices, and therefore have less opportunity to develop their human capital once within organisations, and; (3) minority-ethnic workers may be more likely to enter certain types of occupation that offer less opportunity to develop and implement human capital. This last point has received considerable attention in the sociological literature in relation to research on 'occupational segregation', which is discussed next.

Occupational Segregation

The tendency for minority-ethnic employees to be attracted to, or channelled into certain types of role has been described as occupational segregation (Dick & Nadin, 2006; Maume, 1999; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993). For example, in the U.K. Annual

Population Survey (ONS, 2010a) 42.3% of black or black British individuals in employment worked in public administration, education or health, compared to 30.7% of whites. Pakistani and Bangladeshi employees were also more likely to work in the transport and communications industry (16.9%) compared to white employees (8.2%). There is also evidence to suggest that minority-ethnic employees find themselves allocated to certain types of roles once in organisations such as 'black issues', diversity or community focused roles (e.g. Collins, 1993, 1997; Maume, 1999).

Reskin and Roos (1990) suggest that occupational or role segregation reflects the stereotypes people hold about 'appropriate' roles for different groups. It may also reflect cultural or group preferences for occupation types, a preference to work alongside similar others, or fewer barriers to entry for minority-ethnic groups (Leong, Brown, & Walsh, 1995). However, 'minority positions' are often less valued and perceived as less prestigious in organisations. This can lead to a lack of training opportunities and fewer marketable skills for role incumbents (Blackwell & Guinea-Martin, 2005; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993). Occupational or role segregation can therefore result in individuals being unable to develop or implement their human capital, which may lead to differential career success.

2.5.3 Social Capital Theory

The third theoretical perspective utilised in career success research is social capital theory. Social capital is defined as a function of social structures that facilitate the actions of individuals (Coleman, 1990, p. 302) described by Belliveau, O'Reilly and Wade (1996, p. 1572) as "an individual's personal network and elite institutional affiliations". Most definitions of social capital refer to the social resources that are available to an individual; in the context of organisations these are the network of relationships between peers, supervisors and subordinates (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Hayes, 2000). Social capital theory suggests that individuals who are able to build and mobilise their social capital will achieve greater levels of career success. This section, discusses two areas of social capital research that have paid significant attention to ethnicity: **informal networks** and **mentoring relationships**.

Informal Networks

Building social capital through informal networking has been persistently linked to successful career outcomes and is considered an important aspect of managerial roles (Luthans, Hodgetts, & Rosenkrantz, 1988; Mintzberg, 1994). Informal networks are important for career success because they provide access to career-related resources such as information, assistance and guidance from others (Sparrowe, Liden, Wayne, & Kraimer, 2001). Gaining control over such resources has been linked to increased power (Krackhardt, 1992), enhanced reputation (Kilduff & Krackhardt, 1994), and promotions (Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 2001). Networking also provides social support and is an important means of accessing mentoring and sponsorship within organisations (Ragins, 1997; Thomas, 1990).

Networking research has predominantly been studied within sociology, where researchers typically use 'social network analysis' to map individuals' contacts and examine the strength and structure of network relationships or 'ties'. In a study of 448 MBA alumni, Seibert, Kraimer and Liden (2001) found that developing a range of less intense networking relationships (weak ties), and occupying network positions where unique information can be gained (structural holes), led to better relationships with those who were outside the direct work group and in higher organisational positions. These relationships then predicted access to privileged information, resources and career sponsorship. This in turn helped individuals to achieve enhanced salaries, promotions and career satisfaction, highlighting the importance of forming strategic network relationships for career success.

Ethnicity and Informal Networks

Minority-ethnic employees' lack of progression to senior organisational levels has often been attributed to exclusion from social networks (Igbaria & Wormley, 1995; Morrison & von Glinow, 1990). The preference for homophily - the tendency for people to create ties with individuals who are ethnically similar - is repeatedly cited as a cause for minority-ethnic exclusion from informal networks (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). A preference for homophily has several implications for differential career success. Because there are fewer minority-ethnic employees than

majority-ethnic employees in organisations, they have less opportunity to create ties with similar co-workers (Friedman, Kane, & Cornfield, 1998; McGuire, 2000). This means that their networks must have a wider range than their majority-ethnic counterparts, reaching beyond work areas and organisations (Murrell, Blake-Beard, Porter, & Perkins-Williamson, 2008). Whilst this may provide access to unique resources (Burt, 1998), their network contacts are less likely to be of high status, and therefore provide fewer career benefits (Lin, Ensel, & Vaughn, 1981).

Minority-ethnic employees in majority dominated organisations are therefore likely to experience a tension between their preference for homophily and their need for relationships that can enhance career success. Research has found that minority-ethnic employees who develop networks largely composed of majority-ethnic individuals are more successful (Brutus & Livers, 2000). Yet, there is a need to invest more time and effort creating and maintaining non-homophilous networks, whereas majority-ethnic employees benefit from 'multiplex' network ties, reinforced by both similarity and usefulness (Ibarra, 1993, 1995).

Ibarra (1993) suggests that non-homophilous networks are also more difficult to establish for minority-ethnic employees because they lack power and the career resources to offer in exchange, and are therefore less desirable network contacts. According to James (2000), majority-ethnic group members may also operate exclusionary practices, to protect their in-group, impeding access to networks for minority-ethnic groups. As a result, not only are majority network ties difficult to establish, but homophilous relationships may be induced, as a response to majority group exclusion, rather than by choice (McPherson et al., 2001).

Despite providing a useful insight into how informal processes within organisations influence the career success of minority-ethnic groups, network research has several shortcomings. Much of the research is cross-sectional, making it difficult to determine whether network composition leads to successful career outcomes, or whether individuals who are successful in their careers go on to form useful networks. There is also little known about other organisational influences such as organisational culture and climate for diversity that may influence network structure and behaviour. Whilst networking is one of the largest areas of career success

research to examine ethnicity in the workplace, very little is known about networking behaviour beyond broad group differences. There has been no research concerned with *how* minority-ethnic groups engage network ties, or whether they place the same importance on networking behaviour.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a second form of social capital and is often considered a form of developmental network relationship (Thomas, 1993). In the context of the workplace, mentoring has been defined as a relationship that enhances the personal and professional growth of a protégé or mentee (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008). Traditionally, mentors are more experienced and senior individuals within the same organisation, and most research has focused on informal mentoring relationships (Ensher, Thomas, & Murphy, 2001). There is general agreement across the literature that, similar to informal network relationships, mentoring provides both career development (e.g. sponsorship, performance feedback) and psychosocial support (e.g. role modelling, friendship: Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). Mentoring has been linked to enhanced career satisfaction, self-esteem, salary and promotion (Allen et al., 2004; Chao, 1997; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Scandura, 1992).

Mentoring and Ethnicity

Research on ethnicity and mentoring has demonstrated that minority-ethnic employees have no more difficulty gaining access to mentoring relationships than their majority-ethnic colleagues (Blake-Beard, 1999; Thomas, 1990). However, similar to findings in the networking literature, minority-ethnic employees may prefer to develop mentorships with racially similar others (Dreher & Cox, 1996). As well as greater interpersonal comfort, minority-ethnic mentees may prefer minority-ethnic mentors because they can provide them with strategies to overcome discrimination and prejudice in the workplace (Allen et al., 2005; Ragins, 1997).

Despite an apparent preference for same-race mentoring, the demographic composition of organisations means there is less opportunity for minority-ethnic employees to develop mentoring relationships with racially similar others,

particularly those of high status (Ragins, 1997; Ragins & Kram, 2007). This means that same-race mentorships are less likely to provide career related benefits (Dreher & Cox, 1996), and although they offer increased psychosocial functions, these have been found to be less relevant for extrinsic career success (Allen et al., 2004).

Cross-race mentoring can provide minority-ethnic mentees with the knowledge, resources and social capital provided by majority groups (Ragins, 2007a; Thomas, 1990). Dreher and Cox (1996) found that black MBA graduates who entered cross-race mentorships with a white mentor increased their annual compensation by approximately 11% more than those in same-race mentorships. Importantly, those mentees with female or minority ethnic mentors received no more compensation than those who went without a mentor. Yet, whilst cross-race mentoring may be more beneficial, minority-ethnic employees may be regarded as less desirable mentees, because their work is placed under greater scrutiny, they may be evaluated unfairly and perceived as less competent and therefore reflect badly on potential mentors (Ragins, 2002).

Although research suggests that cross-race mentoring may be more beneficial, if not more difficult to establish for minority-ethnic employees, the mentoring literature makes the assumption that same-race and cross-race relationships mean the same to all identity groups. White mentors and mentees are likely to experience organisations very differently to black mentors and mentees. Despite this, white-white relationships are often combined in the same category as black-black mentorships for analysis (e.g. Thomas, 1990). Therefore, research on the developmental needs of different groups is necessary. Nevertheless, mentoring research has, in comparison with other fields, been very progressive in terms of its attention to ethnicity and diversity. It has also demonstrated that an inability to gain equivalent outcomes as majority-ethnic mentees may well act as a barrier to career success for minority-ethnic mentees (Clutterbuck, Ragins, & Matthewman, 2002; Ragins & Kram, 2007).

2.5.4 Summary of Theoretical Perspectives from Career Success Research

Three career success theories have been discussed so far in this review. Firstly, research on individual differences suggests that an individuals' personality or ability can influence the level of career success they achieve. Secondly, Human Capital Theory suggests that the level of 'investment' individuals make in themselves, such as developing their education or skills, can lead to beneficial returns on that investment, in the form of career success. Social Capital Theory has provided a greater amount of research on ethnicity and suggests that differential career success may be due to minority-ethnic employees being less able to develop social capital that will be beneficial for their career. Yet these theories place emphasis on the role of the individual to gain education and skills, and to foster successful social relationships. The next section discusses theories on ethnicity from wider organisational research, which have given greater consideration to the role of external barriers to career success.

2.6 Theories on Ethnicity from Wider Organisational Research

Whilst there has been limited ethnicity research in some of the areas of career success, there are a range of theories that have been used to study ethnicity in organisations. Many of these originate from social cognitive research and for the purposes of this review two overarching theoretical perspectives will be discussed: **social categorisation theory** and the **similarity-attraction paradigm**. Although these have not been extensively applied to differential career success, they are discussed in this review because they offer important insight into how group interactions may affect minority-ethnic employees' organisational experiences. A third perspective has also adapted some of the existing theories to include the role of power, which is particularly important for the study of ethnicity as historical and societal power differences between groups guide group interaction. Therefore theories that adopt a **power perspective** will also be discussed.

2.6.1 Social-Cognitive Perspective: Social Categorisation Theory

Social categorisation theory has been extensively applied to the study of ethnicity. The principle of social categorisation has also been used as a foundation for a

number of sub-theoretical perspectives, which can provide insight into how groups interact within organisations and the implications this may have for differential career success. Therefore, the following section will firstly introduce social categorisation theory and how it developed from **early psychological research**. Next, the most prominent social categorisation theory, **Social Identity Theory** will be discussed. Other theories that have been used to understand how minority-ethnic employees' treatment in organisations may differ to their majority-ethnic colleagues include research on **Stereotyping**, **Interpersonal Attribution Theory** and **Aversive Racism Theory.** Therefore, their importance for differential career success is considered below.

Early Psychological Research

Ethnicity research within psychology has concentrated on how and why biases occur and their influence on those who are discriminated against. Early psychological research considered prejudiced attitudes of individuals as being the cause for the negative experiences of minority-ethnic groups in society. Allport (1954) proposed that prejudice is due to a process of categorisation. He argued that individuals have a tendency to think in terms of category membership and therefore make distinctions between groups, which guide beliefs, perceptions and reactions. He suggested this process of categorisation was a cognitive mechanism that enables individuals to quickly identify others; a concept that forms the basis of modern stereotyping research (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996). Allport (1954) proposed that individuals have a preference towards groups that contain the self (in-group) and defend their categorical membership, which can come at the expense of members of other groups (out-groups) resulting in prejudice.

Building on Allport's (1954) concept of categorisation, a range of theories have developed which focus on individuals' attitudes and behaviour as group members and cohesion within and between social groups. The most prominent, social identity theory, is discussed next.

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory, introduced in the 1970s, led ethnicity researchers to examine cognitive processes and explore the nature of prejudice, discrimination and intergroup conflict (Tajfel, 1977; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986). This perspective suggests that as well as having a personal identity, individuals gain their social identity through being a member of a social group. The theory proposes that individuals engage in the process of social-categorisation; sorting others into in-groups (e.g. majority-ethnic) or out-groups (e.g. minority-ethnic). Maintaining a positive self-esteem is regarded as the motivation for seeking group membership and to enhance self-esteem, individuals establish group distinctiveness by favouring their in-groups.

Feelings of group membership occur when social identity is salient, leading individuals to adopt attitudes and behaviour that enhance the status of the in-group, such as ethnocentrism and stereotyping (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Turner & Reynolds, 2001). In relation to career success, this process may result in minority-ethnic employees being perceived as less trustworthy and cooperative than majority-ethnic individuals (Operario & Fiske, 1999; Ruscher, Fiske, Miki, & Van Manen, 1991). This may lead to differential treatment, such as affording minority-ethnic employees less job discretion or autonomy, which has been associated with differential career success (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990). Hogg (2001) proposes that minority-ethnic employees will also struggle to reach leadership positions, because they will not embody the defining stereotypical attributes of key in-group decision makers. Social identity theory also offers an explanation as to why minority-ethnic employees may find it difficult to engage in cross-race interactions such as networking and mentoring (Ibarra, 1995).

Despite its relevance to the workplace, much social identity research has been concerned with establishing reliable measures of observable categorisation processes between artificial groups in controlled laboratory settings. For example, by dividing groups into ‘red’ or ‘blue’ and measuring aspects of their behaviour towards the other groups (e.g. Brewer, 1995; van Leeuwen, van Knippenberg, & Ellemers, 2003). These scenarios fail to account for the social complexities of the workplace,

such as power differences between groups in society and the organisation, and implicit biases that some may hold towards certain groups (Amodio & Devine, 2006). There has also been little applied research on *ethnicity* and social identity in organisations. Instead, research has focused on identification with organisations or work groups (e.g. Abrams, Ando, & Hinkle, 1998; Van Knippenberg, 2000). Furthermore, studies have often merely compared responses from demographic groups (e.g. black vs white), and failed to measure the degree to which individuals identify with these categories.

Instead of examining identities in organisations, research using a social identity/categorisation theoretical perspective has predominantly compared group differences on socio-cognitive processes related to the process of group categorisation. Examples of these are stereotyping, intergroup attributions and aversive racism, which are discussed below.

Stereotyping

Stereotypes are "beliefs about the characteristics, attributes and behaviours of members of certain groups" (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996, p. 240). Most believe stereotypes exist because they act as a mechanism of simplifying cognitive demands, the perceiver can use the existing knowledge they have about the category someone belongs to, such as race or gender, rather than having to process new information (Bodenhausen & Macrae, 1998; Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994). Stereotyping research traditionally draws on Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) where it is hypothesised that stereotyping can be used as a tool to protect the in-group and disadvantage the out-group (Abrams & Hogg, 2010).

Stereotypes and Career Success

Common negative stereotypes that whites make about blacks for example are that they are of lower intelligence and portrayed as occupying inferior roles (Essed, 1991; Fiske, 1998). This type of stereotype provides an explanation for research that has found that blacks or African Americans receive less job discretion, lower

performance evaluations and lower job involvement than their white colleagues (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993; Igbaria & Wormley, 1995; Nkomo & Cox, 1990).

However, the majority of stereotyping research in organisations has focused on gender. Research has found that women's career success is affected by stereotypes in two ways. The first shows the stereotypes men hold of women do not fit the stereotypes they hold of what a successful manager is. Because men are more likely to hold decision making roles, women are likely to be perceived as having less potential to work at senior organisational levels (Heilman, 2001; Schein & Davidson, 1993). The second way stereotypes can affect career success is that men also hold stereotypes about what they think women as a group should be like. Women who do not conform to this are then penalised. Both of these forms of stereotyping result in biased performance evaluations and differential treatment at work (Eagly, 1995; Heilman, 2001; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004).

Although there has been less research on stereotypes and ethnicity, particularly in organisations, research has reported that stereotypes may affect minority-ethnic career success in the same way. Tomkiewicz, Brenner & Adeyemi-Bello (1998) found that successful manager characteristics were closer to 'white male' than African American, suggesting that differential career success may be partially explained by stereotypical attitudes.

Interpersonal Attribution Theory

Causal attributions are the everyday explanations that individuals make for their own behaviour, the behaviour of others and events that are important, unusual or potentially threatening (Silvester, 2004; Wong & Weiner, 1981). The process of making causal attributions allows individuals to make similar events and behaviours more predictable and controllable. Intrapersonal causal attributions are concerned with the explanations individuals make about their own behaviours and experiences and are discussed in section 2.9. This section focuses on interpersonal attribution theory, which is concerned with the attributions that individuals make about others.

Dimensions in Attribution Research

Attributional research originated in social psychology (e.g. Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967) and research typically categorises causal explanations using several dimensions. For example, Weiner (1979), a key attributional theorist, proposed three-dimensions. The first of these refers to whether the cause is perceived to be internal or external. The second dimension, stability, relates to how constant or varying a cause is over time. Controllability is the third dimension and refers to the extent individuals feel themselves or others have control over the outcome.

Importantly, Weiner (1985, 1986) argued that each of these dimensions must be considered alongside the others, where their combinations result in several attributional patterns. For example, an individual who believes their intelligence has caused a given outcome would be making an internal, stable, uncontrollable attribution, whereas someone who believes they achieved the outcome due to luck would be making an external, unstable, uncontrollable attribution. Further dimensions have since been used in attributional research (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Munton, Silvester, Stratton, & Hanks, 1999). The personal-universal dimension was developed to provide information on the unique aspects of an individual. The global-specific dimension relates to causes that occur in a wide or narrow range of situations.

Interpersonal Attributions and Differential Career Success

In line with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), managers may use in-group serving attributions to increase the distinctiveness of their own social group (e.g. white, male) therefore enhancing their self-esteem (Hewstone, 1990; Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002). According to interpersonal attribution theory, this can be achieved by attributing positive in-group and negative out-group behaviour to internal/stable/controllable (e.g. ability) causes and negative in-group and positive out-group behaviours to external/unstable/uncontrollable causes (e.g. bad luck: Hewstone, 1989; Pettigrew, 1979).

The majority of research concerning attribution bias has focused on gender and been conducted in controlled laboratory settings (e.g. Haccoun & Stacy, 1980; Heilman & Haynes, 2005; Sczensny, Bosak, Neff & Schyns, 2004). Research on gender in the workplace has found that women's successful performance is more likely to be attributed to external, uncontrollable and temporary (or unstable) factors such as help from others, or luck, compared to men whose performance is more likely attributed to more internal factors, such as effort or ability (Feather & Simon, 1975; Rosenthal, Guest, & Peccei, 1996).

Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1993) conducted one of the only studies examining ethnicity and workplace attributions. They measured the causal attributions supervisors made concerning 322 black managers and 426 white managers. They found that supervisors were more likely to attribute the performance of successful black managers to external causes such as help from others, whereas the performance of successful white managers was more typically attributed to internal causes such as ability. These attributions were also related to black managers being perceived as having less favourable career advancement prospects than white managers.

If minority-ethnic successful performance is continually attributed to external or uncontrollable sources, such as luck, help from colleagues or short term effort, it is likely to affect future task allocation, appraisal and promotion (Green & Mitchell, 1979; Silvester & Chapman, 1996). Therefore the attributions made by others offer an important insight into the psychological mechanisms that may influence differential career success.

Aversive Racism Theory

Aversive Racism Theory is a third area of research that is based on the principle of social categorisation. 'Aversive racism' describes individuals who possess a subtle, often unintentional, form of bias, rather than display overt racist behaviour (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). According to Dovidio and Gaertner (1998), this form of bias is apparent in many white individuals, who think that they are non-prejudiced and

actively endorse equal opportunity, but actually harbour negative feelings about disadvantaged groups. These negative feelings result from individuals categorising others into in-group and out-groups, but unlike many other theories adopting a social-categorisation approach, aversive racism is also influenced by socio-cultural beliefs and values, such as racism, justice, fairness and equality (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998).

Importantly for differential career success, the concept can help identify when discrimination and bias against minority-ethnic groups will occur. The theory states that when discrimination would be obvious, to themselves and others, aversive racists will not discriminate. Yet, when situations are ambiguous, and racism can be rationalised to another factor, discrimination is more likely to occur (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). For example, Dovidio & Gaertner (2000) asked students to select others onto a peer counselling programme. They found when prejudice would be obvious and both black and white candidates' qualifications were clearly strong, participants did not discriminate. However, they did discriminate against black candidates when qualifications from both groups were ambiguous. However, there has been little applied research, meaning that factors such as equal opportunity policies and climate for diversity, which will influence what degree discrimination can enter organisational processes, have not been accounted for.

2.6.2 Social-Cognitive Perspective: Similarity-Attraction Theory

A second approach to research on ethnicity and diversity in organisations focuses on interpersonal attraction, rather than social categorisation (Byrne, 1971). Similarity-attraction theory states that similarity in attitudes, values, personality traits and/or demographic differences (e.g. ethnicity) enhances interpersonal liking and attraction (Byrne, 1971, 1997). Individuals who share similar backgrounds are likely to share similar values and life experiences, which make interaction easier (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Interacting with similar others also positively reinforces individuals' beliefs and attitudes and therefore is more desirable than interacting with dissimilar others (Triandis, 1960). The similarity attraction theory forms the foundation of two theories that are discussed below in relation to ethnicity in

organisations: **relational demography theory** and **leader-member exchange theory**.

Relational Demography Theory

Relational demography theory draws on the similarity-attraction paradigm because it suggests that individuals compare their demographic characteristics against the demographic composition of the work group or organisation (Riordan & Shore, 1997). Whether individuals perceive themselves to be similar or dissimilar affects their work-related attitudes and behaviours (Pfeffer, 1983; Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992b; Tsui, Xin, & Egan, 1995; Wesolowski & Mossholder, 1997).

Although relational demography is particularly relevant to ethnicity, there has been little research on similarity of socio-demographic characteristics such as gender or ethnicity. Instead the majority of research has examined similarity of attitudes, or values, linking them to career outcomes such as dissatisfaction, promotion and salary attainment (e.g. Jackson et al., 1991; Mueller, Finley, Iverson, & Price, 1999; Parker, Dipboye, & Jackson, 1995; Pfeffer, 1983; Tsui, Porter, & Egan, 2002).

Relational demography may influence differential career success in several ways. For example, individuals who are ethnically dissimilar to their work group may be less socially integrated and therefore less likely to receive the same career-related advice or social support from others. This effect can be seen in the research on networking, discussed in section 2.5.3. They will also be unable to fit the prototype that a group, or manager, holds about a successful group member and may therefore receive less positive performance appraisals or fewer promotion opportunities. In support of this, Riordan and Shore (1997) found that Hispanic employees in a U.S. insurance company had higher advancement opportunities in work groups that contained white and minority employees, compared to when in work groups that were mostly white. However, the same effect was not found for African Americans, suggesting that they may use the racial composition of the wider organisation as a referent group, rather than individual team composition.

Tokenism

Relational demography is also relevant to research on solo or token status. Tokens are individuals who are demographically dissimilar to the rest of their working group, or are at least in the minority (e.g. less than 20%). Kanter (1977) suggested that this status means individuals are highly visible and their work is placed under greater scrutiny than others. They are therefore less likely to receive accurate performance evaluations and feedback, which can lead to differential career outcomes. Yet, Sackett, Dubois & Noe (1991) found that work groups with larger black representation did not have smaller differences in performance evaluations between blacks and white employees.

However, a second way tokenism can affect workplace outcomes is that individuals who have solo or token status are more likely to feel that others view them in terms of their category membership and expect to be subject to stereotyping (Cohen & Swim, 1995; Niemann & Dovidio, 1998) . The anxiety caused by stereotype threat can adversely affect their performance, which if continued may lead to differential career success (Roberson & Kulik, 2007).

Whilst relational demography has highlighted the importance of examining the demographic compositions of groups in organisational research, it often assumes that membership of demographic categories is objective and therefore does not allow for individuals to identify with groups to varying degrees (Nkomo & Cox, 1999; Phinney & Alipuria, 1996). It also fails to examine important intersectionalities, such as the combination of ethnicity and gender and how these affect workplace experiences. Both social identity theory and organisational demography assume all identity differences cause similar effects, for example, that being the only female is similar to being the only minority-ethnic individual in a work group. As such, they have discounted the importance of the social and historical context of diversity issues.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory has been used in relation to sponsorship in career success research (e.g. Breland, Treadway, Duke, & Adams, 2007; Byrne, Dik, & Chiaburu, 2008). However, for the purposes of this review, it is discussed within the similarity-attraction paradigm, as research draws on this extensively to explain relationships between leaders and individual subordinates. The theory proposes that some leaders develop high-quality LMX relationships with their subordinates, which foster trust, respect, obligation, support. Research on majority-ethnic participants has found this leads to higher subordinate performance, career satisfaction, salary, progression and organisational commitment (Harris, Harris, & Brouer, 2009; Wayne et al., 1999; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). However, low quality LMX has been linked to low trust, interaction, support and rewards and subordinates are more likely to be given routine tasks, and have a more formalised relationship with their supervisor (Epitropaki & Martin, 1999; Janssen & Van Yperen, 2010; Martin, Epitropaki, Thomas, & Topaka, 2010).

LMX and Differential Career Success

Although there are few studies examining LMX and ethnicity, research suggests that when dissimilarity in factors such as age, gender, education, job tenure as well as race, exists between leaders and subordinates, it is associated with lower quality LMX (Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989; Wayne et al., 1997). Leaders and members who are racially, or ethnically dissimilar may like, trust and respect each other less than those who are similar. Differences in ethnicity also provide the possibility of prejudices and biased expectations, which stall the formation of successful LMX. This means that ethnically dissimilar subordinates may be offered less support and resources, suggesting LMX may be an important factor in differential career success (Pelled & Xin, 2000; Scandura & Lankau, 1996).

Research examining ethnicity and line manager support has demonstrated that minority- and majority-ethnic managers receive different types or levels of support from supervisors (Alderfer, Alderfer, Tucker, & Tucker, 1980; Fernandez, 1981; Igbaria & Wormley, 1995; Jones, 1986). Greenhaus et al (1990) conducted an

important survey of 1,628 managers, which found that black managers reported being given less job discretion and autonomy by seniors compared to white managers, and that this in turn related to lower performance evaluations and career satisfaction.

Researchers have suggested that similarity in deep-level diversity such as personality and attitudes, may help to overcome the low quality LMX associated with ethnic dissimilarity (Ditomaso et al. 2007). Furthermore, Scandura and Lankau (1996) propose that contextual influences, such as climate for diversity, group and organisational composition and the economic environment are important for demographically dissimilar LMX relationships, yet these have been overlooked in much LMX research. This is a criticism that is true of many of the theories discussed thus far in this review, which theories adopting a power perspective, discussed next, have attempted to rectify.

2.6.3 Power Perspective

Theories that approach diversity research from a power perspective acknowledge the importance of wider contextual factors. In particular, they recognise that individuals from socio-demographic groups are perceived as high or low status, as well as ingroup/outgroup or similar/dissimilar. Theories discussed below that have adopted this perspective include **embedded intergroup relations theory** and **social dominance theory** and there is also growing research on the role of power in **stereotyping** and **mentoring**. A final area of research that draws on a power perspective to understand how individuals gain career success is research on **political skill.**

Embedded Intergroup Relations Theory

Unlike social identity theory, embedded intergroup relations theory originated from a sociological perspective and focuses on the relationships between identity groups, organisational groups and groups in society (Alderfer, 1987; Alderfer, Tucker, Morgan, & Drasgow, 1983). Alderfer (1987) suggested that members of organisational groups tend to share similar work tasks, functions and hierarchical

positions and therefore share common 'organisational views'. This theory proposes that tension is created by the interaction between organisational and identity groups and the extent of this tension depends on embeddedness; the degree patterns in society, such as power and status, are reflected in the organisation. For example, if white middle class males dominate powerful positions in society and the organisation, the intergroup embeddedness would be congruent, resulting in relationships between identity and organisational groups being managed in a similar way to the broader society.

Thomas and Alderfer (1989) argue that the theory is particularly relevant for the career experiences of minority-ethnic employees. Conditions within organisations can reinforce stereotypes and restrict power and responsibility for minority-ethnic groups, reflecting and perpetuating group differences that are found in society. However, to the author's knowledge there has been no applied research based on this theory. This is likely due to the difficulties in measuring a multitude of factors that influence power (e.g. ethnicity, class, age etc.). Whilst the theory provides a promising framework for the study of diversity, it does not provide an adequate basis on which to form hypotheses (Proudford & Nkomo, 2006). However, diversity researchers have advocated its use as it highlights the need to examine broader social contexts (Nkomo & Cox, 1999).

Social Dominance Theory

A more recently developed model that considers power and status differences is social dominance theory (SDT: Sidanius, Pratto, & Mitchell, 1994). This theory proposes that, rather than just forming social identity groups based on differences, individuals categorise others based on social hierarchies (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The theory argues that the distribution of power between groups is, and will remain, unequal, and that social or group oppression, such as racism or sexism, is due to these group-based hierarchies (Federico & Sidanius, 2002; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

According to SDT, individuals have social dominance orientations (SDOs), which vary based on their position in a social hierarchy (Levin, Sidanius, Rabinowitz &

Federico, 1998). Therefore those in dominant positions (e.g. white males) are likely to possess high SDOs and promote inequality to maintain the hierarchical structure. SDT states that hierarchical structures therefore persist due to factors such as individual discrimination, institutional discrimination, and in-group bias. For example, managers may select individuals that are compatible with their hierarchical beliefs, individuals may be socialised in line with the social hierarchy and be offered disproportionate rewards (Gaertner & Insko, 2000; Sidanius, Pratto & Bobo, 1996; Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar & Levin, 2004)

However, research has tended to focus on individuals' general preference for a hierarchal social system, rather than specific intergroup bias to achieve dominance of one's own group (Hewstone, Rubin & Willis, 2002). SDO is also argued to be generally stable and therefore cannot sufficiently account for individuals' motivation to enhance their group's hierarchical position in some situations, but not others (Huddy, 2004; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). A key problem is the lack of empirical evidence to support its use in organisations, which is largely due to the difficulties of asking participants to make public their SDOs, which may be subject to social desirability, when studying social hierarchies in applied settings.

Stereotyping and Power

A growing area of stereotyping research, led by Professor Susan Fiske, has incorporated power differences between groups and how this may affect the types of stereotypes people make and the scenarios that make stereotyping more likely. Fiske and colleagues suggest that powerful people (e.g. managers) within social hierarchies are in a position where their biases can reinforce the status quo and maintain power and conflict between groups by distributing resources unfairly, limiting the options for minority groups (e.g. Fiske, 2000; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Goodwin, Operario, & Fiske, 1998).

Powerful individuals pay less attention to stereotypic-inconsistent information and therefore do not engage in the process of using more unique, personal information to understand people (individuation). It is proposed that this occurs because (1) the

powerful do not have sufficient motivation to attend to their subordinates and form accurate impressions; hierarchies mean that attention is directed upwards through the organisation; (2) the powerful do not have sufficient cognitive capacity to cope with the amount of information presented to them, that is, the amount of subordinates and projects they are responsible for; research has found increased use of stereotyping with increased cognitive load (Gilbert & Hixon, 1991; Macrae, Hewstone, & Griffiths, 1993); and (3) certain powerful individuals are likely to have a wish to dominate over others (Chen, Ybarra, & Kiefer, 2004; Goodwin et al., 2000; Operario & Fiske, 1999).

The majority of the research on power and stereotyping has been conducted in the laboratory, often relying false power scenarios. This means the real life power struggles and hierarchies found in organisations are difficult to replicate. Nevertheless, minority-ethnic groups are concentrated in lower organisational levels; therefore the suggestion that, not only their social identity, but also their power status, may enhance the likelihood that they are stereotyped by senior organisational members is important when considering their career experiences and treatment within organisations.

Mentoring and Power

Power differences have also been used to explain why people form mentoring relationships and who with. According to Ragins (2007a), individuals use mentoring as a method of gaining power in organisations. Mentees develop power from being mentored, in the form of career related information, support, visibility, and career success (Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Thomas, 1999). Therefore, individuals will be motivated to be mentored by more powerful individuals. However, minority-ethnic employees may be perceived as holding less power, regardless of their hierarchical position, because of their non-dominant status in society. Therefore, they will be less desirable as potential mentors and minority-ethnic mentees may prefer to seek majority-ethnic mentors who they perceive to be more powerful.

However, whilst cross-race mentoring may be advantageous in terms of power resources, minority-ethnic employees may have difficulty forming such relationships. This is because mentors also gain power from mentoring relationships (Ragins, 2002, 2007b). For example, the performance of a successful mentee can boost their reputation for selecting and training talented individuals. Powerful mentees will also be more likely to provide mentors with reciprocal career-related resources and information, such as networking contacts (Brass, 1995). Minority-ethnic employees are more likely to be perceived as less powerful than majority-ethnic employees, and will therefore be perceived as less desirable or potentially risky to mentor (Ragins, 2002).

This theoretical perspective suggests that minority-ethnic employees will find it more difficult to develop mentoring relationships with those who are perceived as powerful. Due to a lack of power resources, they may therefore receive differential career outcomes compared to majority-ethnic employees who enter mentoring relationships (Clutterbuck et al., 2002; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000).

Political Knowledge and Skills

There is increasing attention paid to the development of power through political knowledge and skills. Many organisational processes are regarded as political, such as selection, performance evaluation, pay and promotion decisions (Dreher, Dougherty, & Whitely, 1989; Ferris & Judge, 1991; Wayne & Liden, 1995). Within organisations, it is argued that individuals and groups engage in political behaviour to ensure power, influence and resources to gain organisational and career success (Judge & Bretz, 1994; Mintzberg, 1985; Pettigrew, 1973; Pfeffer, 1981). A growing area of research in organisational politics is concerned with how political skill may influence organisational and career outcomes (Ferris, Davidson, & Perrewe, 2005; Ferris et al., 2007).

Political skill is an interpersonal style which purportedly enables individuals to form useful networks and coalitions at work, understand social situations and others' motives and behaviours, hide ulterior motives, be perceived as genuine and sincere

and therefore successfully influence others. Political skill has been associated with a range of outcomes, such as job performance, assessor ratings and career success (Blickle et al., 2011; Ferris, Davidson, et al., 2005; Liu et al., 2007). In a recent study of 191 university alumni, Todd, Harris, Harris and Wheeler (2009) found that political skill was positively related to five career success outcomes: total compensation, total promotions, career satisfaction, life satisfaction and perceived external job mobility.

Ferris et al (2005), suggest that political skill can be developed through training and developmental relationships such as leader-member exchange and mentoring. Importantly for minority-ethnic employees, Ferris, Frink and Galang (1993) propose that due to differences in how groups are socialised in organisations and how information is passed between social groups, minority groups may be disadvantaged in their access to developing political skill. They argue that this may leave minority-ethnic employees incapable of successfully navigating the political aspects of organisational life. However, there has been very little research concerning political behaviour and ethnicity and the political skill deficiency hypothesis suggested by Ferris et al (1993) has yet to be tested. This area of research offers an important avenue of research which can improve understanding of the key psychological processes that are involved in forming and maintain career-enhancing relationships in the workplace.

2.6.4 Summary of Theories on Ethnicity in Wider Organisational Research

The theories used to study ethnicity in wider organisational research have adopted a greater focus on external barriers to advancement and career outcomes compared to theories from research on career success. The research following social categorisation and similarity-attraction theories has largely focused on how socio-cognitive processes affect the treatment of others. Within these perspectives, differential career success is considered the result of bias, discrimination and differential treatment from others. For example, biased interpersonal attributions, stereotyping and aversive racism may lead to lower performance evaluations (e.g. Greenhaus et al., 1990). Dissimilarity may lead to lower quality relationships with managers, which can reduce opportunity for training, development and promotion

(Scandura & Lankau, 1996). Whilst these theories overlook how context can shape the interaction between groups and individuals, the power perspective adopted in some areas of research incorporates the role of status and contextualising group differences by examining social and organisational hierarchies and environments. However, in practice there has been less research in these areas. The next section provides an overall summary and limitations associated with the theoretical perspectives discussed in this review.

2.7 Summary and Limitations of Theoretical Perspectives and Research

This review has presented several theoretical perspectives that are relevant to differential career success. These were organised under two broad categories, firstly those from career success research and secondly, those from ethnicity in wider organisational research. Table 2.1 provides an overview of these theories with their associated explanations of differential career success. This section provides a summary and critique of these perspectives and the associated research.

Table 2.1 Summary of Theoretical Perspectives

Theoretical Perspective		Causes of Differential Career Success
Career Success Research	Individual Differences	Minority-ethnic employees find it more difficult to access roles that match or value their individual differences. They may also have different levels of ability (or at least perform differently on cognitive ability tests)
	Human Capital Theory	Minority-ethnic employees may not, 'invest' in factors such as education and training, (or receive differential returns on their investment)
	Social Capital Theory	Minority-ethnic employees do not, (or may find it difficult to), develop and utilise social capital, which would help them gain the resources and support necessary for career success
Ethnicity in Wider Organisational Research	Social Categorisation Theory	In-group favouritism can lead to bias such as stereotyping and aversive racism from others, affecting minority-ethnic employees' treatment
	Similarity-Attraction Paradigm	Minority-ethnic employees receive differential treatment at work because they are ethnically/racially dissimilar from supervisors and work groups
	Power Perspective	Not just group differences, but the power those groups hold within society and within organisations can affect bias and treatment of minority-ethnic employees

2.7.1 Limitations of Career Success and Ethnicity Research

There are several limitations to the career success and wider organisational literature on ethnicity. These include the lack of ethnicity research, particularly within applied settings, the focus on *success* in career research, and a lack research outside of the U.S. context.

Research on Ethnicity

Research on career success and even research on theories that have enhanced our knowledge about bias and discrimination (e.g. social identity theory) have provided few studies that have addressed the role of ethnicity. For example, in the meta-analysis of 140 career success articles conducted by Ng et al (2005), just 13 studies

were concerned with ethnicity. To the author's knowledge there are just ten studies that specifically examine 'career success', where the stated aims are directly relevant to ethnicity (Blake-Beard, 1999; Cox & Nkomo, 1991; Dreher & Chargois, 1998; Dreher & Cox, 1996; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993; Greenhaus et al., 1990; Igbaria & Wormley, 1992, 1995; James, 2000; Landau, 1995). Across the theoretical perspectives discussed in this review, there are just six research areas that have paid significant attention to ethnicity: research on **cognitive ability, occupational segregation, networking, mentoring, performance evaluation and line manager support**. Whilst these research areas have examined ethnicity in greater detail, their treatment of ethnicity has meant that there has been little development in our knowledge of minority-ethnic career experiences.

Much of the research on ethnicity and career success simply treats ethnicity as another predictor of success. Studies typically report that being non-white is associated with lower salary, promotions and satisfaction (e.g. Landau, 1995). Alternatively, large scale questionnaires have been used to measure group differences on a limited number of pre-defined variables, such as job discretion ratings, supervisory support and job involvement, and their relationship with career outcomes (e.g. Greenhaus et al., 1990; Igbaria & Wormley, 1995). Importantly, these variables have been originally developed on majority-ethnic samples, and as such little is known about whether there are unique factors that may be important for minority-ethnic employees' careers.

Research on ethnicity in wider organisational research has often relied on the researcher to make a judgement about the level of identification participants have with different groups. This has resulted in a convention within organisational diversity research of simply comparing demographic groups (e.g. white vs non-white) on single variables, such as performance ratings (Sackett & DuBois, 1991).

Examining group differences on single constructs has meant there has been little theoretical development within ethnicity research from career success and/or organisational psychology (Cox et al., 2001; Kenny & Briner, 2007). Much of the ethnicity research that exists has resulted in 'knowing that' there are differences between groups, but not 'knowing why' and without specific hypotheses to test and

theories to revise, it is difficult for ethnicity research to move on from repeatedly examining questions such as 'are selection tests equally valid for blacks and whites?' (Cox & Nkomo, 1990). It is necessary to understand more about the experiences that may influence differential career success and to provide minority-ethnic employees with a voice, rather than comparing them as categories on single variables. Therefore this thesis uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a richer understanding of minority-ethic career experiences.

Focus on Success

An important feature of the career success literature is its focus on success and achievement. Because of this, there is less knowledge about the factors that may *impede* career success or disrupt career paths and trajectories. In general, research suggests the lack, or absence of career success predictors is what leads to lower levels of success. For example, supervisory support predicts career success (e.g. Wayne et al., 1999), therefore those who do not receive supervisory support, or receive less than others, will achieve lower levels of career success.

To understand differential career success however, it is important that research considers that there may be factors that directly obstruct career success, or hinder individuals' progression through organisations. Research shows that not only do minority-ethnic employees experience different levels of success, but they also receive fewer benefits from majority-ethnic predictors of success, such as education and training (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993; Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2005). This suggests there are other factors influencing their careers, such as bias or discrimination from others, which have received less acknowledgment in the career success literature. Rather than adopting a trial and error approach, measuring variables that were originally developed on majority-ethnic samples for their suitability for explaining differential career success, there is arguably a need to develop a richer understanding of minority-ethnic employees' actual career experiences. Therefore, this thesis explores the experiences of minority-ethnic employees to improve our knowledge about what may impede, as well as enhance their career success.

U.S. Research

Research on career success and ethnicity in organisations has been based almost entirely in the U.S. with little emphasis placed on career experiences in the U.K and wider Europe (Cox et al., 2001; Khapova, Vinkenburg, & Arnold, 2009). For example, the meta-analysis of 140 career success articles, conducted by Ng et al (2005), included no U.K. based ethnicity research. Of the research discussed throughout this review, only a handful of studies have been conducted in the U.K. (e.g. Dewberry, 2001; Robertson & Kandola, 1982).

Whilst U.S. research provides a useful basis for exploring career success in the U.K. and other international contexts, generalisations need to be made with care. The types of careers people pursue and how success is defined is likely to vary widely between different countries and cultures (Schein, 1984). For example, research has found that the types of career behaviours that people adopt, such as proactivity, may differ across countries (Claes & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1998). When examining differences in careers across cultures it is important to consider the social, political and economic contexts (Inkson, Khapova, & Parker, 2007).

Although U.S. and U.K. contexts are broadly similar in many respects, when examining ethnicity, there are important differences in the social, historical and power differences between groups that makes U.S. research difficult to generalise. For example, there are differences in the equal opportunity laws in each country, the U.K. has different patterns of immigration and in the U.S. the largest non-white group is Hispanics (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), yet in the U.K. it is Asian groups who are the largest minority (ONS, 2011). As such, there is a need for future research to investigate career success within a U.K. context, which is particularly important for understanding differential career success. Therefore the research in this thesis is conducted in an organisation based in the U.K.

Use of Laboratory-Based Studies

Research on ethnicity has identified important explanations about the mechanisms and processes that can influence interpersonal relationships, such as stereotyping, attributions and other forms of bias. However, many studies on social-identity theory stereotyping, aversive racism, attributions and relational demography have been conducted in laboratory settings, and/or with student samples (e.g. Crocker & Major, 1994; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Validzic, 1998; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Furthermore, studies that purport to identify work-related findings are often based on hypothetical scenarios (e.g. Fiske, 1993). Although this type of research enables situations to be controlled, it makes the generalizability of the findings to real-life career experiences more difficult.

Laboratory-based research is unable to account for important contextual factors in organisations, such as equal opportunity policies, the organisation's culture and climate for diversity, hierarchical structures and the demographic make-up of different work groups. The subtleties of different group memberships have also been overlooked. For example, being a Black African male manager has multitude of social identities, which cannot be easily replicated by assigning participants red or blue category membership in a laboratory (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). This makes the findings from much of the ethnicity research more difficult to apply and generalise to workplace settings. Therefore the research in this thesis is conducted in an applied, organisational setting.

2.7.2 Limitations of the Theoretical Perspectives

The previous sections have provided an overview of the theoretical perspectives that have been used to explain 1) career success and 2) have been used to guide research on ethnicity in organisations. However, whilst they offer important insight into factors that may influence career success and the psychological processes that may affect minority-ethnic employees' workplace experiences, there are several limitations with applying these theoretical perspectives to differential career success.

Limitations of Career Success Theories

Theories that have been used to explain majority-ethnic career success can be controversial when applied to differential career success. An underlying assumption of individual differences and human capital theory is that other members of the organisation, such as those in powerful or high status positions cannot determine who will achieve positive career outcomes. Instead, it is the individual's own ability and contribution that will afford them success (Ng et al., 2005). However, when applying this logic to differential career success, this implies that a whole demographic group of individuals lack ability or fail to contribute significantly to their own career development. There is evidence to suggest that some minority-ethnic groups do have lower cognitive ability test scores and educational attainment (Demack, Drew, & Grimsley, 2000; Roth et al., 2006). However, the theoretical perspectives of individual differences and human capital theory do not easily account for studies where participants are matched for educational attainment, or have *higher* levels of ability, yet still experience differential success (Suzuki & Valencia, 1997; Tang, 2000).

Social capital theory does provide greater consideration of how others may influence the career success of minority-ethnic employees. Research on networking and mentoring suggests that minority-ethnic employees may find it more difficult to develop social capital that can benefit their career (Ibarra, 1995; Thomas, 1990). Yet, within social capital theory there remains an emphasis on the individual being able to attract the attention and sponsorship of powerful others within the organisation (Ng et al., 2005).

By placing emphasis on individuals' agency to succeed in their careers, career success theories have given little acknowledgement to the possibility that bias or discrimination can influence employees' organisational experiences. As such, these theories offer little consideration of the importance of wider contextual factors and can be perceived as 'blaming the victim' for differential career success.

Limitations of Ethnicity Theories

Whilst the theories of career success place an emphasis on individuals to develop skills and gain sponsorship, theories that have been used to study ethnicity in organisations have focused on bias or discrimination to explain differential organisational outcomes for minority-ethnic employees. In doing so, social categorisation theory and research based on the similarity-attraction paradigm focus on differential treatment by others, rather than attributing responsibility to the individual for their level of career success.

However, these theories focus on the minimal conditions required for individuals to discriminate, or treat out-group members or dissimilar others differently. Therefore, these theories often overlook how context can shape interaction between groups and individuals within the workplace. Theories adopting a power perspective have incorporated some contextual factors, such as the status of individuals and hierarchies in society. However, there has been little applied ethnicity research adopting a power perspective. Even research in this area has often failed to consider the impact of the wider context, such as organisational structures, diversity policies, organisational culture and climate for diversity. These contextual factors are likely to be particularly important when considering ethnicity. For instance, organisational cultures that are unsupportive of diversity initiatives may increase the salience of social identities and influence the relationships between different groups (Terry, 2003; Wharton, 1992).

2.8 Current Research

What is notable about the theoretical perspectives discussed in this review is that they offer little acknowledgment of the importance of individuals' perspectives and how they experience their careers. It is important to consider how minority-ethnic individuals make sense of their career experiences.

This is particularly necessary considering recent research examining the nature of intrinsic and extrinsic career success. In a ten year longitudinal study of 1,336 graduates, Abele and Spurk (2009a) found the relationship between initial extrinsic

success (income and status) and later intrinsic success was smaller than expected. Yet importantly, initial measures of job satisfaction predicted participants' extrinsic career success over the ten year period. These findings suggest that the way individuals experience their careers is not just a by-product of more objective measures of success (e.g. salary), but a determinant of them. Examining how minority-ethnic individuals perceive their careers, can enhance our knowledge about their subsequent confidence, motivation and effort, which may lead to later career success and also offer insight into experiences that may be important for differential career success.

This thesis includes three studies that were motivated by the need to gain a richer understanding of how minority-ethnic employees experience and make sense of their careers. Mixed methods are used to explore concepts and build knowledge throughout the thesis, where each study is used to develop and gain insight into the findings of the last, using different methods.

Study One: A Comparison of Minority-Ethnic and Majority-Ethnic Managers' Causal Attributions for Career Experiences

The first study provides a comparison of the intrapersonal causal attributions made by 20 minority-ethnic and 20 majority-ethnic managers about their career experiences during a semi-structured interview. Whilst interpersonal attributions have been found to influence differential career success (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993), intrapersonal attributions also show potential for explaining differences in how minority- and majority-ethnic individuals perceive and respond to their career experiences. Research on intrapersonal attributions is discussed below in section 2.9.

Study Two: A Template Analysis of the Career Experiences of Minority-Ethnic and Majority-Ethnic Managers

Whilst attributions can explore the patterns of explanations individuals make about their career experiences, they provide less information about the content of those experiences. The second study in this thesis examines the experiences that are perceived to enhance or impede career success from minority-ethnic and majority-

ethnic managers', using the interview data from study one. In doing so it addresses several shortcomings in the existing literature. Previous research has examined ethnicity and career success in U.S. contexts, using large scale quantitative questionnaires, measuring a limited number of pre-defined variables that have been developed in relation to non-minority-ethnic careers. This research offers a qualitative study of minority-ethnic managers' own experiences in a U.K. context. It provides a rich, contextualised understanding of the experiences that are important for differential career success.

Study Three: Differential Political Skill and Career Success

This study builds on the findings from study two that found differences in the perceptions of informal organisational processes held by minority- and majority-ethnic managers. The study uses a quantitative questionnaire (N = 311) which explores differences in political skill between minority- and majority-ethnic employees in relation to three career success outcomes: grade, number of promotions and career satisfaction. In doing so it is able to test the political skill deficiency hypothesis proposed, but not tested in existing literature (Ferris, Frink & Galang, 1993) and offers findings that can be generalised to a wider population.

The next section introduces the literature on causal attributions, which are the focus of study one of this thesis.

2.9 Causal Attributions

Unlike interpersonal attributions, causal intrapersonal attributions are concerned with the way in which individuals explain important novel or surprising events related to their own experiences, rather than others'. Researchers have identified that attributional style (i.e. the typical way in which different individuals explain events and outcomes) can influence how people respond to events and is relevant to a range of career behaviour as well as success (e.g. Albert & Luzzo, 1999; Luzzo & Jenkins-Smith, 1998). It has also been proposed that group differences in attributional style may contribute towards differential outcomes in organisations between minority and majority groups (Major, Feinstein, & Crocker, 1994; Silvester & Chapman, 1996).

To date, however, there has been no study of the causal attributions produced by minority-ethnic employees for their career experiences. This section provides an overview of the importance of causal attributions for differential career success, existing literature on attributions in wider career research, and research on group differences including gender and ethnicity.

2.9.1 Attributions and Differential Career Success

Causal attributions have considerable potential for building an improved theoretical understanding of differential career success. Although there has been very little research examining intrapersonal attributions and career success, there is now a substantial body of literature documenting the importance of attributional style for a range of work-related outcomes, including motivation (e.g. Struthers, Weiner, & Allred, 1998; Weiner, 1995, 2005), and vocational behaviour in student populations (e.g. Albert & Luzzo, 1999; Chudzikowski et al., 2009; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2004; Luzzo & Jenkins-Smith, 1998). Importantly, researchers have also suggested that demographic group differences in attributional style might contribute towards differential career success (Major et al., 1994; Silvester & Chapman, 1996).

Socio-Cognitive Model of Unfair Discrimination

The utility of attributions for research on diversity and careers has been highlighted by Silvester and Chapman (1996) in their socio-cognitive model of unfair discrimination. This model outlines two ways that attributions may impede minority individuals' career success. According to this framework, differential career success may be due to:

1) How managers explain the causes of minority- and majority-ethnic performance differently
2) Differences in the way minority- and majority-ethnic employees explain their own performance and experiences.

The first relates to interpersonal attributions (discussed in section 2.6.1), and in support of the model, existing research has found that minority-ethnic employees

receive differential attributions compared to majority-ethnic individuals. These attributions have also been linked to less favourable career advancement prospects for minority-ethnic employees (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993).

The second explanation refers to intrapersonal attributions and suggests that differential career success may be caused by the way minority-ethnic employees explain their own career experiences. This may occur because attributional style can influence individuals' motivation and effort to overcome career barriers (Albert & Luzzo, 1999; Hirschy & Morris, 2002; Weiner, 1995). Importantly though, there has been no comparative study of causal attributions made by minority- and majority-ethnic managers for career experiences to date. The next sections discuss how intrapersonal attributions can affect individuals' motivation to persevere in their career, and also the effect of these attributions when spoken, or made public to others.

Causal Attributions and Motivation

Attribution research has not just focused on explanations for behaviours and events, but also the implications these explanations have for motivation and future behaviour. For example, within his model of achievement motivation, Weiner (1979, 1985, 1986), suggests that patterns of attributions can lead to outcomes such as guilt, anger, pride and changes in levels of self-esteem. Other research has also linked attributions to learned helplessness and changes in self-efficacy (Hirschy & Morris, 2002; Peterson, Seligman, & Vaillant, 1988). Causal attributions are therefore relevant for career success because they allow researchers to understand how individuals perceive key events and importantly, how they may respond to them. The way an employee explains their career experiences may have important consequences for the way they respond and their subsequent motivation to persevere and overcome future career challenges (Luzzo & Hutcheson, 1996).

Albert and Luzzo (1999), for example, suggest that individuals who attribute negative career events to more external, uncontrollable and stable causes, like an unfair corporate culture (a pessimistic attributional style), are less likely to make an

effort to overcome or change these career barriers, because they see them as permanent or beyond their control. In contrast, individuals who typically attribute negative career outcomes to internal, controllable or unstable factors like insufficient effort (an optimistic attributional style) are more likely to strive to overcome these by changing their behaviour, or the situation.

Spoken Attributions

Whilst early research considered attributions as internal, private cognitions (Edwards & Potter, 1993), it is now recognised that attributions occur spontaneously in natural discourse (Wong & Weiner, 1981). They are used by individuals to explain and justify actions to others, and to negotiate a shared understanding of events and the environment (Bies & Sitkin, 1992; Silvester, Anderson-Gough, Anderson, & Mohamed, 2002). From listening to spoken attributions, others can learn about the causes of key events, so public attributions have the potential to shape the perceptions of others (Silvester & Chapman, 1996). The way intrapersonal attributions are communicated to others therefore has important implications for career success.

Silvester et al (2002) for example, found that applicants who used more internal-controllable attributions to explain negative outcomes during selection interviews were rated more favourably by interviewers than candidates who preferred internal-uncontrollable or external-uncontrollable attributions as the former were seen as accepting responsibility. If an employee can influence their manager to perceive that they are responsible for successes and unaccountable for failures, then this may lead to positive career outcomes such as pay increases, higher performance and promotion ratings (Judge & Bretz, 1994). However, an attributional style where individuals attribute difficulties to external causes may result in an individual being perceived as unable or unwilling to take responsibility for previous actions (Silvester, 1997; Silvester et al., 2002) This highlights the importance of intrapersonal attributions for understanding differential career success. The next section discusses research that has been conducted on intrapersonal attributions in wider career (but not career success) literature.

Attributions in Wider Career Research

Research into the attributions and career decisions of high school and college students has found that individuals who make more internal and controllable attributions for career decisions show greater career commitment and decisiveness, take more responsibility for career decisions, and are more likely to be in a job of their choice (Colarelli & Bishop, 1990; Fuqua, Blum, & Hartman, 1988; Taylor, 1982). Studies of student career aspirations have also found that students who make internal, controllable attributions for learning outcomes achieve more at school (Janeiro, 2010; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Skinner, Zimmer-Gembeck, Connell, Eccles, & Wellborn, 1998), and demonstrate higher levels of career maturity when they anticipate career barriers (Luzzo & Hutcheson, 1996).

These findings have led researchers to argue that attributions for actual career events may contribute to career success via their impact on career self-efficacy and subsequent career expectations and career choices (Luzzo & Funk, 1996; Silver, Mitchell, & Gist, 1995; Zimmerman, 1997). Individuals who typically attribute successful career events to internal, stable causes (e.g. ability) and unsuccessful events to external, unstable causes (e.g. bad luck), are more likely to have higher levels of career self-efficacy. However, career self-efficacy will decrease over time if individuals typically attribute negative events (e.g., a failed application for promotion) to stable, global, uncontrollable causes, such as lack of ability or unfair discrimination, and positive outcomes to unstable causes such as luck (Hirschy & Morris, 2002; McAuley & Blissmer, 2002; Schunk, 1994; Shields, Brawley, & Lindover, 2006; Silver et al., 1995).

This is important considering career self-efficacy has been found to be positively associated with salary, career satisfaction and performance and to predict these outcomes longitudinally (Abele & Spurk, 2009a; Day & Allen, 2004). On the basis of existing research it appears that attributing negative events to external, uncontrollable, or stable causes and positive events to external, uncontrollable causes will result in lower self-efficacy, lower motivation to advance, which may ultimately result in differential career success (Day & Allen, 2004; Hirschy & Morris, 2002; Houston, 1995).

2.9.2 Group Differences in Attributional Style

Gender Differences

Of relevance to differential career success is evidence of demographic group differences in attributional style. Most studies have investigated gender differences, although the literature reports mixed findings. Laboratory studies suggest that women are more likely to attribute their success on tasks to effort or luck and less to ability than men. Women are also reported to be more likely than men to attribute their failures to lack of ability (Feather, 1969; Feather & Simon, 1975; Gitelson, Petersen, & Tobin-Richards, 1982; Levine, Gillman, & Reis, 1982; Wiegers & Frieze, 1977). However, research in organisational settings has found comparatively little support for gender differences in success-failure attributions (e.g. Silvester, 1997).

Gender differences in attributional style may occur for different reasons, including cultural expectations about how women should present themselves and explain their success, the possibility that women have less control over job-outcomes in the workplace, or because they receive feedback from managers who are more likely to attribute women's success to luck or effort (Heilman & Haynes, 2008; Silvester, 1996; Silvester & Chapman, 1996). Whatever the reason, however, previous career research has shown that attributing success externally may lead to lower self-efficacy and potentially poorer career outcomes (Abele & Spurk, 2009b; Hirschy & Morris, 2002; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1996).

Causal Attributions and Ethnicity

Most research on ethnic differences in attributional style has focused on 'attributional ambiguity'(Aronson & Inzlicht, 2004; Crocker & Major, 1989, 1994, 2003; Hoyt, Aguilar, Kaiser, Blascovich, & Lee, 2007; Major et al., 1994; Mendes, McCoy, Major, & Blascovich, 2008). This suggests that members of stigmatized or minority groups can have difficulty interpreting and responding to performance

evaluations and feedback from managers, because they are not sure whether the feedback is valid, or biased due to prejudiced assumptions about their group.

Most studies have focused on minority-ethnic individuals' responses to negative feedback. For example, Crocker, Voeklk, Testa and Major (1991) found that when African American students received feedback that they had performed poorly on a task from a majority-ethnic evaluator, those participants who were told that the evaluator was aware of their ethnic background were more likely to attribute their failure to discrimination (an external uncontrollable cause), than participants who thought the evaluator was unaware of their ethnic background. Similar effects have been found with gender; Major, Kaiser and McCoy (2003) found that women who imagined being rejected from a course by a sexist professor reported significantly less depressive symptoms than those who had imagined being rejected because of factors such as lack of intelligence.

This effect mirrors that of the self-protecting bias (Hewstone, 1989; Miller & Ross, 1975), where individuals attribute negative or threatening events to external, uncontrollable causes to protect self-esteem (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009; Mezulis, Abramson, Hyde, & Hankin, 2004). However, it has been proposed that this effect may be more prevalent in members of stigmatised groups, where members have had greater experience of prejudice and discrimination (Hoyt et al., 2007; Roberson, Deitch, Brief, & Block, 2003).

Studies examining attributions for positive evaluations have also found that minority-ethnic individuals are more likely to attribute positive feedback to external, uncontrollable causes (Britt & Crandall, 2000). It has been suggested that minority-ethnic individuals adopt this style because they attribute positive feedback to special treatment, political correctness, pity or concern from others, rather than personal merit (Hoyt et al., 2007). However, this attributional style can lead to lower levels of self-esteem (Major et al., 1991).

Importantly, Major et al (1994) suggest that individuals may adopt these patterns of attributions within organisations, in response to both positive and negative career experiences, such as promotion and pay decisions. However, whilst the attributional

ambiguity effect has been demonstrated in the laboratory, to the researchers' knowledge there has been no research examining the effect in working adult samples.

The first study within this thesis therefore examines differences in attributional style between 20 minority- and 20 majority-ethnic managers. Because of the lack of applied attributional research on ethnicity, the study uses exploratory hypotheses driven by the existing research on gender and ethnicity attributions. It is therefore expected that minority-ethnic managers will make more external, uncontrollable attributions for positive and negative events than majority-ethnic managers. This study is introduced in chapter four. The next chapter introduces the research context, methodology and research design.

Chapter Three: Context, Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the methodological considerations of this research. Firstly, the organisational context and the challenges of conducting ethnicity research in organisations are considered. The chapter then introduces the research paradigms that have dominated existing ethnicity research in relation to their use of quantitative and qualitative methodology. Pragmatism is then presented as an approach that guides the use of mixed methods in this thesis.

3.2 Research Context

An understanding of the organisational context, including the structure and climate of the organisation in which research takes place is particularly important for ethnicity research. For example, Thomas and Ely (1996) argue that different types of climate for diversity can lead to a variety of outcomes for minority-ethnic groups, ranging from a lack of engagement and segregation to being offered support and opportunities for skill development. Other research has highlighted that minority-ethnic representation at various levels of seniority can influence the levels of engagement, attachment and satisfaction of minority-ethnic employees (Cox & Blake, 1991; Turban, Forret, & Hendrickson, 1998).

Despite the relevance of these findings for the study of ethnicity in organisations, most ethnicity research has failed to consider the role of organisational context (Kenny & Briner, Cox et al, 2001). The following section therefore provides information on the demographic composition and the diversity initiatives that have been implemented within the host organisation that co-sponsored this research.

3.2.1 The Host Organisation

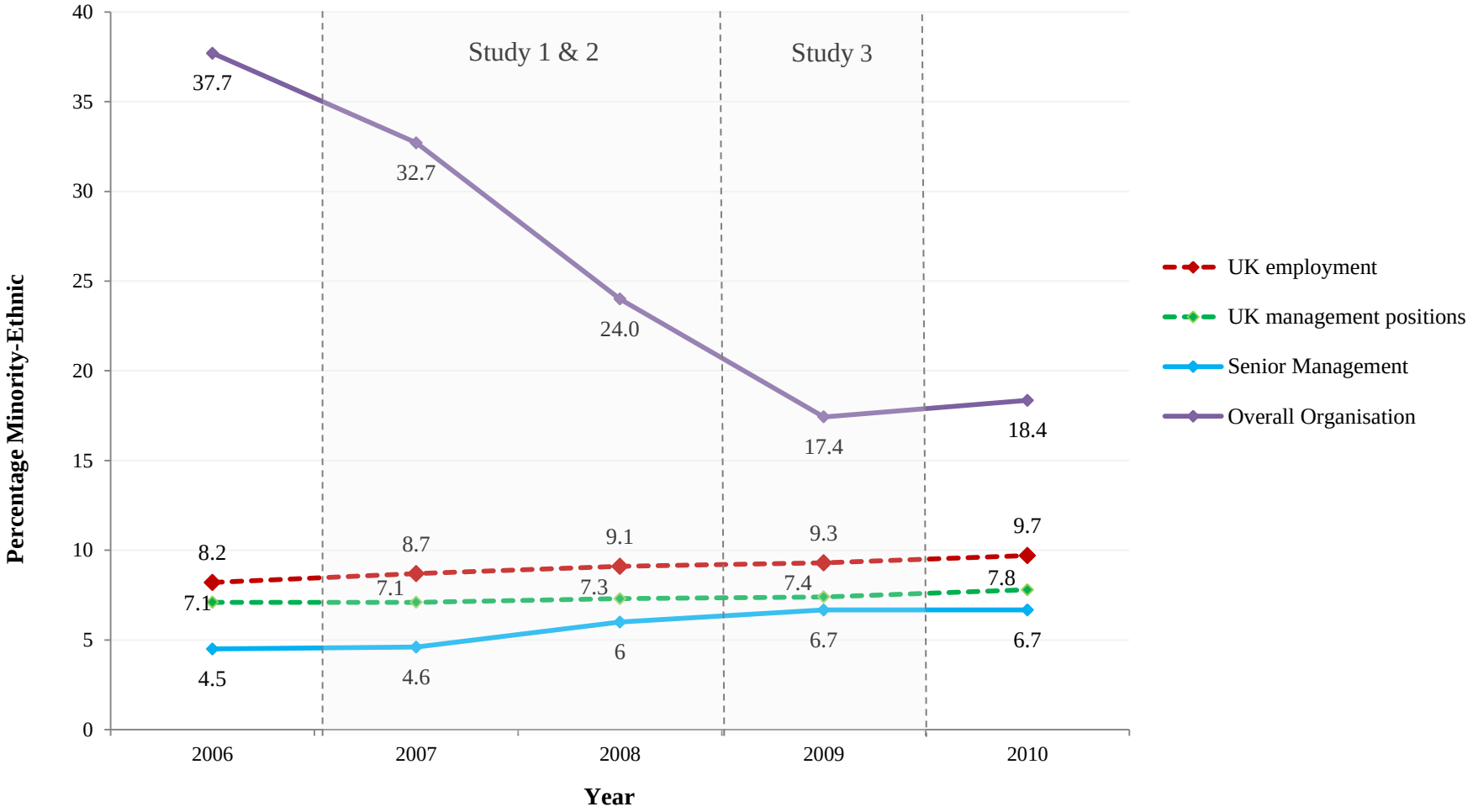
All research in this thesis was conducted in a single public sector organisation in the U.K. that is responsible for developing and implementing a broad range of

government policies. The research was conducted between 2007 and 2009 and during that time the organisation had approximately 2,800 employees (2,600 in 2007, 2,760 in 2008 and 3,040 in 2009).

Minority-Ethnic Representation

Figure 3.1 provides the percentage of minority-ethnic individuals in U.K. employment and in U.K. management positions compared to the overall minority-ethnic representation in the host organisation and representation in senior management between 2006 and 2010. Data for U.K. statistics was gained from the Labour Force Survey (ONS, 2011), the organisation's data were taken from organisational reports, which are not referenced to ensure anonymity. Shaded areas on Figure 3.1 also denote when each study was conducted.

Figure 3.1 Minority–Ethnic Representation in the U.K. and Host Organisation



Overall Representation

Figure 3.1 shows that the host organisation has had consistently higher representation of minority-ethnic employees compared to the representation of minority-ethnic individuals in wider U.K. employment. For example, in 2008, 24% of employees in the organisation were minority-ethnic[1], whereas minority-ethnic individuals comprised just 8.7% of those in U.K. employment.

2007 Organisational Restructuring

As can be seen in Figure 3.1, there was a decline in the percentage of minority-ethnic employees in the host organisation between 2006 (32.7%) and 2009 (17.4%). This may be due to changes in the U.K. economy during this time, which some suggest are likely to impact minority-ethnic employees disproportionally (RFO, 2008). However, the decrease in proportion of minority-ethnic employees may be a reflection of the organisational change that occurred in the organisation between 2006 and 2008.

In response to a series of well publicised operational difficulties the organisation underwent a major reform programme in early 2007. The reforms included an increase of spending across many areas of policy delivery, and a proposed 40% reduction of the workforce over the following four years. The organisation was also restructured, with a number of activities and employees transferred to another organisation. Importantly, this reform also led to a drive from the organisation to improve diversity. This included the co-sponsorship of this research from 2007 to 2010.

[1] It should be noted that these figures are based on those individuals in the organisation who declared their ethnicity on ethnic monitoring documents, which was approximately 45% of employees

Representation at Senior Management

Although the proportional representation of minority-ethnic employees across the whole organisation consistently exceeds that of the U.K. population, representation at senior management levels has been much lower. Figure 3.1 shows that there is a disparity between the percentage of minority-ethnic employees across the whole organisation and the percentage of those in senior management. For example, when conducting research in 2008, 24% of the organisation were minority-ethnic, compared to just 6% of senior management. Importantly, during the research period (2007-2009), these percentages represented between just four to six senior managers in the organisation.

Furthermore, the percentage of those in the organisation's senior management (e.g. 6% in 2008) was less than the percentage of minority-ethnic employees in management across the wider U.K. (e.g. 7.3% in 2008). Although representation in the organisation's senior management has increased (4.5% in 2006 and 6.7% in 2010), Figure 3.1 shows that there remains a lack of minority-ethnic representation at senior levels. For example, although minority-ethnic employment in the organisation (18.4%) was higher than the national average (9.7%) in 2010, just 6.7% of senior managers in the organisation were minority-ethnic.

Career Progression in the Organisation

There are eight seniority levels or grades[1] in the organisation, ranging from administration grades (1, 2 and 3) to senior management (grade 8). Table 3.1 provides the representation of minority-ethnic groups in each category from 2006 to 2010. There are fewer minority-ethnic employees at middle and senior management grades, whilst these figures are steadily rising; minority-ethnic career progression is a concern for the host organisation.

[1] Grades are numbered rather than named for confidentiality purposes

Table 3.1 Minority-Ethnic Representation by Grade

		Minority-Ethnic Representation (%) by Year				
Role Type	Grades	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Senior Management	8	4.5	4.6	6	6.7	6.7
Middle Management	6-7	8.5	6.2	8	8.2	10.6
Supervisory roles	4-5	22.7	19.5	19	15.0	17.1
Administration	1-3	52.4	37	45	29.1	29.8

In order to progress to higher grades, employees can apply to open-competition posts or go through internal promotion interviews in their current role. Both processes use a range of assessment methods, including interviews, work sample tests, situational judgement tests and cognitive ability and personality assessments. Candidates are assessed against organisation-wide and role-specific competencies.

There are three broad types of role in the organisation: strategic, customer focused and support roles (e.g. human resources and finance). In order to progress, candidates must demonstrate skills in each of the organisation's core competencies, which usually means gaining experiences in all three role types. Information from annual performance appraisals is also taken into account: this involves individuals being assessed against a range of performance objectives by their line manager. Employees receive an overall marking, such as 'outstanding', 'effective' or 'needing improvement'.

The organisation also uses centrally organised assessment centres to ensure that candidates are compared to the same standard across the organisation. There are two compulsory assessment centres that candidates must pass in order to progress from grades three to four, and from grades five to six. These use role plays, peer role plays, in-tray exercises and cognitive ability tests to assess the organisation's core competencies.

Whilst it is also possible to be temporarily promoted to higher grades, this method is generally used when managers are under time pressure or when employees have

requested to work at the level of the next grade. However, these individuals still need to go through an assessment process to gain permanent promotion.

Commitment to Diversity

As part of the organisation's reform in 2007 a three-year diversity strategy was launched, aimed at enhancing diversity and representation across all levels. The five aims of the strategy were to: (1) ensure that managers at all levels demonstrate effective leadership on equality and diversity; (2) develop the potential of under-represented groups in order to create a representative workforce at all levels; (3) promote a working environment where staff respect and value each other's diversity; (4) implement statutory obligations on equality and diversity effectively; and (5) deliver services in a way that promotes equality and respects diversity.

Targets were also introduced at each grade, for example, the 2008 target for minority-ethnic representation at senior management (grade 8) was 6%, which was met. Progress in meeting these targets is monitored by a diversity board comprised of senior staff. There is also a team dedicated to supporting and enabling cultural change in this area, and key organisational members act as champions and change agents for diversity.

Each business area is held to account on diversity issues in a series of organisational reviews. Every staff member is required to take a mandatory e-learning diversity programme to promote awareness and discussion of race issues. By 2008 nearly 30% of all staff had completed the course; feedback showed that over 80% of participants felt more aware of legal obligations of diversity and over 70% felt more confident about challenging inappropriate behaviour or language. As well as the e-learning course, a DVD is used to present typical diversity issues that may arise in the workplace, which are then discussed in facilitated workshops.

The organisation encourages recruitment from ethnic media and continually monitors and publishes diversity data concerning selection, promotion and re-

deployment. This data is benchmarked against public, private and voluntary organisations.

Support and Development

The organisation has a large staff support network for minority-ethnic employees, which was launched in 1999. The group has a strong focus on development and provides mentoring, advice and support to members, such as courses for developing presentation and interview skills. The group educates employees about relevant diversity concerns and ensures that they are involved with any HR policy changes in the organisation. They also celebrate various cultural events, such as Black History Month, Ramadan and Anglo Sikh Heritage Week.

Their overall responsibilities are: (1) to provide a support network for minority-ethnic staff and to liaise with other groups in the organisation; (2) to create better relationships with management; (3) to ensure equality of opportunity for all staff; and (4) to assist HR policy development. The group monitors their accomplishments of these tasks with regular strategy meetings with senior managers and an annual general meeting with all members.

Whilst the support network is a voluntary group, there is also a dedicated unit within the organisation that has responsibility for providing development opportunities for minority-ethnic employees. This unit arrange mentoring and have a number of senior managers who mentor minority-ethnic employees as part of their commitment to race equality. The unit also offers middle managers coaching, where they are paired with someone from an external organisation, with whom they can share knowledge about new ways of working and career strategies. There are also a number of informal schemes, such as work shadowing and secondments to provide employees with experience in a range of business areas.

Within the organisation, there is also a talent review process which aims to assess the leadership potential of all minority-ethnic middle management. Those who are identified in this process are able to apply to two leadership schemes. The first is a

positive action development scheme specifically for talented people who are members of under-represented groups (i.e. women, minority-ethnic and disabled employees) and is only open to people in middle management grades. The aim of this scheme is to equip individuals with the skills they need to successfully enter and work in senior grades. The second programme is similar, but participants' careers are tracked to ensure they are receiving access to future development opportunities. There are also mainstream development programmes that are open to all employees and those that cater to more junior employees, where participants are expected to reach middle management within three years.

3.3 Conducting Organisational Ethnicity Research

There are many difficulties associated with conducting organisational research, but these can be enhanced when researching ethnicity. This section reviews these challenges and those encountered in this research process as well as related ethical issues.

3.3.1 Gaining Access to Organisations

Organisations may be reluctant to participate in ethnicity research due to potential legal implications and the effect on public image and reputation of any 'negative' findings, that is, those that may uncover discrimination based on ethnicity (Cox, 2004; Rynes & McNatt, 2001). Furthermore, ethnicity may not be a topic of high priority for organisations; diversity benchmarking reports are typically calculated against the overall percentage of minority-ethnic employees. If the organisation already employs a large percentage of minority individuals, regardless of how many progress to senior positions, they may feel no need to invest time and capital in ethnicity based research.

However, in this research, in part due to their reform, the host organisation was committed to understanding more about the experiences of their minority-ethnic employees. Members of the organisation who were responsible for improving diversity were also interested in advancing the research agenda, so were open to research from an external, academic perspective. Nevertheless, the organisation was

very concerned that their anonymity was assured and required that the confidentiality of the organisation was protected at every stage of the research. Therefore, an agreement was reached that the organsiation would have sight of any written outputs prior to publication, which would carry any disclaimer they required.

Gaining Support of Gatekeepers

The support of senior decision makers is essential for successful organisational research. Before access to participants and data can be achieved, there are often several layers of gatekeepers whose permission has to be obtained. This process can delay research and potentially constrain or influence the type of issues that can be investigated (Buchanan & Bryman, 2007). For example, organisations may attempt to limit the types of questions asked in interviews or may expect results to be interpreted to reflect well on the organisation (Rynes & McNatt, 2001).

To gain access to participants in the host organisation, consultations were made with senior board members, leaders of each division, key members of human resources, the dedicated diversity team within the organisation, and diversity champions. However, it emerged that the critical gate keepers for this research were the leaders of the minority-ethnic support forum. They provided a range of resources that made data collection possible, including contact lists of potential participants and provided the project with legitimacy in the organisation.

Whilst these groups were supportive of the project aims, and did not request any changes to the research area, they did request that extra questions be included in data collection for their own purposes. For example, the HR team wanted to add questions about individuals' experiences of the assessment centre process and the support given to applicants. In order to engage them with the research, these questions were added to the interviews that were conducted in study one. They were placed at the end of each interview to ensure they did not affect what was discussed during the interview or interfere with the project's aims.

The support forum and other groups also asked to be debriefed on the research after data collection and to receive information about any practical implications of the findings through a range of seminars and workshops. Frequently updating and consulting these groups throughout the research process maintained their engagement in the research and encouraged their continual support. This support was invaluable for recruiting participants, which is discussed next.

3.3.2 Recruiting Participants

This section discusses three key barriers associated with recruiting participants in diversity research: structural obstacles, scepticism from potential participants about the value of the research, and participant concerns about anonymity and treatment of data (Cannon, Higginbotham, & Leung, 1991; Henderson, 1998).

Structural Barriers

In this research, approximately 24% of the host organisation's employees were minority-ethnic, making the potential participant pool much smaller than if the study required a majority-ethnic sample. Furthermore, many of those were concentrated at lower levels, with approximately just 6-7% of middle and senior managers being minority-ethnic. During the research period of 2007-2009, there were between just four and six minority-ethnic senior managers in the organisation. This reduced representation of minority-ethnic groups makes recruiting participants more challenging. Because of this, research on ethnicity often results in smaller sample sizes than majority-focused research (Cox, 2004).

Being able to identify and target those individuals is also problematic. Organisations are unable to release information about which of their employees has identified themselves as minority-ethnic due to the Data Protection Act (1998). Many individuals who appear to be minority-ethnic may not categorise themselves in that way. Asking managers to identify and approach possible participants is also problematic and potentially unethical, due to the distress it may cause individuals by being categorised into a group they do not identify with.

In order to overcome these structural issues, diversity researchers advocate more labour-intensive recruitment strategies, involving more personal contact with the potential participant pool. For example, Cannon et al (1991) reported that, in a study of women from professional, managerial and administrative backgrounds, white women were twice as likely to respond to written research requests, such as by letter, compared to black women, who preferred face-to-face contact. In the current research, the organisation's minority-ethnic support forum was invaluable for providing this personal link to participants. They offered opportunities to meet with potential participants and promote the research amongst minority-ethnic employees.

Scepticism

A second barrier to recruiting participants is scepticism; minority-ethnic employees may feel wary about the motives behind research or may not have experienced any benefits from participating in previous research projects (Henderson, 1998). Minority-ethnic participants may feel apprehensive about participating in ethnicity research conducted by a white researcher and may have concerns about being exploited in the research process (Cannon et al., 1991; Edwards, 1990). Participants may also be sceptical about the type of research questions being investigated and may perceive an underlying agenda to research that explicitly targets ethnicity (Cox, 2004). Therefore, the value of research and the way information will be used needs to be clearly identified and explained to participants.

In the host organisation, achieving the backing and assistance of the minority-ethnic support forum was significant. Not only did this allow the research to be promoted amongst its members, but their cooperation also helped minimise any apprehensiveness over participating in a white-researcher-led project. However, this required a great deal of negotiation to ensure that, whilst feedback was given in return for their assistance, the research was not channelled by any agenda they may have had. It was also essential that the support forum understood the research and had accurate expectations about the outputs, as failing to meet their expectations may have resulted in them restricting access at later stages and possibly not actively supporting the research (Buchanan & Bryman, 2007).

The role of ethnicity in this research was also not communicated until participants had contacted the researcher. It was presented as research examining career experiences in general to reduce the likelihood of participants misunderstanding the research rationale or using it as an opportunity to air specific grievances about their treatment as minority-ethnic employees. Using innocuous terms to describe study aims is often used as a way of maximising 'buy-in' in organisational research but it can also raise ethical concerns related to informed consent (Buchanan & Bryman, 2007, 2009). However, in this research, once individuals contacted the researcher, they were provided with the full details of the studies before deciding whether to participate. Whilst describing the studies in general terms meant that targeting minority-ethnic groups specifically was difficult, it also meant that participants were less suspicious about the project aims and were therefore more open and honest in the research process.

Anonymity Concerns

The third barrier to recruiting participants is concern over treatment of data and anonymity, which minority-ethnic groups may require additional assurance of (Cannon et al., 1991). This was particularly apparent in this programme of research. This was because the studies required information concerning their career experiences, which may have involved discussion of colleagues and line managers. Participants were anxious that this information was not shared in any type of feedback to the organisation. In line with ethical guidelines (Brewerton & Millward, 2001; British Psychological Society, 2009) participants were assured of their confidentiality at every stage of the research and that all findings reports would be anonymised.

Minority-ethnic participants were particularly apprehensive about the research; often being the sole minority-ethnic employee in their work group, or even department meant that they could be easily identified by non-personal information, such as their seniority grade. For example, there may only have been one Grade 8, Pakistani Female in the organisation. Therefore, this type of information also had to be

excluded from any findings reports or feedback to the organisation and all findings were generalised. Quotes were provided in feedback information only after expressed permission from participants. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw at any stage in the research. These steps have been advocated in cross-race research as a method of building trust between researcher and participant (Edwards, 1990).

This section has discussed the key challenges for ethnicity research. The next section provides an overview of the dominant paradigms used in ethnicity research and introduces the pragmatic approach used in this thesis.

3.4 Dominant Paradigms in Ethnicity Research

Paradigms are the belief systems, or world views that guide researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). They typically reflect researchers' beliefs about what reality is (ontology), what can be counted as knowledge (epistemology), and how knowledge can be gained (methodology: Creswell, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Ethnicity research in the social and behavioural sciences has been dominated by several prevailing paradigms: psychological research has tended to adhere to the post-positivist paradigm, which has built on the earlier positivist paradigm. However, the constructivist and advocacy paradigms have been more readily adopted in other disciplines, such as sociology, legal studies, and political science (Armitage, 2007).

Although it has been argued that both qualitative and quantitative methods can be used with any research paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), in practice, post-positivism and constructivism/advocacy have been almost exclusively associated with quantitative and qualitative methods respectively (Bryman, 2009; Creswell, 2009; Yardley & Bishop, 2008). The dominance of these paradigms has therefore resulted in a divide between ethnicity research adopting qualitative and qualitative methods. In general, there has been limited communication between researchers using different paradigms and this has led to a lack of advancement in the field (Kenny & Briner, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

However, pragmatism is an approach that is particularly relevant to the study of ethnicity. It is used to guide the research in this thesis because it offers a philosophy that provides a bridge between existing paradigms. This section presents a discussion of the value of each paradigm for ethnicity research. Table 3.2 provides an overview of the ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs that guide the positivist, post-positivist, constructivist advocacy paradigms and the pragmatic approach.

Table 3.2 Summary of Traditional Paradigms and the Pragmatic Approach

	Positivism	Post-Positivism	Constructivism	Advocacy	Pragmatism
Ontology	**Naïve Realist:** reality is objective and observable	**Critical Realist:** reality is largely objective and observable, but the presence of researchers can influence what is being measured	**Relativist:** reality is subjective, value- laden and can be interpreted differently by each individual	**Political Reality:** There are marginalised groups in society whose agenda needs to be promoted	Reality is defined by what is useful to enhance understanding
Epistemology	Researcher and reality are separate. Knower and known are independent, a dualism	Researcher needs to remain distanced from participants to maintain objectivity	Interpretation is shaped by the researcher's own experiences and background. Constructs understanding with participants. Knower and known are interactive and inseparable	Researcher needs to be immersed within research and provides a voice for participants	The epistemological stance that is adopted is based on practicality (i.e. 'what works' to address the research question). Knowledge is generated by and dependent on the experienced reality of the world we exist in.
Typical Methodology	Quantitative	Quantitative	Qualitative	Qualitative	The methods chosen should fit the research problem at hand. It is often valuable to combine methods

Adapted from Creswell (2009) and Guba and Lincoln (1994)

3.4.1 Post-Positivism and Ethnicity Research

Research on ethnicity from a psychological perspective has been almost entirely guided by the post-positivist paradigm. Post-positivism focuses on objectivity in research and stresses careful measurement and observation of reality. Whilst it should be noted that post-positivism accepts qualitative methodology to some extent (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), post-positivist research typically adopts quantitative methods such as experimental designs and questionnaires (Creswell, 2009).

As discussed in chapter two of this thesis, there are a number of theories that have been used to study ethnicity in organisations, including social categorisation theory, social identity theory, the similarity-attraction paradigm and relational demography theory. The research associated with these theories has focused on testing hypotheses concerned with how groups interact. In the case of career success research, different groups have also been statistically compared on several outcome variables, such as supervisory support, salary, promotions and job satisfaction (e.g. Greenhaus et al., 1990; Igbaria & Wormley, 1995).

Research methods have included quantitative laboratory-based experimental designs (e.g. Fiske, 1993) and questionnaire studies (e.g. Wesolowski & Mossholder, 1997). Therefore, ethnicity research has predominantly been involved with quantifying individuals' attitudes and behaviours as group members, measuring cohesion within and between social groups, and testing statistical group differences on single variables.

Strengths of the Post-Positivist Paradigm for Ethnicity Research

The post-positivist paradigm emphasises that research adopts precise and reliable measurement, controls extraneous variables and ensures that the research process can be replicated (Yardley & Bishop, 2008). For ethnicity research, this has meant that research has high levels of internal validity and theories can be continually tested and revised to enhance our understanding of how ethnicity can influence group interaction and various outcomes, such as career success. Importantly, by adopting

quantitative methods, the effect of ethnicity can be examined after the effects of confounding influences such as gender have been controlled for. Furthermore, quantitative methods allow research to be conducted on large numbers of participants and for the findings to be generalised to wider groups (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Yardley & Bishop, 2008).

Limitations of the Post-Positivist Paradigm for Ethnicity Research

Reducing social situations and behaviour to controlled measurable variables, has meant that research adopting the post-positivist paradigm has overlooked the importance of contextual factors. For example, research often reduces ethnicity down to measurable categories such as black or white (e.g. Cox & Nkomo, 1986; Hite, 2004). In doing so, the findings from such research are often abstract and largely ignorant of the influences of societal, historical and power differences between groups. In addition, although post-positivist research can test and revise theory, it fails to acknowledge important information that does not fit with pre-determined hypotheses. This has resulted in a lack of knowledge about how minority-ethnic employees actually experience the workplace. Within disciplines adopting the post-positivist paradigm, such as organisational psychology, this has also resulted in little theory development relating to ethnicity (Kenny & Briner, 2007). However, these are limitations that the constructivist and advocacy paradigms can help to address, and these paradigms are discussed next.

3.4.2 Constructivism and Advocacy Paradigms

The constructivist paradigm is based on the assumption that individuals develop subjective meanings of their world, and that their experiences can be influenced by historical and social contexts, rather than there being one objective truth (Boyce, 1996; Prasad, Pringle, & Konrad, 2006). The advocacy paradigm takes constructivism further by actively pursuing an agenda for marginalised groups (Creswell, 2009). The advocacy paradigm emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as a reaction against post-positivist research that reduced the study of minority groups to measurable variables (e.g. black/white, male/female: e.g. Fay, 1987; Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). Research adopting this paradigm aims to redress inequality and

oppression by empowering participants. It uses academic enquiry to highlight their predicament and advance political agendas.

The Advocacy Paradigm in Ethnicity Research

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the advocacy paradigm has been adopted in the field of ethnicity, particularly within research in sociology, legal studies and political science. Two examples of theories guided by this paradigm are critical race theory and black feminism.

Critical Race Theory encourages the use of qualitative storytelling with minority-ethnic participants to enhance critical and reflexive discussion of the role of race in society. The approach originates from Law, where a number of U.S. legal scholars were concerned about the slow rate at which laws relating to racial equality were being changed in the 1970s. In order to promote equality, critical race theorists aim to challenge the assumptions and myths in common culture that oppress minority-ethnic groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The theory assumes that racism is endemic in society and its effects are imprinted on every day interactions. Therefore, the theory advocates critically examining participants' everyday experiences for racialised events. More recently, as with black feminism, the approach has been used to examine intersectionalities (e.g. ethnicity and gender) in social interactions (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Phoenix, 1994).

Black feminism was developed in response to the lack of research on black women's experiences, particularly in regards to their participation in social movements (Bhavnani, 1992; Collins, 1986; Springer, 2002). Black feminists argue that traditionally dominant (i.e. white) interpretations of women's lived experiences need to be challenged. Therefore, as with critical race theory, black feminism promotes storytelling methods, which are used to understand black women's knowledge and experiences and the impact of injustices in wider society. In particular, this theory focuses on the intersectionality between gender and race; although they may be linked with different types of oppression, black feminists consider their effects to be simultaneous, rather than being distinct social categories (Glenn, 1999). Other

researchers also consider further intersectionalities, which are related to social oppression, such as class, sexuality, disability and age (Collins, 2000).

These theories, as well as others such as such as postcolonial theory, which explores individuals' experiences and reactions to colonialism (Mongia, 1996), have contributed to ethnicity research, by highlighting the importance of understanding minority-ethnic individuals' lived experiences.

Strengths of the Constructivist and Advocacy Paradigms for Ethnicity Research

Unlike the post-positivist paradigm, research based on the constructivist and advocacy paradigms affords the opportunity to contextualise research within societal and historical settings. This is particularly important for the study of ethnicity, where factors such as historical patterns of immigration, and power differences between groups in society can influence how they interact within organisations (Alderfer, 1987). Rather than testing group differences on single variables (i.e. like many post-positivist studies), these paradigms acknowledge the role of participants and highlight the need to give them a 'voice' in the research process. Ethnicity researchers who adopt these paradigms are therefore able to explore the lived experiences of minority-ethnic groups in the workplace and gain a rich understanding of what factors they perceive as important for the research in question.

Researchers adopting constructivist and advocacy paradigms promote the use of qualitative methods to explore the meanings and processes that may influence relationships (Yardley, 2008). Whilst qualitative research cannot fully isolate the effects of particular factors, it can allow the researcher to adapt the focus of the research depending on emerging findings. It is also useful and important for ethnicity research because it is not constrained by existing hypotheses, which due to the paucity of ethnicity research, are likely to have been developed from work on non-ethnic groups, and may therefore be less relevant. By enabling researchers to gain an in-depth, contextualised understanding of minority-ethnic experiences, these paradigms promote theory *development*, (rather than testing and revising hypotheses)

something so far lacking in the ethnicity literature in organisational psychology (Kenny & Briner, 2007; Proudford & Nkomo, 2006).

Limitations of the Constructivist and Advocacy Paradigms for Ethnicity Research

Gaining a richer, contextualised understanding of phenomena can mean that research led by the constructivist or advocacy paradigms is more time consuming, in terms of data collection and analysis. Because of its in-depth nature, it is also more difficult to conduct research with larger populations and findings are less generalizable to other contexts. For research in organisational psychology, this means that it is more difficult to make recommendations as to how organisations can improve the workplace experiences of minority-ethnic groups, because findings may not generalise beyond the organisational context where the research was conducted. The qualitative methodology typically adopted in constructivist and advocacy research also means it is more difficult to test hypotheses and examine the relevance of existing theories.

A typical post-positivist critique of constructivist and advocacy paradigms is that they allow bias into the research process. By building an understanding *with* participants, the research processes often lacks objectivity. It is therefore difficult to understand to what extent the researcher him/herself has influenced the findings. Furthermore, research associated with the advocacy paradigm has placed a large emphasis on uncovering discrimination and racism in everyday situations. Whilst discrimination and racism are arguably present in organisations (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Gaetner & Dovidio, 1986) there may be more subtle or indirect mechanisms that influence minority-ethnic group's experiences of the workplace that are not associated with experiences of prejudice. Therefore, organisational research that actively pursues a 'racialised' agenda, may actually constrain our understanding of what issues are important for minority-ethnic employees.

Although the advocacy and constructivist paradigms have been used widely to examine ethnicity in sociological and political research, they have yet to be fully embraced by organisational psychology research on ethnicity (Cox et al., 2001;

Kenny & Briner, 2007). This divide between the uses of different paradigms is evidenced in the 'paradigm wars', which is discussed next.

3.4.3 The Paradigm Wars

Despite the benefits of the various paradigms, during the 1980s and 1990s, post-positivist and constructivist researchers in the social and behavioural sciences, who were convinced of the 'purity' of their chosen paradigm, criticised the other's method of study. This resulted in what has been called the 'paradigm wars' (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). These debates stemmed from a belief that the paradigms, including their associated methods, are fundamentally incompatible, due to the different world-views taken by researchers (Howe, 1988). On one side were post-positivist purists, stressing the importance of measuring, quantifying and generalising data (e.g. Sayer, 1992). On the other side were researchers who extolled the virtues of having deep, rich and contextualised understanding, using qualitative methods (e.g. Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Although epistemology should not necessarily dictate methodology, these purist researchers viewed mixing methods as unmanageable, because there was no epistemological justification for doing so (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Although organisational psychology has not fully engaged in the 'paradigm wars', research in the field predominantly follows the post-positivist paradigm. In an editorial discussing the dominance of positivism in organisational psychology, Symon and Cassell (2006) suggest its popularity is because psychologists are trained under a post-positivist perspective, therefore, rather than actively chosen, it is adopted as a default option by the majority of psychological researchers. Furthermore, its use is reinforced because research from a post-positivist perspective traditionally attracts more funding in academia. However, critics have suggested that it has led to a stagnation of research (e.g. Anderson, 1998). This is particularly apparent in ethnicity research, where post-positivist quantitative research has resulted in knowing *that* there are differences between ethnic groups, but not knowing *why*. Research adopting alternative paradigms could enrich our understanding of how minority-ethnic individuals experience the workplace (Kenny & Briner, 2008).

Combining paradigmatic stances and qualitative and quantitative methodology can offer many benefits for ethnicity research. As researchers identified the benefits of combining methods in wider social and behavioural science, a new single paradigm thesis of pragmatism emerged, which offers a way of combining the strengths of each paradigm and provides an epistemological justification for mixing qualitative and quantitative methods (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007). It is therefore the approach that guided the research in this thesis, and is discussed next.

3.4.4 Pragmatism

Pragmatism offers a philosophy that provides a bridge between the positivist and constructivist paradigms and is generally considered as an epistemological justification for mixed methods research (Denscombe, 2008). Because it offers the opportunity to move between existing paradigms, it is typically regarded as an 'approach' rather than a paradigm in its own right (Morgan, 2007). Whilst the approach originates from the writings of the philosophers Charles Sanders Pierce, William James and John Dewey in the late 19th and early 20th century, the popularity of pragmatism increased as researchers questioned the dominance of traditional paradigms in the latter 20th century and began to utilise both qualitative and quantitative methods (Roter & Frankel, 1992; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Rather than assume that our view of reality is subjective and based on our own sociocultural experiences (constructivist), or that reality is entirely objective and measurable (positivist), pragmatism is concerned with 'what works' (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 1990). Pragmatists agree with the constructivist standpoint that there is no absolute truth, but they also subscribe to the positivist and post-positivist assertion that there is an external reality (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Consequently, pragmatism advocates that researchers choose methods that offer the best solution to the research problem at hand, whether they are qualitative, quantitative or a mixture of both. Pragmatists give the research question primary importance, and consider it more important than the philosophical paradigm or theoretical perspective. This allows researchers to examine topics and research questions that do not fit neatly into purely post-positivist/quantitative or constructivist/qualitative frameworks

(Armitage, 2007). Pragmatism therefore permits researchers to draw from different, or even competing theories and evidence, to understand social situations, attitudes and behaviour (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Pragmatism and Ethnicity Research

Adopting a pragmatic approach is particularly useful for the study of ethnicity in the workplace and is therefore used to guide the research in this thesis. Organisational research can bring many challenges that can interfere with the research process, such as constraints on the type of research questions that organisations allow to be investigated, or the type and number of participants available. In these cases, pragmatism allows the researcher to choose the most appropriate method from a range of techniques. Pragmatism also has a very practical focus; preferring action to philosophy, pragmatists advocate the development of theory that can inform practice. This is important for organisational research, to ensure academic findings do not remain abstract but have a tangible impact in the workplace (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Pragmatists assume that social phenomena will be influenced by social, historical, political and other contextual factors (Creswell, 2009). This is particularly important for the study of ethnicity, where socio-historical, power and status differences may affect the relationship between demographic and cultural groups. Pragmatism is a value-orientated approach; it asserts that researchers can be embedded in the research context and may well use their values to choose what to investigate. This means that it can incorporate researchers who are guided by the advocacy paradigm, and actively pursue political agendas for minority groups, as well as the more objective intergroup studies conducted from a post-positivist perspective. Crucially, pragmatism offers the opportunity to improve communication between researchers from different paradigms (Creswell, 2009; Maxcy, 2003; Watson, 1990):

"…a pragmatic approach would deny that there is any a priori basis for determining the limits on meaningful communication between researchers who pursue different

approaches to their field. Instead, a pragmatic approach would place its emphasis on shared meanings and joint action." (Morgan, 2007, p 67).

Therefore, this approach may enhance the development of ethnicity research, as researchers are able to select a mix of methodologies that are best suited to enhance the field. The next section discusses how mixing qualitative and quantitative methods has developed in existing psychological and organisational research.

3.5 Mixed Methods in Organisational Research

Mixing methods has become increasingly popular within organisational research and can involve mixing qualitative and quantitative methods within a single study, or across a program of closely related studies (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). There are many different terms used to describe this approach, such as synthesis, multi-method and integration (Creswell, 2009), but it has more recently been described as 'mixed methods', which Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007, p. 123) define as:

"the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration"

Although pragmatism increased in popularity in the mid-1990s (e.g. Roter & Frankel, 1992; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), mixed methods research has a much longer history in the field of Psychology. Campbell and Fiske (1959) are widely acknowledged as being the first to draw attention to the utility of mixed methods by using multiple quantitative methods to validate personality traits (Creswell, 2009). Whilst their study focused solely on quantitative data, it encouraged the use of multiple types of data in a single piece of research and this concept has been extended to data triangulation; validating findings with two or more methods. Despite these early beginnings, organisational research has only recently begun to value qualitative and mixed approaches (Mingers, 2003; Symon & Cassell, 1998). This has been attributed to a lack of reflexivity from researchers when considering

epistemology, as well as a lack of awareness of the benefits of alternative paradigms (Johnson & Cassell, 2001; Yardley & Bishop, 2008).

Many mixed methods studies have been conducted without any formal acknowledgement that mixing methods is taking place, or any discussion of the philosophical implications (Bryman, 2006a, 2006b, 2009; Denscombe, 2008). In a review of 232 journal articles that adopted a mixed methods strategy, Bryman (2006b) identified that 27% did not justify their methodological approach, or acknowledge epistemological concerns. Bryman (2006b, 2008) also found that mixed methods in workplace research is increasing; twice as many journal articles in social research used mixed methods in 2003, compared to 1994, 23% of which were on organisational research. Mixed methods studies can be found in a number of organisational research areas, such as training, leadership and selection (e.g. Dulin, 2008; Loewen & Loo, 2004; Nielsen, Randall, & Christensen, 2010; Silvester, Anderson-Gough, Anderson, & Mohamed, 2002). Furthermore, Buchanan and Bryman (2009) argue that mixed methods is particularly suitable for organisational research as it provides a way of combining measurable features of the workplace (e.g. profit, size) with more subtle processes (e.g. culture, hierarchies).

Mixed methods offer the opportunity for ethnicity researchers to build theory and provide rich contextualised data using qualitative approaches and to combine this with testing hypotheses and generalising findings. The pragmatist nature of mixing methods means that the approach can be used to overcome some of the challenges associated with conducting ethnicity research, such as smaller participant pools, developing trust between researcher and participant and eliciting truthful responses (as discussed in section 3.3). Given the advantages a mixed methods approach offers for ethnicity and organisational research, this thesis uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

However, whilst pragmatism provides researchers with a range of values or standards and provides justification for combining methods to best answer research questions, it should not be considered as validating an 'anything goes' approach (Denscombe, 2008; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It is important to recognise that pragmatism emphasises using methods fittingly to illuminate the research topic.

Therefore, the reasons for using qualitative and/or quantitative methods within a programme of research need to be rationalised to ensure that they are used appropriately. The following section presents the mixed methods strategy used in this programme of research.

3.5.1 Mixed Methods Strategy

It is important that the strategy of combining qualitative and quantitative methods is clarified in mixed methods research. The ordering of methods used must be specified, that is, whether they are used concurrently, or used sequentially to build upon each other's findings. The priority given to each form of data collection and when the approaches will be integrated must also be considered (Creswell, 2009; Morse, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Table 3.3 provides a summary of the studies and research methods used in this thesis.

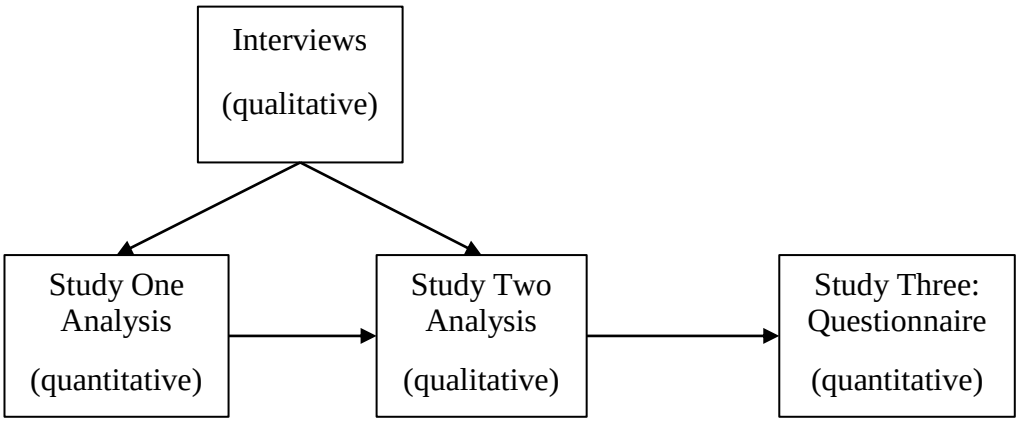
Table 3.3 Overview of Research Studies

	Study One	Study Two	Study Three
Focus of the Study	To examine differences in how minority- and majority-ethnic managers attribute the causes of key career events	To explore the key experiences that are perceived to enhance and impede minority- and majority-ethnic managers' career success	To explore the role of political skill on the career success outcomes of minority- and majority-ethnic employees
Participants	20 Minority-Ethnic, 20 Majority-Ethnic Managers		114 Minority-Ethnic 197 Majority-Ethnic Employees
Methodology	Qualitative and Quantitative	Qualitative	Quantitative
Data Collection	Semi-Structured Interviews		Questionnaire
Analysis	Attributional Coding and MANCOVA	Template Analysis	Mediated Regression

Overall, the research in this thesis adopts a sequential exploratory design. Using Creswell's (2009) typology, this type of design uses qualitative data collection first to explore a phenomenon and then uses quantitative data to generalise or expand on findings or develop and test emergent theory or concepts from the preliminary qualitative stage (Creswell, 2009; Morgan, 1998). This approach is particularly relevant to fields where there has been a lack of advancement, such as ethnicity, because it lends itself to theory development and allows qualitative findings to be expanded and generalised in later quantitative work.

Figure 3.1 shows the sequential exploratory design of the research in this thesis. The figure shows that study one was a mixed methods design, because it used quantitative analysis on qualitative data. Building on study one, study two was then used to explore the content of that data and therefore qualitative analysis was adopted to gain a richer understanding of the interviews. Study three was a quantitative design which tested some of the findings from study two. As each study builds on the last, Figure 3.1 demonstrates the emergent nature of the design.

Figure 3.2 Mixed Methods Research Design



The reasoning behind the choice of methodology for each study is discussed next. It should be noted that the discussion below is in relation to the use of mixed methods and how the methods fall within the pragmatic approach used in this thesis. More

information on the specific use of these methods is provided in chapters four, five and six.

The Pragmatic Approach in Study One

Study one explores the causal attributions made by minority- and majority-ethnic managers for their career experiences using the Leeds Attributional Coding System (LACS). This technique involves the coding of qualitative interview statements, followed by a quantitative, statistical analysis.

Existing Methods for Studying Causal Attributions

Research that has examined causal attributions from a post-positivist perspective has traditionally considered causal attributions as internal, private cognitions that are quantifiable. Therefore, many studies have used questionnaires to measure attributions, examples include the Attributional Style Questionnaire (Peterson et al., 1982), the Occupational Attributional Style Questionnaire (Furnham, Sadka, & Brewin, 1992) and the Assessment of Attributions for Career Decision Making questionnaire (AACDM: Luzzo & Jenkins-Smith, 1998). Questionnaires typically ask respondents to consider and identify the causes for hypothetical events. Whilst they are relatively easy to administer and provide consistent information across potentially larger participant groups, they are limited to the topics the researcher deems important. Moreover, because they are often guided by the post-positivist paradigm, emphasising measurement and reliability of data, they often fail to provide contextual information to facilitate participants' process of sensemaking (Silvester, 2004).

An example of this is the AACDM, which was developed to examine attributions for career decision making and has been used in studies with students who are planning future careers (Creed, Patton, & Bartrum, 2004; Luzzo, James, & Luna, 1996). Its items include '*I have control over the decisions I make about my career'* and '*If my career decisions lead to success, it will be because of my skills and abilities'.* The generalised nature of these items means that they are less able to unearth the attributional patterns for specific or contextualised events.

The research on diversity and attributions has often used questionnaires or given participants a range of causal options to choose from. For example, in a study on gender, attributions and prejudice Major, Quinton and Schmader (2003) asked participants whether the performance evaluation they received was due to factors such as 'sex discrimination', 'unfair treatment', 'prejudiced evaluator' and 'creative ability'. This type of research not only limits the types of attributions individuals can make, it also potentially primes participants to agree with the responses presented to them. Therefore, this purely quantitative methodology was not deemed suitable for study one, because a greater understanding of individuals' attributions can be gained from studying those that are made spontaneously.

Leeds Attributional Coding System

Instead of a purely quantitative methodology, study one uses the Leeds Attributional Coding System (LACS: Munton et al., 1999) an alternative method to questionnaires. As well as considering attributions as private cognitions, this method allows the analysis of spontaneously produced, spoken attributions. The LACS was designed as an ecologically valid methodology for analysing naturally occurring attributions from interviews and other forms of discourse. It is therefore a less intrusive method of analysing attributions than questionnaires and allows participants to control the content and type of attributions they produce (Bugental, Johnston, New, & Silvester, 1998). It has been used to investigate spoken attributions in a range of contexts including culture change (Silvester, Anderson, & Patterson, 1999; Silvester, Ferguson, Patterson, & Ferguson, 1997) and selection interviews (Silvester, 1997; Silvester et al., 2002), but to the authors' knowledge this is the first use of the method to analyse career experiences.

Pragmatism and the Leeds Attributional Coding System

Adopting a pragmatic approach is particularly relevant when using the LACS because it allows the positivist perspective of attributions, as quantifiable reflections of internal cognitions, to be considered alongside the constructivist concept that attributions are dynamic and part of a creative process where individuals publicly

share and negotiate meanings of events with others (Silvester, 2004). The pragmatic approach was particularly important for combining the different paradigmatic stances of the two stages involved in the LACS process for study one.

The first stage of the LACS in study one involved conducting semi-structured interviews with participants. Building on the constructivist paradigm, these interviews were used to provide a rich understanding of individuals' careers. Rather than choosing from a list of predefined causal explanations, (e.g. questionnaire research: Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993), the attributions were produced through a process of spontaneous, personal sensemaking. The causal attributions were therefore contextualised to participants' own organisational and career experiences. This stage also utilised storytelling, which has been promoted as a useful method for understanding minority-ethnic individuals' experiences in research guided by the advocacy paradigm.

The second stage in the LACS process in study one followed the post-positivist paradigm. It involved coding statements from the qualitative interview data and assigning them with numerical codes. These codes were then analysed statistically. This quantitative analysis allows broad patterns of attributional style to be determined, groups to be compared and generalisations to be made from the data. Because the LACS process used in study one combines constructivist and post-positivist paradigms and methodology, the pragmatic approach is particularly appropriate for this research.

The Pragmatic Approach in Study Two

Study two explores the experiences that are perceived to enhance or impede career success for minority- and majority-ethnic employees. Although study one examined important differences in causal attributions, study two used the exploratory sequential design of this thesis to build on this by exploring the *content* of individuals' experiences. Using the qualitative interviews from study one, template analysis was used to analyse the data.

Template Analysis

Template analysis is typically used to analyse textual data, such as interview transcripts and is a method largely pioneered by Nigel King (2004, 2010). The technique is a form of thematic analysis which involves developing a 'template' where themes are organised into a hierarchical structure. Templates often have themes that can be defined in advance (*a priori* themes), and these can either be developed from examining a subset of interview transcripts or can be guided by the research literature. These broad themes are then used to analyse the transcripts and more specific codes are added to the template, which is then revised until a final template is established (King, 2004). Chapter five provides greater detail of how template analysis was used in this research; the next section discusses how it sits within a pragmatic approach.

Pragmatism and Template Analysis

A pragmatic approach was particularly suitable for the use of template analysis in this research, because the technique can draw on a range of epistemological positions (King, 2010). In this research, the use of template analysis was influenced by both post-positivist and constructivist perspectives.

Falling within the constructivist paradigm, semi-structured interviews and storytelling methodology were used to gain a rich, contextualised understanding of individuals' career experiences. Using template analysis from a constructivist perspective means that interpretation can be shaped by the researcher's own experiences and background, so researchers must remain reflexive throughout the research process. This was particularly important for the use of template analysis in this research, as the researcher was a white female. Interpretations were therefore questioned and scrutinised for any cultural biases that may have influenced the analysis. A core tenet of constructivism is that the researcher constructs understanding with the participants and involves them throughout the research process. Therefore, in this research, feedback and suggestions from participants were used to modify the final template.

King (2004) does not advocate quantifying the codes from template analysis, because in doing so, researchers would be suggesting that the frequency of a code corresponds to its importance, which cannot be assumed. However, template analysis can also draw on the post-positivist paradigm. In this research, rather than constructing *a priori* codes from the interview transcripts (a more constructivist approach), they were guided by key areas of the research literature and were then changed and developed during the course of analysis. This is consistent with the post-positivist paradigm, which aims to use research to test and revise existing theory. Post-positivist research also emphasises calculating reliability between coders. However, as King (2004) rejects the quantification of themes and codes, statistical inter-rater reliability was not used in this research. Instead, discussion between coders about their different interpretations was used to determine the reliability of the template and coding.

The Pragmatic Approach in Study Three

Study three is a quantitative questionnaire study, which tests existing hypotheses from the political skill literature. In doing so it sits squarely in the post-positivist paradigm, which emphasises testing and revising existing theory. Using quantitative methodology also meant that political skill could be assessed across a wide sample and statistically associated with objective and subjective career success. Statistical inference also means that findings can be generalised beyond the study sample.

Although the methodology used within study three was guided by post-positivism, the study builds on findings from study two. By using post-positivist led, quantitative methodology in study three to build on the constructivist/qualitative findings from study two, this study also falls into the pragmatic approach used across the thesis. Because of the key advantages of each methodology for the study of ethnicity, qualitative and quantitative methods are given equal importance throughout the thesis.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the organisational context where this research was conducted. It has also discussed some of the unique aspects of conducting ethnicity research in organisations and its associated difficulties. The paradigms that have dominated ethnicity research in behavioural and social sciences have been discussed. Pragmatism has been presented as an approach which bridges these existing paradigms and is particularly relevant for ethnicity research. It also offers an epistemological justification for the mixed methods used in this thesis.

Chapter Four: A Comparison of Minority-Ethnic and Majority-Ethnic Managers' Causal Attributions for Career Events

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a study that compares the causal attributions that minority- and majority-ethnic managers make when recalling experiences of significant positive and negative career events. Examining attributions is important for differential career success because it can enhance knowledge about how minority-ethnic employees interpret and make sense of their career experiences. The study builds on previous research on diversity and attributions, which suggests that there may be socio-demographic group differences in attributional style. The following section provides a summary of the attribution research discussed in chapter two.

4.1.1 Importance of Intrapersonal Attributions

It is important to compare the causal attributions made by different groups because existing research suggests that attributional style can influence career outcomes. The type of attributions individuals make for key events can impact their emotional responses and future behaviour (Weiner, 1980, 2005). For example, research with students has found that those who make more internal, controllable attributions for career decisions have greater career commitment and responsibility (e.g. Colarelli & Bishop, 1990). Individuals who attribute successful events to more internal and stable causes (e.g. ability), and unsuccessful events to external, unstable causes (e.g. unlucky), have been found to have higher levels of self-efficacy which is important for future career behaviour (Silver et al., 1995). It has also been proposed that individuals who make more external, uncontrollable attributions for negative career experiences may have more difficulty in overcoming future career obstacles (Albert & Luzzo, 1999). Furthermore, the type of intrapersonal causal attributions that individuals communicate, for example, in selection, promotion and appraisal scenarios, are important for how they are perceived by others, including important decision makers (Silvester et al, 2002). However, there do appear to be some group differences in attributional styles.

4.1.2 Group Differences in Attributional Style

According to the socio-cognitive model of unfair discrimination (Silvester & Chapman, 1996), differences in the causal attributions made by members of minority groups (such as women and minority-ethnic individuals) may influence their success in the workplace.

Research on ethnicity and attributional style suggests that members of minority groups may find it difficult to accurately determine the causes of events when they perceive the possibility of discrimination or differential treatment (i.e. attributional ambiguity). Laboratory research has found that minority-ethnic participants tend to attribute failure to external, uncontrollable causes (e.g. discrimination) in order to protect self-esteem (Crocker & Major, 1989; Major et al., 1994). Consistent with the laboratory studies on gender, research has also found that minority-ethnic participants attribute success to external, uncontrollable causes (Hoyt et al., 2007). It has been suggested that these patterns occur because minority-ethnic individuals perceive success to be caused by preferential treatment, such as pity from others or affirmative action (Major et al., 1994)

However, to date there has been no comparative study of the causal attributions made by minority- and majority-ethnic managers for career experiences. Therefore the aim of this study was to provide an evidence base to determine whether there are such differences. Based on the existing research on diversity and attributions, it was expected that:

H_1: Minority-ethnic managers will attribute negative career experiences to more external, uncontrollable causes than majority-ethnic managers

H_2: Minority-ethnic managers will attribute positive career experiences to more external, uncontrollable causes than majority-ethnic managers

Managers were chosen for the study because ethnicity research in organisational psychology has yet to consider the important information they can provide about how they have navigated their careers to date (Kenny & Briner, 2007).

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Participants

Forty middle and senior managers participated in the study: 20 minority-ethnic and 20 majority-ethnic managers, a similar sample size to existing attribution research (e.g. Silvester, 1997; Silvester et al., 1997). Managers were matched for organisational level, gender, and work area. The average time spent at their current level of seniority was M = 41.4 months (SD = 34.1 months) and M = 31.2 months (SD=30.5 months) for minority- and majority-ethnic managers respectively. All were educated to degree level and four minority-ethnic and four majority-ethnic managers had MBAs. The minority-ethnic group comprised five men and 15 women, and the majority-ethnic group comprised six men and 14 women. Managers typically managed teams of between five and 20 employees.

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling; email shots (see Appendix 1) were sent out to managers who were registered with the organisation's minority-ethnic support forum, the diversity team and diversity champions were also asked to forward the email to potential participants. This strategy was adopted because only approximately 5-7% of all middle and senior managers were minority-ethnic and therefore gaining enough minority-ethnic participants would have been difficult using a more generalised sampling method. The email explained that the research was examining career experiences, and details about how to participate. The email did not specify the focus on ethnicity, in order to enhance initial buy-in and to prevent participants misunderstanding the research rationale or using it as an opportunity to air specific grievances (Buchanan & Bryman, 2007). To ensure ethical practice and build trust between researcher and participant, all potential participants were informed of the full aims of the project once they had contacted the

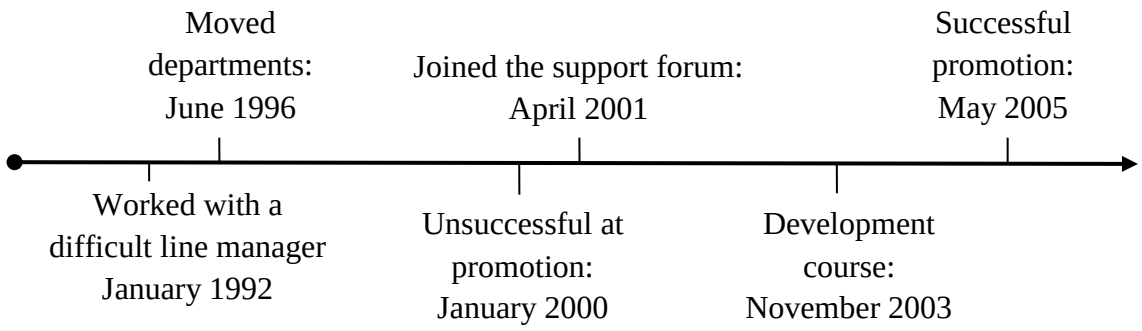
researcher (see Appendix 2 for the information sheet). Upon deciding to participate, they also completed an informed consent form (Appendix 3).

Demographic information was collected to enable the minority- and majority-ethnic samples to be matched. For the most part this was achieved by asking minority-ethnic participants to refer their majority-ethnic colleagues to the research. If there was no suitable match, convenience sampling was used and managers continued to be matched where possible on the characteristics named above.

4.2.2 Procedure

Prior to the interviews, the managers were contacted by email and phone, and asked to complete a 'timeline' by drawing a pictorial representation of the general sequence of their career (see Figure 4.1 for an example). The timeline method is used widely in career counselling (Brott, 2004; Goldman, 1992) and has been advocated as a way of focusing interviewee attention (Chell, 2004). In this research the timeline method was used to encourage managers to reflect on their career experiences and to facilitate the interview by allowing the manager and researcher to share a visual aid during discussion. Its primary purpose was to provide key career incidents that were explored during the interviews. Managers were asked to identify any specific events that they believed had had a positive or negative impact on their career trajectory or satisfaction. For the purposes of this study, experiences that had a negative impact on career success were defined as "events or conditions, either within the person or in his or her environment, that impede career success" (Swanson & Woitke, 1997, p. 434). Positive experiences were defined as events or conditions that *assist* career success. Those managers, who were unable to complete the timeline beforehand were asked to develop it with the researcher during the interview.

Figure 4.1: Example Timeline



All interviews were conducted individually with managers. Although no time limits were fixed, interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes for the minority-ethnic sample and 40 minutes for the majority-ethnic sample. Interviews were semi-structured using the critical incident technique (CIT), a method used in qualitative interviews to investigate significant events, incidents, processes and outcomes, which in this study were identified by the manager in question (Chell, 2004; Flanagan, 1954). CIT has been suggested as a useful tool for gaining broader insight into the role and experience of ethnicity within organisations (Kenny & Briner, 2007). It was particularly useful in this research because it was possible to explore each incident with probes, in order to understand the cognitive, affective and behavioural factors associated with successful or unsuccessful career success.

First, managers were asked to provide a summary of their career to-date using the timeline as a guide. Then CIT was used to explore positive and negative events managers had identified on the timeline. Probes were used to uncover the background, perceived causes and consequences of key events. For example, "*Why do you think you were (un)successful?",* and "*What have you learnt from this experience?"* (see Appendix 4 for the interview schedule). All interviews were recorded with the permission of participants and then transcribed verbatim for analysis. Managers were assured of their confidentiality, as any names or identifiable information were removed from transcripts of the interviews and recordings were securely stored. All information fed back to the organisation was also in general terms, with no reference to specific ethnic backgrounds or grades. This was to ensure

that participants were not identified, for example, if they were the only female, Grade 8 Black African in the organisation.

4.2.3 Attributional Coding

Attributional analysis of the interview transcripts was conducted using the Leeds Attributional Coding System (LACS: Munton et al., 1999). It is a five-stage process involving (1) identifying a source of attributions, which can be any discourse material, verbal or written, (2) extracting attributions, (3) identifying agents and targets, (4) coding attributions on five causal dimensions and finally (5) analysing the numerical data.

Step 1: Identifying Source of Attributions

The source of attributions was the transcribed semi-structured interviews conducted with participants as described above.

Step 2: Extracting Attributions

Attributions were extracted from the interview transcripts. Joseph, Brewin, Yule and Williams (1993, p. 250) define attributions as 'statements identifying a factor or factors that contribute to a given outcome' where 'a stated or implied causal relationship has to be present'. Causal attributions were only extracted if they referred to an event or experience that the interviewee identified had positively or negatively affected their career, for example: recommendation for a training course, being given a high profile work assignment; failure to secure a promotion, or an inability to get on with a line manager. An interview excerpt is shown with extracted attributions in Figure 4.2, which also demonstrates how outcomes can have more than one cause. Figure 4.3 provides examples of extracted attributions for positive and negative career events. When extracting attributions, causes are underlined, arrows (→) are used to denote the direction of the outcome and a slash (/) indicates the end of an outcome

Figure 4.2 Interview Excerpt and Associated Extracted Attributions

Interviewer*:* How did the promotion come about?

Participant: I did one particular very good job and my line manager went to the head of department and said you need this girl, → and /they took me on/, ← because that is how it works here → so that's how I go the job/. But then I had a series of really hostile line managers,→ which coincided with a period of enormous ill health for my daughter, → so it wasn't going to work properly/.

Extracted Attributions:

1. my line manager went to the head of department and said you need this girl, → and /they took me on/
2. /they took me on, ← because that is how it works here
3. because that is how it works here → so that's how I got the job/.
4. I had a series of really hostile line managers,→ so it wasn't going to work properly/.
5. which coincided with a period of enormous ill health for my daughter, → so it wasn't going to work properly/.

Figure 4.3 Examples of Extracted Attributions for Career Experiences

Negative Career Experiences
• I was turned down [for the development programme] on the basis that ← it was too expensive • I am finding it very challenging, ← its experience, that's what I'm lacking • I had to work around him [line manager], ← I don't think he ever would have thought I was capable • I have not got anything in terms of temporary promotion or any of those kind of things, ← I guess I am a bit too outspoken. • I just didn't feel appreciated → so it felt like a really tough time for me • I think it is the [organisation] requirements → that are holding back my career • I failed the [assessment], ← I was far, far too immature and definitely not ready • I haven't been on any development programmes,← he [line manager] has stopped them all
Positive Career Experiences
• I think I had quite good personal networks → which helped me get that promotion • The people that work there really appreciated my skills → which really bolstered my confidence • He [line manager] was prepared to go out of his way to promote me to senior people and give me the career opportunities that I needed → and that has had a particularly positive effect on my career • I think the worklife balance in [the organisation] → has helped me stay in my career • I decided to do the MBA → and I got two promotions within two years as a result • I went on [the development programme] ← because I made a positive decision that I wanted to do more training. • The reason why people like me were selected is ← because we knew our subject • It was through her [line manager] encouragement → that I moved up

Step 3: Identifying Agents and Targets

Once attributions were extracted, the 'Agent' and 'Target' was identified for each attribution. This process clarifies who is causing the events and who is being affected by them (Silvester, 2004). An Agent is "the person, group or entity nominated in the cause of the attribution" and the Target is "the person, group or entity which is mentioned in the outcome of the attribution" (Silvester, 2004, p. 232). The Agents and Targets that were identified were as follows:

1. Speaker
2. Managers (including line managers and those other than the direct line manager, including recruiting managers)
3. The Organisation (e.g. policies, promotion procedures, organisational climate)
4. Other (e.g. colleagues, team members)

Step 4: Coding Attributional Dimensions

The LACS involves coding attributions using five dimensions: Internal-External; Stable-Unstable; Controllable-Uncontrollable; Global-Specific; Personal-Universal. Definitions of each attribution dimension and examples are shown in Table 4.2. As recommended by Silvester (2004), definitions of dimensions were adapted to correspond to the research context. Each attribution was coded from the speaker's perspective, using information from the transcript to reach a coding decision, irrespective of whether the researcher agreed with the statement. A three-point scale was used to rate attributions on the five dimensions (3 = internal, controllable, stable, global, personal; 1 = external, uncontrollable, unstable, specific, universal) and attributions were also coded for positive, neutral or negative career experiences.

Table 4.2 Attribution Dimensions, Kappa Reliability Data and Examples of Coded Attributions

Dimension	Definition	Example
Stable-unstable	κ = .73	
Stable (3)	A cause is rated stable it if is likely to have an ongoing impact on the speaker	I don't think I will ever be the world's greatest statistician → so I would never do the economic type roles
Unstable (1)	A cause is rated as unstable if it is likely to be relatively short term or have little permanent effect on any future career outcomes	I got onto the development program, ← I think I have just been exceptionally lucky
Internal-external	κ = .71	
Internal (3)	A cause is coded internal if it originates within the applicant, such as their behavior, characteristic (including ethnicity) or skill	I wasn't successful [in the interview] ← because I don't have the right personality and resilience
External (1)	A cause is coded external if it originates outside the applicant, such as others' behavior, situational constraints or circumstances	I had a line manager that was really supportive, really supportive,→ it was a really good part of my [organization] career
Controllable-uncontrollable	κ = .75	
Controllable (3)	An attribution is rated as controllable if the cause could (without effort) be changed by the speaker to produce a different outcome	I got my [senior] role ← through sheer hard work
Uncontrollable (1)	An attribution is rated as uncontrollable, if the speaker perceives the outcome not to be open to influence	I didn't get the job ← because I was always the outsider trying to get in

Dimension	Definition	Example
Global-specific	κ = .71	
Global (3)	A cause is rated global if it is likely to influence later work opportunities or career mobility	I developed a reputation for delivering. →I think that was a turning point my career
Specific (1)	A cause is rated as specific if it is unlikely to have a wide influence or is considered relatively unimportant by the Speaker.	It was right place right time → and they gave me a temporary promotion
Personal-universal	κ = .72	
Personal (3)	A cause is coded personal if it is something unique to the Speaker and not typical of other employees	I was the only person on the team that specialized in the subject → so I could take on that role better than another member of staff doing it
Universal (1)	A cause is coded universal if it is something that is not distinctive to the Speaker, something that is likely to be typical of all employees.	you are expected to work out your own personal development → there is no career guidance

Note. For coding purposes, causes are underlined, and arrows (→) are used to denote the direction of the outcome.

Reliability

To ensure reliability of coding and interpretation, a second coder who was minority-ethnic and trained in using the LACS, independently rated a random sample of 350 extracted attributions (approximately 20% of the total). Asking coders of different ethnicities to provide reliability data is a method advocated for reducing bias in ethnicity research (Gunaratnam, 2003). The second coder was also blind as to whether the attributions were from minority- or majority-ethnic transcripts as they were anonymised and specific references to ethnicity were removed. Inter-rater agreement was assessed using the Kappa co-efficient (κ: Brennan & Prediger, 1981). Fleiss (1971) suggests that Kappa values above .6 are good and previous organisational research using the LACS has found levels of reliability on each of the dimensions between .45 and .85 (Koczwara, 2006; Silvester, 1997). Kappa values for the causal dimensions are presented in Table 4.2 and ranged from $\kappa = .72$ to $\kappa = .75$.

Step 5: Analyses

In order to test the hypotheses, mean scores were calculated for positive and negative career events for each of the five attribution dimensions separately. This procedure is advocated when using the LACS because each participant makes multiple attributions, which means the raw attribution data violates the statistical assumption that each score is independent, (Field, 2009; Leggett & Silvester, 2003; Stratton, Munton, Hanks, Heard, & Davidson, 1988). Averaging the scores therefore allows comparisons to be made across participants who produced different number of attributions. This was particularly important considering the minority-ethnic group made over twice as many (N = 1150) attributions as the majority-ethnic group (N = 558) and has been used in previous attribution research examining group differences (e.g. Koczwara, 2006). It also allowed interpretation to be conducted at the level of the individual, rather than the event, therefore this method of averaging scores provides a more representative measure of sensemaking for each individual. The mean scores for each dimension were analysed using a series of multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVAs). Because of the gender composition of the sample (male: $n = 11$, female: $n = 29$), gender was controlled for in all analyses.

4.3 Results

4.3.1 Frequency of Attributions.

A total of 1708 attributions were extracted from the forty interviews. 799 (46.8%) of these related to incidents that interviewees perceived as negative and 909 (53.2%) to positive incidents. Table 4.3 provides the frequency of attributions extracted for minority- and majority-ethnic, and male and female managers and the mean number of attributions extracted per interview. Managers produced between 14 and 99 attributions per interview with ranges of 27-99 and 14-55 for minority- and majority-ethnic managers respectively.

Despite asking similar questions, minority-ethnic managers made more attributions in total, per interview (M = 57.50, SD = 18.73) than majority-ethnic managers (M = 27.90, SD = 11.48). After controlling for gender, using ANCOVA ($F(1, 37) = .37$, $p=.55$, $\eta_p^2 =.01$), this difference was significant ($F(1,37) = 35.19$, $p <.001$, $\eta_p^2 =.49$), with a large effect size (where $\eta_p^2 = .01$ is a small effect, $\eta_p^2 = .09$ is a medium effect and $\eta_p^2 = .25$ is a large effect: Levine & Hullett, 2002). Because of the difference between the total number of attributions made by minority- (N= 1150) and majority-ethnic (N=558) managers, it was also important to examine the proportions of attributions per interview. Minority-ethnic managers also made proportionally more attributions for negative experiences per interview (56% or M = .56, SE = .03) than majority-ethnic managers (41% or M = .41, SE = .04), again, after controlling for the effects of gender ($F(1, 37) = .02$, $p=.69$, $\eta_p^2 =.00$), this was found to be a significant difference, with a medium sized effect ($F(1, 37) = 7.28$, $p=.01$, $\eta_p^2 =.16$).

Table 4.3 Attributions Produced by Managers

	Positive Events		Negative Events		All	
	N	M	N	M	N	M
Majority-Ethnic	317	15.85 (6.85)	241	12.05 (8.63)	558	27.90 (11.48)
Minority Ethnic	482	24.10 (7.95)	668	33.40 (16.43)	1150	57.50 (18.73)
Male	192	17.45 (8.26)	236	21.45 (19.59)	428	38.91 (24.23)
Female	607	20.93 (8.44)	673	23.21 (16.10)	1280	44.14 (20.57)
All	799	22.73 (16.87)	909	19.98 (8.43)	1708	42.70 (21.44)

Note. Standard Deviations are displayed in parentheses

Table 4.4 reports the percentages of agents and targets for attributions. Percentages were used because the total number of attributions made by minority and majority-ethnic managers differed. Table 4.4 shows that minority-ethnic managers reported being the agent of positive outcomes (57.26%) more than majority-ethnic managers (47.95%). Majority-ethnic managers were more likely to report being the agents of negative outcomes (39.83%) than minority-ethnic managers (29.64%) who reported external agents caused such incidents such as managers (35.48%), and the organisation (20.51%).

Table 4.4 Percentage of Agent and Target Attributions

	Positive Experiences			
	Agent		Target	
	MnE	MjE	MnE	MjE
Speaker	57.26	47.95	91.49	93.69
Managers	16.80	23.34	5.60	4.10
Organisation	15.56	18.30	1.24	1.26
Other	10.37	10.41	1.66	0.95
	Negative Experiences			
	Agent		Target	
	MnE	MjE	MnE	MjE
Speaker	29.64	39.83	75.00	87.14
Managers	35.48	28.63	12.28	4.98
Organisation	20.51	15.35	4.49	2.49
Other	14.37	16.18	8.23	5.39

Note. MnE = Minority-Ethnic, MjE = Majority-Ethnic

4.3.2 Pre-Analysis Checks

To test the hypotheses, separate multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVAs) were conducted on attributions for positive experiences and attributions for negative experiences, using the five attribution dimensions as dependent variables. MANCOVAs provide greater power to detect effects than running multiple ANOVAs or t-tests (Cole, Maxwell, Arvey, & Salas, 1994; Field, 2009). For this study, the procedure also allowed comparison of minority- and majority-ethnic managers, whilst controlling for the effect of gender as a covariate. This was important because over half the sample (N=29) were female.

Pre-analysis checks revealed several instances where the data deviated from normality, for example, the stable-unstable dimension for negative attributions was non-normal for the majority-ethnic group (*D (20) = .25, p<.01:* all Kolmogorov-Smirnov results are reported in Appendix 5). Consequently, bootstrapping, using the SPSS 18 bootstrapping module, was applied to all analyses because this technique does not require assumptions of normality to be met (Efron & Tibshirani, 1993). The method is becoming increasingly common in organisational psychology research (e.g. Gerber, Wittekind, Grote, Conway, & Guest, 2009; Irving & Montes, 2009; De Vos, De Clippeleer, & Dewilde, 2009; Zinko, Ferris, Humphrey, Meyer, & Aime, 2011).

Bootstrapping estimates the sampling distribution from multiple small samples, which are achieved by random sampling and replacement from the original data. A mean is then calculated for each small sample, from which a sampling distribution can be estimated. The standard error, which is calculated from the standard deviation of this sampling distribution, can be used to compute confidence intervals and conduct significance tests (Field, 2009). Bootstrapping allows tests susceptible to violations of normality to become more robust and also controls for Type I and Type II errors so is particularly useful with small samples (Chernick, 2008).

In this analysis a 'bias corrected and accelerated' bootstrap was applied, which corrects the distribution for bias and skewness (Efron & Tibshirani, 1993; Millsap & Maydeu-Olivares, 2009). Resampling with replacement was conducted 10,000 times

for each MANCOVA, using a stratified technique based on ethnicity and gender: this restricts resampling and replacement to cases from within minority-ethnic/majority-ethnic and male/female groups, and has been advocated when examining group differences (SPSS, 2009).

One of the assumptions of MANCOVA is that the covariance of the dependent variables should be similar across all levels of the independent variable. Box's Test was used to test this and was non-significant for the analysis on positive career experiences (Box's M = 24.06 F(15, 5814) = 1.38, p=.15) and negative career experiences (Box's M = 18.34, F(15, 5814) =1.05, p=.40) meaning the assumption of homogeneity of covariance matrices across groups had been met.

4.3.3 Test of Hypotheses

A MANCOVA, controlling for the effect of gender (V= .26, F(5,33) = 2.32, p= .07, η_p^2 =.26), revealed a significant main effect of ethnicity for attributions for negative career experiences, with a large effect size: using Pillai's trace (V = .28, F(4,33), p=.04, η_p^2 =.28). Table 4.5 reports results for the individual attribution dimensions. This shows that significant differences were found on two dimensions: internal/external and uncontrollable/controllable, with minority-ethnic managers making more external and uncontrollable attributions, providing support for hypothesis one. Table 4.5 also shows that these differences were large effects (using Cohen's d, where d=.2 is a small effect, d = .5 is a medium effect and d = .8 is a large effect: Cohen, 1988). No significant group differences for ethnicity were found for the stable, global and personal dimensions and the effect sizes for these dimensions were also small.

Table 4.5 Group Differences on Attribution Dimensions for Negative Events

	Minority-Ethnic		Majority-Ethnic			
Dimension	M	SD	M	SD	F	d
Stable-Unstable	1.98	.33	2.05	.29	.59	-.23
Internal-External	1.45	.15	1.63	.26	8.37**	-.85
Controllable – Uncontrollable	1.22	.11	1.36	.18	9.94**	-.94
Global- Specific	2.17	.28	2.10	.27	.71	.25
Personal-Universal	1.96	.36	1.92	.33	.11	.12

† p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01,

Note. Attributions were coded: 3 = internal, controllable, stable, global, personal; 1 = external, uncontrollable, unstable, specific, universal. Analysis based on 10,000 bootstrap samples, two-tailed significance is reported, df=1, 37.

A second MANCOVA was conducted on attributions for positive career experiences. A significant main effect of ethnicity was found, with a large effect size (V = .31, F(5,33) = 2.97, p =.03, η_p^2 = .31) using Pillai's trace and when controlling for gender, which was found to be non-significant, and had a medium effect size (V = .17, F(5,33) = 1.27, p=.30, η_p^2 = .16). Table 4.6 presents results for each attribution dimension. Minority-ethnic managers made significantly less stable attributions, with a large effect, but significantly more controllable attributions, with a medium to large effect. They also made more personal attributions for positive career experiences; a difference which approached significance (p=.08) and was a medium sized effect. No significant group differences for ethnicity were found for the internal-external or global-specific dimensions, which also had small effects. Therefore hypothesis two was not supported.

Table 4.6 Group Differences on Attribution Dimensions for Positive Events

	Minority-Ethnic		Majority-Ethnic			
Dimension	M	SD	M	SD	F	d
Stable-Unstable	1.98	.31	2.21	.26	6.42*	-.80
Internal-External	1.91	.30	1.78	.36	1.72	.39
Controllable – Uncontrollable	1.86	.23	1.70	.20	6.70*	.74
Global- Specific	2.25	.17	2.25	.29	.00	.00
Personal-Universal	2.34	.29	2.11	.47	3.18†	.59

† p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01,
Note. Attributions were coded: 3 = internal, controllable, stable, global, personal; 1 = external, uncontrollable, unstable, specific, universal. Analysis based on 10,000 bootstrap samples, two-tailed significance is reported, df=1, 37

4.4 Discussion

This study set out to compare the causal attributions that minority- and majority-ethnic managers make when asked to recall and describe significant positive and negative career events they have experienced. In doing so the study builds on previous research on diversity and attributions.

4.4.1 Summary of Results

It was found that:

- minority-ethnic managers produced significantly more attributions per interview (p<.001) and proportionally more of their attributions described negative career events per interview than majority-ethnic managers (*p*=.01);

- minority-ethnic managers attributed negative events to more external (*p*<.01), and uncontrollable (*p*<.01) causes than majority-ethnic managers, which provided support for hypothesis one; and,

- minority-ethnic managers attributed positive events to less stable (*p*=.02), but more controllable (*p*=.01) causes than majority-ethnic managers. An approaching significance result (p=.08) suggested minority-ethnic managers

also made more personal attributions. These findings do not support hypothesis two.

4.4.2 Number of Attributions

The finding that minority-ethnic managers produced more overall attributions and proportionally more negative attributions for career experiences, than majority-ethnic managers could be due to a number of factors. It may be that these individuals have encountered more negative career events over their careers, or that these events have been more salient or challenging than events experienced by majority-ethnic managers. Previous research has shown that people typically engage in sense-making and generate causal attributions when they encounter unexpected or personally threatening events (Wong & Weiner, 1981).

Without controlling for the exact type and quantity of career events experienced by different groups of managers (something arguably impossible in naturalistic career research) it is only possible to speculate whether the greater number of attributions reflect differences in the number or importance of negative career experiences. However, as minority-ethnic managers spontaneously produced more negative attributions for career events under similar interview conditions, it suggests this is a meaningful difference worthy of further attention from researchers.

4.4.3 Causal Attributions for Negative Career Experiences

Support was found for hypothesis one, which predicted that minority-ethnic managers would make more external, uncontrollable attributions for negative career experiences. Hypothesis one was derived from research on attributional ambiguity which suggests that minority-ethnic managers may be more likely to attribute negative career experiences (e.g., failed application for promotion) to external uncontrollable events, because in an environment where success is more difficult for minority individuals, this helps to protect self-esteem (Crocker & Major, 2003; Miller & Ross, 1975).

Whilst this may serve a protective function in the short-term, externalizing negative events may damage self-efficacy in the long-term if career barriers come to be perceived as permanent and unchangeable (Abele & Spurk, 2009b; Hirschy & Morris, 2002; Luzzo & Ward, 1995). Therefore, this pattern of attributions may impact motivation to persevere in the face of future career obstacles and ultimately impact career success for minority-ethnic employees (Albert & Luzzo, 1999). Table 4.7 shows examples for these type of attributions produced by minority-ethnic managers, as well as examples of attributions made by majority-ethnic managers.

Table 4.7 Example Attributions for Positive and Negative Events

	Minority-ethnic	Majority-ethnic
Positive Events	what has taken me through [promotion] before, (...) ← I would say is my hard work and dedication	I seemed to have a gift for that as well. → So I was quite good at [that type of work]
	every job I applied for I got, (....) ← I was very determined	why people like me were selected was ← because we knew our subject
	they have recommended me for bonuses ← because of the work I've done	[I was asked to do the role] (....) ← I had the capacity and capability to just do it
	I channelled my anger there into an assessment center, → which I had only done for practice, and I got [a promotion]	[getting the job] was actually, it's one of those things ← I knew a lot more about than other people because I had an interest in [the subject], so I had a natural aptitude for that
Negative Events	I think it is the [organization's] requirements → that are holding back my career	I couldn't get another job (....) ← because I wasn't really performing very well in the interviews
	because of the poor management, → I did not know what to expect or when I had succeeded, so that was a stalling point in my time here [in the organization]	I failed dismally and I was the only one who did, (....) ← it was my inexperience
	And then the third time I've done it [assessment center], it got even worse, (...) ← they keep on changing the process	I had no idea what it was that they were looking for [in the selection process], ← I was completely unprepared.
	I never felt able to apply for [development program], or anything as expensive, ← because I didn't think the unit would support me.	I failed the [assessment] twice. The first time it was after university and ← I was far, far too immature and definitely not ready ← The second time I wasn't ready, but perhaps a little bit over confident

Note. Causes are underlined, arrows (→) are used to denote the direction of the outcome

4.4.4 Causal Attributions for Positive Career Experiences

Hypothesis two was also derived from attributional ambiguity research which suggests that minority-ethnic individuals are more likely to attribute positive experiences to external and uncontrollable causes. This is because they can be less certain that successful outcomes are due to their own efforts, or result from special treatment as part of organizational actions to address under-representation in the workforce (e.g. Hoyt et al, 2007; Major et al, 1994). Contrary to these predictions, however, minority-ethnic managers in this study attributed positive career events to significantly *more* controllable and more personal (p=.08), but significantly less stable causes than majority-ethnic managers, thus hypothesis two was not supported. Table 4.7 presents examples of the positive attributions produced by minority- and majority-ethnic managers.

There are several possibilities for the lack of support for hypothesis two. Only a small selection of managers (N=4) reported participating in positive action activities, which may indicate that they did not feel they had been subject to any undue assistance in their career. This pattern of attributions also indicates minority-ethnic managers may be adopting a self-serving bias, or a tendency to take responsibility for positive outcomes (Miller & Ross, 1975). This bias has been found to occur consistently across individuals and groups (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009; Mezulis et al., 2004). For example, Silvester et al (2002) found that interview candidates were more likely to make internal, controllable, stable, global and personal attributions when discussing positive, as opposed to negative events.

Researchers have suggested that this bias acts to not only protect self-esteem, but also enhance self-efficacy (Higgins & Snyder, 1989; Silver et al., 1995). However, the stable-unstable dimension is important when examining self-serving attributions and in this study minority-ethnic managers made significantly more unstable attributions for positive career experiences. Compared to stable attributions (e.g. ability), unstable attributions (e.g. effort) have been associated with lower self-efficacy (Houston, 1995; Silver et al, 1995). Therefore, minority-ethnic managers' attributional style for positive events may have important implications for their self-

efficacy in the long term and therefore their future achievement striving and career success (Abele & Spurk, 2009b). Furthermore, the reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy and attributions may mean that minority-ethnic managers continue to face lower performance, confidence and even depression as a result of this attributional style (Hirschy & Morris, 2002; Houston, 1995; Peterson et al., 1988).

4.4.5 Cognitive Bias or Accurate Representation

The findings in this study suggest that minority-ethnic managers made attributions for positive and negative experiences that protected their self-esteem. However, it is not possible for this research to determine whether minority-ethnic managers are demonstrating a cognitive bias, or whether they are accurately representing their career experiences. For example, attributions for negative experiences do not take into account the fact that minority-ethnic managers may have experienced more negative career events that actually are caused by external and uncontrollable factors. Furthermore, minority-ethnic managers may be demonstrating learned helplessness; they may come to expect negative experiences to be beyond their control because they may have repeatedly experienced uncontrollable events (Abramson et al., 1978).

If attributions for negative experiences are accurate representations, then it may in turn influence the type of attributions minority-ethnic managers make for positive experiences. Their experiences of striving against negative factors may mean that they feel the need to claim career achievements as being due to their own efforts and abilities, rather than external factors. This explanation provides support for the finding that minority-ethnic managers in this study made *more* controllable and personal attributions than the majority-ethnic group for positive career experiences.

Without controlling for the types of career experiences individuals report and their actual causes, which may be impossible to determine, it is difficult to establish whether these causal attributions are reflecting cognitive bias or are accurate representations. Nevertheless, the attributions reported by managers in this study reflect their perceptions and are also reflections of what they are choosing to communicate.

4.4.6 Public Attributions

Most studies of attributional style and careers have focused on the role of *intra-personal* attributions on self-efficacy and career motivation of students: as such attributional activity is typically conceptualized as a private cognitive process. But spoken or public attributions also have the potential to influence an individual's career success via their impact on how others perceive him or her and their potential to move to higher organisational levels. Thus it is possible that the way in which an individual explains career-related outcomes can influence self- and other-perceived ability to advance.

Communicated attributions, which are commonly used in workplace discourse (Wong & Weiner, 1981) to explain and justify actions, negotiate shared understanding of events and to shape public identities (Bies & Sitkin, 1992; Silvester et al., 2002), may provide an important source of information for individuals responsible for identifying talent and determining suitability for senior positions. Spoken attributions may therefore be particularly important for career success, because employees frequently have to explain their actions and persuade others of their competence in formal situations, such as selection, appraisal and promotion interviews, and informal day to day interactions with managers and colleagues (Silvester, 1997; Silvester et al., 2002).

Consequences of Public Attributions

In this study, minority-ethnic managers made more external, uncontrollable attributions for career experiences. If communicated in the workplace such attributions may create a negative impression. For example, research has found that individuals who attribute poor performance to more external and uncontrollable causes (e.g., "I failed the assessment because I wasn't supported throughout the process") are seen by others as being less likely to learn from their mistakes and take responsibility for their actions (Silvester et al., 2002). Silvester et al (2002) found that applicants who used more internal-controllable attributions to explain negative outcomes during selection interviews were rated more favourably by interviewers than candidates who preferred internal-uncontrollable or external-uncontrollable

attributions. Therefore, even if minority-ethnic managers have in reality experienced more uncontrollable, external career barriers, producing more external, uncontrollable attributions for negative events may lead them to be judged less favourably by managers and result in fewer opportunities for career success.

There is also evidence that public attributions for positive events influence judgements made by others. Individuals who attribute positive outcomes to more internal, controllable causes (e.g. ability) are perceived as more competent, receive higher performance ratings, and achieve improved career outcomes (Heilman & Hayes, 2008; Silvester et al, 2002; Barrick, Schaffer & DeGrassi, 2009; Judge & Bret, 1994). Interestingly, minority-ethnic managers in this study were found to make significantly *more* controllable and more personal attributions (p=.08) for positive outcomes than majority-ethnic managers. It is not possible to say for certain why these differences in positive attributions were found, although it can be speculated that faced with higher levels of negative career experiences, these minority-ethnic managers were particularly keen to emphasise their successes.

This attributional style might suggest that as a group, minority-ethnic managers will be perceived more favourably. However, producing public attributions that emphasise external causes for negative outcomes and internal, personal causes for positive outcomes can lead to an individual to be perceived as arrogant or difficult to manage. Studies suggest that if an individual is perceived to be engaging in too much self-promotion or where there is a perceived discrepancy between self-promotion and ability, individuals may be seen as egotistical and less suitable for progression to senior levels (Cialdini & De Nicholas, 1989; Higgins & Judge, 2004; Judge & Bretz, 1994).

4.4.7 Strengths and Limitations

In this study, the Leeds Attributional Coding System was used to compare the causal attributions of minority- and majority-ethnic managers. Unlike existing laboratory-based attribution research (e.g. Hoyt et al., 2007; Major et al., 1994), this allowed attributions to be extracted from rich, in-depth interview data, within an organisational setting. Furthermore, whilst research on career-related attributions has

typically used questionnaires to measure causal beliefs (e.g. AACDM: Luzzo & Jenkins-Smith, 1998), using the LACS in this study enabled the analysis of spontaneous attributions, and therefore was less intrusive and had greater ecological validity (Silvester, 2004). However, although the LACS was used in this study to analyse semi-structured interview data, by coding and quantifying attributional statements, the richness of the original qualitative data is somewhat lost. In particular, there is little understanding about the *content* of managers' career experiences.

The present study focused on attributions produced retrospectively for career experiences. Whilst this may be inevitable when exploring career experiences, which by their nature occur as part of a career narrative, it is possible that observed group differences may result from retrospective sense-making and are influenced by a culmination of career experiences (Cannon, 1999; Cox & Hassard, 2007). Ideally, future longitudinal research is needed in order to examine how attributions change over time and with experience. A related point is whether the attributional patterns observed are a reflection of causal beliefs and/or actual events. It could be that minority-ethnic managers actually encounter more negative events that are caused by external and uncontrollable factors than majority-ethnic managers do. It is worth investigating this to determine whether these are perceived or actual differences.

4.4.8 Future Research

Managers' Attributions for Subordinates

There is a need to investigate the attributions that supervising managers make for minority-ethnic employees and whether minority-ethnic employees can easily determine the causes of others' behaviour towards them (Crocker & Major, 2003). To compare interpersonal attributions of supervising managers was an original aim of this thesis. However, practically researching ethnicity at senior management levels is very challenging because the potential participant pool can be very small. In the host organisation for this research, just 5-7% of middle and senior managers were minority-ethnic. It became apparent that there were not sufficient numbers of

minority-ethnic managers who managed enough subordinates whom they could discuss. Therefore the original proposed study was not feasible in the host organisation.

Lower minority-ethnic representation at management levels also means it can be particularly difficult to gain enough participants to enable statistically meaningful conclusions to be drawn. That said, there is clearly a need for more research on ethnicity at higher organisational levels, not only to allow for a better understanding of the factors that allow for career success, but to counter inherent bias in existing research, which is almost entirely focused on ethnicity at lower levels (Kenny & Briner, 2007).

Differentiating Between Ethnic Groups

In the present study, the analysis compared minority-ethnic and majority-ethnic groups. However, researchers suggest that group differences in attributional style may develop as a consequence of factors like upbringing (Choi, Nisbett, & Norenzayan, 1999) and past experiences (Furnham, Sadka, & Brewin, 1992; Rosenthal, 1995; Spector, 1982). It is therefore important that future research examine the attributional styles of different ethnicities, such as Black African, Indian or Chinese, rather than combining them into one minority-ethnic group. Research should also study intersectionalities, such as the effect of gender and ethnicity on attributional style. In this study gender was controlled for and there were found to be no differences between male and female attributions. However, future research should aim to examine the attributions of specific populations, such as Black African women. Despite the importance of such research, examining differences between ethnic groups and intersectionalities, particularly at senior organisational levels, is difficult in regards to the number of available participants for such studies.

Longitudinal Research

Longitudinal research is essential in order to test whether the relationship between attributional style and career success is causal and to investigate the impact of

attributional patterns on differing career trajectories over time. Do employees who make external, uncontrollable attributions for negative events experience slower career progression than those who make internal, controllable attributions? Does attributional style influence both subjective (e.g. career satisfaction) and objective (e.g. salary, promotions, grade) career success?

The relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy also deserves more attention. Recent research has combined these constructs and found they predict outcomes such as job satisfaction, salary and performance (Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2004). However, their relationship may be more complex and require longitudinal research to examine the relationship between short-term self-esteem gains and longer-term self-efficacy outcomes.

Public Attributions

This study investigated attributions produced during research interviews, not spontaneous attributions produced in the workplace. Future research could investigate employee discourse in context to determine whether similar patterns of attributions would be found in natural settings. For example, Stangor, Swim, Van Allen and Sechrist (2002) found that Black Americans tended to curtail their attributions regarding discrimination as a cause of outcomes at work in the presence of out-group (usually white male) members. Although, it should be noted that in the current study, interviews were conducted by a white female researcher, yet minority-ethnic managers still produced external, uncontrollable causal attributions. One opportunity might be to examine spoken attributions produced by minority- and majority-ethnic employees during selection, promotion and appraisal processes.

4.5 Summary

This study contributes to ethnicity and career research by comparing attributions made by minority- and majority-ethnic managers for their career experiences. In doing so it provides important insight into the psychological mechanisms that may influence differential career success. Whilst it found mixed results for the hypotheses based on the existing diversity attribution literature, the study provides an evidence

base by demonstrating that there are important ethnic-group differences in attributional style. However, managers' interpretation of their career experiences cannot be fully investigated using attributional analysis, because by quantifying statements, the context of what interviewees discuss cannot be fully understood. Therefore, the next chapter aims to gain greater insight into managers' subjective career experiences.

Chapter Five: A Template Analysis of the Career Experiences of Minority-Ethnic and Majority-Ethnic Managers

5.1 Introduction

Study one provided a comparison of the causal attributions that minority- and majority-ethnic managers make when asked to recall and describe significant career events they have experienced. However, whilst attributional analysis can provide an understanding of differences in *how* minority- and majority- ethnic managers explain their career experiences, it is less able to offer insight into the *content* of those experiences. Therefore, it was decided to undertake a second study examining the career experiences minority-ethnic managers identified as important for their career success when asked to recall significant career events, and compare these with the experiences identified by majority-ethnic managers.

Researchers have identified several areas that may be important for differential career success, including occupational segregation, mentoring, networking, relationship with line managers and performance evaluation (e.g. Collins, 1993; Greenhaus et al, 1990; Ibarra, 1995; Ragins, 2002). However, research has largely focused on lower level employees, and there is less knowledge of managers' experiences. It is important to study managers because they can provide unique insight into how their ethnicity has affected their experiences of organisations and how they have navigated their career to date.

Furthermore, existing research has examined ethnicity and career success using large samples and questionnaires, or compared ethnic groups on single variables (e.g. Igbaria & Wormley, 1995; Landau, 1995). There have been surprisingly few qualitative studies of minority-ethnic career experiences. Importantly, qualitative research examines what individuals consider important and gives voice to participants rather than impose the ideas of the researcher. Thus far, the perceptions of minority-ethnic managers, and what they identify as important for their careers, has yet to be heard. (Kenny & Briner, 2007, p. 449-50):

"It will not be possible to get a full understanding of how minority ethnic workers experience the workplace, if [qualitative] research is not conducted. The type of qualitative research that is needed is that which, […], seeks to gain a better understanding of how the individual has experienced/is experiencing the workplace and what impact that might have on their perceptions and career decisions."

The following study used the same in-depth critical incident interviews as study one, but applied a different methodology (template analysis) to compare the career experiences of minority-ethnic managers in a large public sector organisation, with the experiences of a matched sample of majority-ethnic managers from the same organisation. The primary research questions for this study are:

Research Question 1: What are the career experiences minority-ethnic managers identify as important for their career success?

Research Question 2: How do these compare with experiences identified by majority-ethnic managers?

5.2 Method

5.2.1 Participants and Procedure

This study utilised the interviews that were conducted with 20 minority-ethnic and 20 majority-ethnic middle and senior managers in study one. Detailed information about the participants and interview procedure is provided in sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2. A copy of the interview transcript can be found in Appendix 4.

5.2.2 Template Analysis

Template analysis (TA) was used to identify themes from the minority- and majority-ethnic interview transcripts, which represented the career experiences that each group of interviewees discussed as important for their career success. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interview transcripts for the minority- and majority-ethnic groups were analysed separately using template

analysis, beginning with the minority-ethnic transcripts (King, 2004). In terms of timings, this analysis was conducted in parallel with the attributional analysis in study one. However, the template analysis was conducted after the attributions were extracted, but not coded. Analysing the data in this order reduced the likelihood of contamination from the findings of study one.

TA provides a flexible method of reclassifying data and identifying themes throughout the analytical process (King, 2004). The approach has been used in similar contexts, to examine the development needs and role perceptions of male and female managers (Mallon & Cassell, 1999; Ray, 2002). King suggests it is particularly useful for comparing different groups' perspectives (King, 2004; King, Thomas, & Bell, 2003). An advantage of TA in this context is that it allows previous research to be used as a starting point for template development, but does not constrain the analysis to established findings (Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

TA involves organising data into codes, which are placed into a hierarchical 'template' where broad themes encompass more specific findings. Unlike other methods such as content analysis, the approach does not assume that the frequency of codes relates to significance. Therefore, an issue raised once may be perceived as important as one raised multiple times. TA also allows parallel coding, where the same text can be coded under two or more categories.

Development of Templates

Following previous research on group differences (e.g. Charity, 2010), the process involved two stages: (1) the minority-ethnic transcripts were analysed and a template was developed; and (2) the minority-ethnic template was adapted to develop a second template for the majority-ethnic group.

The minority-ethnic template was developed first because understanding the career experiences of minority-ethnic managers was the primary focus of this study. Furthermore, it also meant that the template could be guided by existing research findings of differential career success.

The majority-ethnic template was developed by analysing the majority-ethnic transcripts with the minority-ethnic template; adopting a reflexive process, codes were added and removed from the minority-ethnic template to establish the similarities and differences between managers' perceptions from both groups.

Analysis: Minority-Ethnic Template

Codes in TA can be pre-determined, for example, by drawing on previous research or theories, or they can be entirely emergent and guided by the interview schedule. In this study, TA was grounded in *a priori* higher-order codes, determined using themes from the existing research on differential career success. These codes were chosen based on the research areas, as discussed in chapter two, that have provided most research on differential career success (in no particular order):

(1) Occupational Segregation

(2) Networking

(3) Mentoring

(4) Performance Evaluation

(5) Line Manager Support

Once higher order codes are identified in TA, transcripts are examined repeatedly to identify lower order codes that describe more specific emergent findings. After all the minority-ethnic transcripts were read through by the researcher for familiarisation, each transcript was systematically analysed to identify new additions or changes to the template. TA is a cyclical process and therefore transcripts were examined multiple times as the template evolved.

TA allows the original themes to be adapted or removed. As well as inserting new codes, King (2004) suggests changes can include deleting and redefining codes, and changing their importance and placement in the template. New codes were inserted into the template when interview content suggested they were relevant to career success and were not covered by the existing codes. Due to only using *a priori* level-

one codes, all lower order codes had to be inserted during the process. Level-two, level-three and level-four codes were added to each level-one code where greater distinctions were felt necessary. The researcher felt that four levels of codes were able to capture the information in the data satisfactorily. King (2004) suggests templates should use between three and five levels of codes to avoid being overly detailed or succinct. Figure 5.1 shows how the minority-ethnic template evolved after examining five and ten transcripts.

Figure 5.1 Minority-Ethnic Template Development after Five and Ten Transcripts

A Priori Themes	Template after Examining Five Transcripts	Template after Examining Ten Transcripts
1. Occupational Segregation	1. Visibility 1. Discretion 2. Role Type 3. Profile of Assignments	1. Visibility 1. Work Profile 1. Role Type 2. Work Content 1. Discretion 2. Profile of Assignments 2. Recognition 1. Extra Work Effort 2. Receiving Credit
2. Networks	2. Networks 1. Informal Networks 1. Accessing Informal Networks 2. Informal Selection & Promotion 2. Formal Networks	2. Networks 1. Informal Networks 1. Accessing Informal Networks 2. Informal Selection & Promotion 2. Formal Networks 1. Peer Support 2. Self Help
3. Mentoring	3. Development 1. Development Courses 2. Mentoring	3. Development 1. Development Courses 2. Line Manager Blocks 3. Mentoring 1. Availability of Mentors 2. Mentoring Support
4. Performance Evaluation	4. Performance Evaluation	
5. Line Manager Support	5. Line Manager Support 1. Advocate 2. Career Guidance 3. Recognition	4. Line Manager Support 1. Sponsorship 1. Advocate 2. Introduces Networks 2. Career Guidance 3. Performance Evaluation 4. Blocks Career Moves

The most significant insertion was a level-one code. It became clear that aspects of work that may help enhance an individual's reputation, such as the kind of projects they worked on, and the amount of discretion they were given in their roles were perceived as important for career success. Therefore, 'visibility' was inserted into the template as a level-one code after five transcripts were examined.

King (2004) suggests that if codes are too broadly or narrowly defined they can be adapted and introduced at a higher or lower level. Importantly, this was the case with three of the original level-one codes. The scope of the 'mentoring' code was changed, making it a second level code under a wider 'development' theme, to reflect interviewees' comments and descriptions about the provision of, and access to, development activities. 'Occupational segregation' was also adapted, as the scope of the original code was too broad. It became evident in the transcripts that the type of work interviewees were doing was important, but it was better explained by the higher code 'visibility'. Therefore, the specific aspects relating to occupational segregation were provided as codes associated with 'work profile' under 'visibility'. Finally, it became apparent that 'performance evaluation' was too specific as a level-one code and was therefore subsumed under 'line manager support'.

As the template developed, several other changes were made to the scope and placement of codes. For example, the insertion of 'visibility' as a higher order code led to several other codes being changed in terms of their higher order classification. Initially placed under 'line manager support' as a level two code, the code 'recognition', relating to receiving credit for work and being acknowledged in the workplace, was reclassified under 'visibility'. Similar revisions were made before using the template to re-examine each interview to ensure it encompassed all aspects of the data. The final template was reached once it had been applied to all the minority-ethnic transcripts and it was decided that there were no further additions or changes to be made. An example of an extract coded with the final template is provided in Figure 5.2, this figure also demonstrates how statements can be parallel coded (i.e. coded with more than one code).

Figure 5.2 Example Extract of Coding with Final Minority-Ethnic Template

Background: The following extract was from a minority-ethnic male interviewee who was discussing temporary promotions, a process that occurs within the organisation when an employee is appointed to provide short term cover to carry out the duties of a vacant post in a higher grade, often leading to permanent promotion.

Extract:

I have never had that opportunity, but people get them all the time. My perception is that they are not fair, that is my perception. I cannot see the basis of why those people got it, and why I did not get it [2.1.2.1 Networks: Informal Promotion Procedures]. *I don't believe, I don't know that the approach of my line managers generally has been fair, they wouldn't tend to see certain groups, shall we say, as needing that opportunity, for temporary promotion* [4.4 Line Manager Support: Career Impeding Behaviour; 2.1.2.1 Networks: Informal Promotion], *and one is scared of speaking out because you tend to put your head over the parapet and you get shot down and you get victimised and there is not very much you can do about it* [1.3. Visibility: Rocking the Boat]. *The people we are dealing with are very intelligent people so...some people are often not seen as, some people's instinct is, not…to deliberately not give certain people the opportunity – if I can put it that way* [4.4.2 Line Manager Support: Blocks Career Moves]. *And, another difficulty is not been given credit for the good work you've done and seeing someone else doing as much or less than you did and being give a lot of credit for that* [1.2.3 Visibility: Receiving Credit], *so at one point I began to put in 50-60 hour weeks to get noticed* [1.2.2 Visibility: Extra Work Effort]. *But if someone is already doing a job, it is always difficult for you to knock the person off the perch; to start with, that person will be already doing the job and knowing a lot about the job* [2.1.2.2 Networks: Predetermined Candidates].

Analysis: Majority-Ethnic Template

A similar procedure was followed for the development of the majority-ethnic template. The researcher read all the majority-ethnic interview transcripts for familiarisation. The purpose of creating a majority-ethnic template was to identify experiences that were similar or different to the minority-ethnic template. The minority-ethnic template was used to guide its development, using a reflexive process that involved discarding some original minority-ethnic template codes that did not appear, and inserting new codes where appropriate.

Many of the lower order codes from the minority-ethnic template were discarded, for example, codes relating to formal networks and positive action development were removed because none of the majority-ethnic interviewees discussed using these resources. Codes relating to performance evaluation and recognition in the workplace were also removed as they did not appear in any of the majority-ethnic transcripts. When codes were discarded, the placement of remaining codes was adjusted accordingly. This meant some level-three codes, for example, 'work content' reverted to being level-two codes.

Importantly, three codes were inserted into the majority-ethnic template. Firstly, 'self-promotion' was inserted under the networks theme, and 'building reputation' under the 'visibility' theme, both related to proactive promotion of the self within the organisation. The nature of the mentoring relationships discussed were also felt to be more informal for the majority-ethnic group and therefore, the mentoring codes relating to mentoring support and availability were removed and replaced with the level-two code 'informal developmental relationships' to reflect this. The final minority- and majority-ethnic templates are presented in Figure 5.3.

Reflexivity and Quality Checks

Reflexivity was extremely important throughout the development of both templates. As a White British researcher, this was necessary to avoid interpretations that were

culturally and ideologically biased (Andersen, 1993; Stanfield & Dennis, 1993). Consequently, coding decisions were constantly questioned and scrutinised.

In order to enhance reflexivity, a minority-ethnic research colleague, who was experienced in this type of qualitative analysis, examined and coded sections of the data. This is a procedure recommended by King (2004) to ensure any assumptions about the data are questioned and forces coders to be explicit about their coding decisions. Working with a second coder who is minority-ethnic is also advocated in ethnicity research, to reduce any bias that the (white) researcher may bring to the analytical process (Gunaratnam, 2003) .

The minority-ethnic research colleague coded data at two points in the development of each template: (1) Firstly, at the beginning of each template's development, the minority-ethnic research colleague examined and coded two transcripts; (2) secondly, after ten transcripts had been coded by the researcher for each template, the minority-ethnic research colleague examined and coded another two transcripts. At these points, similarities and differences in interpretation were discussed and reflected upon and the templates were amended accordingly.

After the final templates had been developed, the minority-ethnic research colleague and another research colleague, who was majority-ethnic, were each asked to code three interview transcripts from each group, using the final template. Whilst some researchers suggest it is important to calculate inter-rater reliability in qualitative coding, this process is not advocated by King (2004). Instead, the researchers were asked to identify if there were any areas of the text that were left uncoded and whether they felt any of the codes needed clarifying, re-scoping or adapting in any way. This process revealed that no changes were necessary in either template and the decision was reached that these were satisfactory for the final templates.

King (2010) suggests that respondent feedback is a useful method of checking the quality of template analysis. Therefore, the final templates were presented to a convenience sample of the original interviewees. This was done separately for a group of minority-ethnic (N=5) and majority-ethnic (N=4) managers who were shown the minority-ethnic template and majority-ethnic template respectively. Each

of the level-one themes was presented with an overview of the lower-level codes and these were discussed within the groups. There was general agreement on the templates, although as a result, the placement of one code was changed, though the meaning remained the same. The code 'line manager blocks' originally placed under the development theme, was moved to be placed under the line manager support theme, under the level-two code 'career impeding behaviour' and re-named 'blocks training and development' as the feedback from the groups suggested that this aspect was specifically related to line manager support, rather than development in general.

Respondent feedback is useful and allows the template to be interpreted within the organisational context. However, it is worth noting that participants may not want to challenge the researchers' interpretation and/or may not be able to detach themselves from their own experience to consider the experiences of those in the wider group or organisation (King, 2010; Willig, 2001). This was why this process was conducted in conjunction with the analysis and checks from other coders.

Figure 5.3 Minority- and Majority-Ethnic Final Templates

Minority-ethnic	Majority-ethnic
1. Visibility *1. Work Profile* *1. Role Type* *1. Role Choice* *2. Value of Diversity* 2. Work Content 1. Discretion 2. Profile of Assignments *2. Recognition* *1. Scrutiny* *2. Extra Work Effort* *3. Receiving Credit* *3. Rocking the Boat*	1. Visibility 1. Work Content 1. Discretion 2. Profile of Assignments *2. Building Reputation*
2. Networks 1. Informal Networks *1. Accessing Informal Networks* 2. Informal Selection and Promotion 1. Informal Promotion Procedures 2. Predetermined Candidates *2. Formal Networks* *1. Peer Support* *2. Self Help* *3. Backlash*	2. Networks 1. Informal Networks 1. Informal Selection and Promotion 1. Informal Promotion Procedures 2. Predetermined Candidates *2. Self-Promotion*
3. Development 1. Mainstream Development Courses *1. Legitimate Networkin*g 2. Prestige *2. Positive Action Development* *1. Channelled* *2. Ghettoised* 3. Mentoring *1. Availability of Suitable Mentors* *2. Mentoring Support*	3. Development 1. Mainstream Development Courses 1. Networking 2. Prestige *2. Informal Developmental Relationships*
4. Line Manager Support 1. Sponsorship 1. Advocate 2. Introduces Networks 2. Career Interest 1. Highlights Opportunities 2. Career Guidance *3. Performance Evaluation* *1. Quality of Feedback* *2. Appraisal* 4. Career Impeding Behaviour 1. Blocks Training and Development 2. Blocks Career Moves	4. Line Manager Support 1. Sponsorship 1. Advocate 2. Introduces Networks 2. Career Interest 1. Highlights Opportunities 2. Career Guidance 3. Career Impeding behaviour 1. Blocks Training and Development 2. Blocks Career Moves

Note. Codes unique to each template are denoted by italics

5.3 Findings

Inspection of the full templates revealed that similar experiences were perceived to influence career success by majority- and minority-ethnic interviewees. However, the themes manifested themselves differently for each group. Despite following the same interview format, interviewees talked for longer than majority-ethnic interviewees (average 60 and 40 minutes respectively). The most obvious difference was that the final template for minority-ethnic interviewees was far more detailed and expansive than that for majority-ethnic interviewees.

The following section describes the codes and themes that emerged from the templates and the similarities and differences between the minority- and majority-ethnic templates.

5.3.1 Visibility

The visibility theme encompasses several positive and negative aspects of achieving visibility in the organisation. Interviewees from both groups placed emphasis on striving for visibility in their work roles, highlighting the importance of their work content and type of assignments. However, for the minority-ethnic group, gaining visibility was more complicated: many reported visibility as being difficult to achieve in some instances, depending on their work profile, as well as gaining recognition in their roles. Minority-ethnic interviewees also discussed negative aspects of visibility, such as enhanced scrutiny. Conversely, rather than identifying difficulties in achieving visibility, majority-ethnic interviewees focused on being proactive in enhancing their visibility through building their reputation.

Role Type

Occupational segregation was an *a priori* code in the template, but whilst several minority-ethnic managers reported experiencing segregation, it was discussed in relation to its effect on visibility in general, such as being in roles that lacked prestige and exposure in the organisation. For example, five of the minority-ethnic

managers interviewed had worked at some stage during their career in a diversity-related role. Whilst they enjoyed this work, they reported that these roles were problematic for enhancing their visibility and damaged their opportunities for progression:

> *"Being a black female within the equality arena isn't sometimes a good thing. You get typecast. I have noticed when applying for other jobs, people can't see beyond the fact that I am a black woman who has worked in an environment that talks about black issues. So I am now looking to move on, but I am finding it very challenging."*
>
> [Participant 20: Minority-Ethnic, Female]

Whilst some of the minority-ethnic interviewees who had worked in diversity roles reported that it was their own choice, driven by interest in the diversity field, others reported having less choice about the types of roles they were placed in:

> *"I felt at that time that HR dumped me there partly because of my name. I told them what my preferences were and it just wasn't taken into account"*
>
> [Participant 5, Minority-Ethnic, Male]

Importantly, *all* minority-ethnic interviewees, whether they had been in 'segregated' roles or not, observed an unequal spread of minority-ethnic employees across the organisation. They reported being dissatisfied that there were certain areas where minority-ethnic employees were concentrated in 'ethnic roles', such as customer-facing roles, dealing with minority-ethnic communities:

> *"I wish [the organisation] would show that they value BME[1] staff because I don't see a lot of BME people in [work area], I don't see them in [other work area]"*
>
> [Participant 14, Minority-Ethnic, Male]

Majority-ethnic managers did not discuss the types of roles they, or others, were in as disadvantageous for their visibility in the organisation, or careers, therefore the code 'role type' is not included in the majority-ethnic template.

[1] BME = Black and Minority-Ethnic

Work Content

Both groups of managers discussed the content of their work; however, they spoke about it differently. Majority-ethnic interviewees argued that gaining entry into roles that offered them autonomy and job discretion was essential to enhance their visibility and achieve greater levels of career success. They also placed importance on working on high profile projects and assignments. Those who discussed this regarded these projects as important for career success because they provided exposure to senior decision makers and therefore direct routes to important network contacts:

> *"You have to get the jobs that have got a bit of an edge to them and then prove yourself. You need exposure really.*"
>
> [Participant 39: Majority-Ethnic, Male]

However, whilst minority-ethnic managers also acknowledged the role of work content in career success, many reported having a lack of job autonomy, control and discretion, and were less likely to be awarded with high profile work assignments:

> *"When it comes to putting people forward for special things, or if there is any high profile work to be done, I get put forward when it is skills based, because I am privileged to have education behind me, If it is something that requires a lot of thinking, I could probably get put forward for it, but if it is something that I have to compete with the other managers, I probably will not be. Sometimes I think that it hasn't been handed out fairly."*
>
> [Participant 1: Minority-Ethnic, Female]

Recognition

The second minority-ethnic level-two code, 'recognition', did not appear in any of the majority-ethnic interviewees' transcripts. However, many minority-ethnic interviewees reported being under more scrutiny than their colleagues and also described putting extra time and effort into work to overcome this and receive credit for work:

"...I had a series of really hostile line managers. Everything I did was wrong and every little thing was picked up, you know it was nasty."

[Participant 3: Minority-Ethnic Female]

"..if you stand out from the norm, then by default, it's human nature that you will be noticed a little bit more, and there is always a greater pressure to essentially follow the rules even more closely than some of the non-BME counterparts, there is more chance that when you get it wrong it will be spotted more quickly, and ultimately your work will get noticed more than others so it just means that, it's not that anybody has said anything to me, by that very fact, the reality of that fact, I have always worked harder, worked longer hours and maybe just go the extra mile than some of my counterparts."

[Participant 17: Minority-ethnic, Male]

"another difficulty is not been given credit for the good work you've done and seeing someone else doing as much or less than you did and being given a lot of credit for that, so at one point I began to put in 50-60 hour weeks to get noticed"

[Participant 9: Minority-Ethnic, Female]

This suggests, somewhat paradoxically, that although they reported experiencing greater scrutiny, minority-ethnic interviewees also adopted strategies to enhance their visibility in their work units.

Rocking the Boat

The final level-two code under 'visibility' related to a fear from several minority-ethnic managers about raising their ethnicity as an issue in organisations. As demonstrated by this quote, it was seen as a definite taboo and something that could potentially affect career success.

"I wear the shoes and I know where they hurt, other people would disagree with me but my perception is that being BME has held me back, based on my experience. That is my perception, whether or not other people agree with me is another matter, but that is a very dangerous thing for anybody to say, once you say it you are in big trouble, you are standing out like a leper, you are then 'trouble'. You will not make progress anywhere, not just where you were, but any other person will be very wary about taking you on, so it's a kind of, it's very career limiting to say things like that.

[Participant 13: Minority-Ethnic, Female.]

Building Reputation

An important difference between the groups was that majority-ethnic, but not minority-ethnic, interviewees discussed the importance of developing a positive reputation in the organisation. Several interviewees reported that building reputation was more important for career success than more formal channels of progression (e.g. assessment centre performance). They discussed actively striving to enhance their reputation and using their reputation as a tool to achieve career success. Furthermore, enhancing reputation was regarded by many as an important step for establishing influential network contacts. Several majority-ethnic interviewees reported taking roles specifically because of their potential benefits for enhancing reputation. However, whilst minority-ethnic interviewees identified the importance of working on high profile projects and being afforded job discretion, they did not discuss taking an active role to build their own reputation.

> *"I took on that role and a few projects that were outside my remit, I did that because I knew I would get a good name out of that, someone who could be relied on and senior people would hear more about me"*
>
> [Participant 28: Majority-Ethnic, Female.]

5.3.2 Networks

The network theme includes two types of networking discussed by interviewees. Firstly, both groups discussed the importance of informal networking, particularly its role in the promotion system. However, their reactions to networking behaviour were different: whilst minority-ethnic interviewees reported difficulty accessing informal networks and were concerned with the fairness of informal processes, majority-ethnic interviewees emphasised the role of actively promoting themselves and engaging in the informal nature of the organisation. Secondly, minority-ethnic (but not majority-ethnic) interviewees reported participating in a formal network, which related to the organisation's minority-ethnic support forum, as a means of overcoming some of the difficulties associated with informal networks.

Informal Networks

Interviewees from both groups identified that informal networks were important for career success, particularly in informal promotion situations. They reported that hiring-managers would promote or select individuals without going through a centralised assessment centre, and whilst these procedures were often formal (e.g. interview boards), successful candidates were often those who already knew the hiring manager and were lined up for the role. There was also a system where individuals could be temporarily promoted without going through formal procedures, which most interviewees considered as important for gaining permanent promotion at a later date. Several interviewees from both groups reported that those who were rewarded with temporary promotion were usually those who were well networked and had contact with senior decision makers. Not being within those informal networks was also perceived as a significant barrier to career success:

> *"I know a number of people who are trying to move on and the number of jobs that aren't advertised. You find someone who's new in a role and that job hasn't been advertised. My head of unit, since he arrived he's kind of pulled the unit and the unit is now comprised of people who he's worked with before and he likes and he has recruited into those jobs because he likes them and not because that job has actually been advertised. So networks are really, really important.*"
>
> [Participant 37, Majority-Ethnic, Female]

> "*You are in the right place at the right time; obviously I have never been in the right place at the right time to be promoted. Some of it is probably knowing people and they know you and a job comes up and they say 'oh you are the man for it'. But the system is based on the formal and the informal. If you know people who are good and you trust them, then you are likely to work with them, if you don't, you are in the great unknown and it's too hard*".
>
> [Participant 6: Minority-Ethnic, Male]

There were differences in how the minority- and majority-ethnic interviewees regarded these informal systems. Minority-ethnic interviewees reported informal processes as unfair. The next quote is from an interviewee who described how her line manager had ignored her interest in an opportunity for temporary promotion and offered it to someone else in the team:

"I think within [the organisation], there hasn't been open and fair recruitment because to be honest with you, I actually got that fed up that I resigned from [the organisation], on the basis that there was an opportunity for promotion, temporary promotion"

"It had been fixed basically for somebody else to get the job, so it wasn't open and fair recruitment"

[Participant 12, Minority-Ethnic, Female]

Many of the minority-ethnic interviewees attributed this difficulty in accessing informal networks to their ethnicity:

"it's a very incestuous place. It's who you know, who you are friends with, who you drink with that gets you promoted, I saw a lot of that. And as an Asian woman I never went to pubs, so I was always excluded. I was never there with the pub banter so it was like, they had all been out, I didn't go out with them, so I was never really part of the gang"

[Participant 16: Minority-Ethnic, Female]

"*I think you do get gangs of people who work together and some senior person moves on and brings three or four of their friends along with. This kind of thing does happen, it happens everywhere. So yes I think it is quite clique-ey. The criteria seems to be that you have to behave in a certain way and people think you have to fit the mould and it's almost as though, if you don't fit the mould of behaving in a certain way, confidently, with a few jokes and quips here and there and networking efficiently then you have problems. And I think that can be harder for people if you are from a different ethnic background*"

[Participant 5: Minority-Ethnic, Male]

Of particular note however, was that not only did minority-ethnic interviewees report having difficulty accessing informal networks, many also reported a strong faith in the formal systems of the organisation, such as assessment centres and competency-based assessment. Several also considered informal networking as unfair and a form of behaviour that they did not want to engage in:

"*Ability to drink is not one of their competencies, and yet that's what the favourites in my current unit are seen to be doing most, there is a real clique in my unit at the moment. The favourites are the people that are schmoozing with the head of unit. I don't want to be involved in it."*

[Participant 8: Minority-Ethnic, Female]

In comparison, majority-ethnic interviewees were more ambivalent towards informal networks and how they influenced the promotion system. Many regarded networking as a normal feature of organisational life; even when they reported their career success had been held back by informal networks. They typically saw it as their responsibility to enhance their personal networks and used self-promotion to enhance their networks and chances of successful promotion. Examples of this included asking contacts to recommend them to hiring managers, and contacting the hiring department to increase managers' awareness of them:

> *"I've gone for jobs and felt the interview was biased in the sense that they already knew who they wanted, and that's the kind of worst position to be in, because you think "why did you bother interviewing me". But it's about how well you promote yourself beforehand."*
>
> [Participant 35: Majority-Ethnic, Male]

> "*the posts were advertised, and these were sought-after posts, you know, crème de la crème and I kept on bombarding the guy who was advertising with emails, and phone calls and I knew of him before, from a previous job, so it was like trying to use our personal relationship to try and get this job."*
>
> [Participant 32: Majority-Ethnic, Female]

> *"I got [the promotion] through again, just knowing. I ended up going with the [manager] but when I knew I was coming up to a move, coming up to the end of 2007 I just let people know that, "look, I'm going to be looking for a job have you got anything for me?""*
>
> [Participant 21: Majority-Ethnic, Male]

Whilst self-promotion was not mentioned by minority-ethnic managers for their own careers, several did discuss others' use of this tactic for career success. As with informal networking behaviour, these minority-ethnic interviewees expressed their dissatisfaction with others' self-promotion tactics:

> *"He got a job, by getting a friend of his to ring the line manager and say what a good egg he was, and I just felt that that was wrong"*
>
> [Participant 14, Minority-Ethnic, Male]

Formal Networks

Within the minority-ethnic template there was also a second level-two code related to the formal support network, which was created and sponsored by the organisation. Although there were similar support networks for majority-ethnic employees, these were not discussed by majority-ethnic interviewees. The minority-ethnic interviewees who had joined this forum reported it was a good source of peer support and provided them with opportunities to learn from minority-ethnic role models. It was also used for gaining skills through training and listening to influential speakers and as a method for raising diversity concerns as a united front to senior management. However, several minority-ethnic managers who were active members in this support forum reported receiving a negative backlash for their membership activity from colleagues and the wider organisation:

> *"I had been tarred, I had been marked for raising those issues, but the one thing I had believed in was exactly as I say, was* [the support forum]. *I sometimes felt like I had kind of like risked my career at the cost of trying to show people what it was like to be a BME person"*
>
> [Participant 16: Minority-Ethnic, Female]

Accordingly, some minority-ethnic interviewees were concerned about others' perception of their participation in such groups. Nevertheless, the support forum was perceived as important for career success and a key way for overcoming some of the difficulties interviewees associated with the informal nature of the organisation. Importantly, those who discussed the support forum considered it a legitimate, or as can be seen from the quote below, a 'professional' form of networking and did not report associating networking within the group with the negative connotations they had of informal networking behaviours:

> *"In the* [support forum], *I was taught how to chair meetings, how to network with people, how to speak to senior management, how to socialise in a professional way, whereas in* [my department], *I wasn't heard, I wasn't developed, I wasn't talked to, and I was looked down at"*
>
> [Participant 11: Minority-Ethnic, Male]

5.3.3 Development

Mentoring was used as an *a priori* code in the initial template; however, interviewees reported that it was development in general, including mentoring, that was important for their careers. Minority- and majority-ethnic interviewees reported development courses as useful for networking opportunities and prestige. Importantly, minority-ethnic interviewees considered the networking within these formal settings as professional and legitimate. Whilst interviewees from both groups reported difficulty accessing such courses, minority-ethnic interviewees reported that this was because they were more likely to be channelled into positive action development. In addition, several of the minority-ethnic interviewees reported a preference for formal, structured mentoring, whereas majority-ethnic interviewees discussed how they benefitted from more informal, developmental relationships.

Development Courses

Both minority- and majority-ethnic interviewees discussed the importance of attending development courses. However, instead of enhancing skills, interviewees reported their main benefit as providing networking opportunities. Whilst this networking aspect of development courses could have been placed under the network theme, it was subsumed under development because it related to interviewees' motivation for attending development courses, rather than networking more generally. Minority-ethnic interviewees discussed this form of networking as more professional or legitimate than networking outside of formal structures. There were also a number of development courses offered by the organisation and each differed in level of prestige. Several courses were perceived as providing a privileged identity for attendees and were therefore reported as more desirable to attend:

> *"I think what is good is that when you've got that* [development program X] *badge on you, you are recognised by people as having passed a very difficult test to get in and you know, being good and I think that helps and I think a lot of senior people will look down and think "they're a* [development program X], *maybe I'll give the work to them or I'll just look at what their career's doing". It separates you out from everybody else, so it's good in that sense and the training's quite good, […]. And*

> *not just in terms of what it teaches you but also in developing a network of* [attendees] *across the department and across* [the organisation] *as well which is really helpful"*
>
> [Participant 27: Majority-Ethnic, Female]

> *"Development programmes enhance the skills I already have, I don't think they do anything else; they are good network opportunities, and nothing more than that."*
>
> [Participant 15 Minority-Ethnic, Female]

Both minority- and majority-ethnic interviewees reported difficulty in accessing mainstream development courses. Majority-ethnic interviewees most often cited budget constraints, available time, and competition for places as reasons they were unable to attend such courses:

> *"I have wanted to do* [development course] *and I have wanted to do that since I started in* [the role]. *But I have had to cancel it three times since I have been in* [the role] *'cause, there has been too much work on and I have been asked to postpone it".*
>
> [Participant 30: Majority-Ethnic, Male]

However, minority- ethnic interviewees reported being pressured or channelled into positive action courses, which cater specifically for minority-ethnic, female and disabled employees. They also expressed the opinion that positive action programmes were less desirable because they did not offer the same prestige as mainstream courses. Furthermore, many minority-ethnic interviewees did not want to be associated with diversity initiatives:

> "*My manager has a sheep dip approach to development opportunities– "you're black so this is all the stuff that is available for black people, so you go on it too." Whereas what I am looking for is something that's more specific to my needs and where I would like to go with my career, which might mean something more mainstream*".
>
> [Participant 9: Minority-Ethnic, Female]

> *"I don't think departments take it that seriously, the brand, so I don't know how useful* [positive action courses] *are. People were very eager*

for me to go on [the positive action course] *because it was the BME one and that's why I think – there is always the potential of being ghettoised rather than being part of the mainstream, and I cautioned against that"*

[Participant 17, Minority-Ethnic, Male]

Mentoring

Neither minority- or majority-ethnic interviewees reported difficulty accessing mentoring relationships, but minority-ethnic interviewees reported considerable difficulty finding mentors they considered suitable. 'Suitability' varied from having cross-race mentoring with people of high status, to same-race mentorships with potential role models. Several minority-ethnic interviewees reported using cross-race mentoring to gain alternative perspectives on perceived career barriers:

"[my mentor] has helped me and the challenges, we talk through challenges and being able to see things from a different perspective. If you are not progressing as you think you should there is a tendency to think that there might be one contributing factor – I'm black. But I think I have been able to see things from a different perspective. Everybody else is on a similar playing field at times, there are situations where race might be a factor, but it isn't always the case. Everyone else has to do something extra – you bring yourself up to a level where you can compete effectively. Having a perspective – she is quite sincere and I can discuss anything with her and she can give me the benefit of her experience. It helps me focus on what I really want to do in my career. I have learnt new skills, how to present myself better.

[Participant 2, Minority-Ethnic, Female]

Importantly, the type of mentoring relationship discussed by minority- and majority-ethnic interviewees was different. Majority-ethnic interviewees who spoke about mentoring, reported that they relied on a range of informal developmental relationships gained through networking, rather than single mentorships. They also reported meetings with these 'mentors' were relaxed and informal as opposed to fixed, formal meetings with timescales or agendas:

"It's networking within a wider family, you get to know people and find out where to go for information, people whose judgement you trust and then in turn play that role yourself for others and their careers"

[Participant 19, Majority-Ethnic, Female]

Instead of these informal relationships, minority-ethnic interviewees who talked about mentoring focused on formal mentoring programmes, where mentor and mentees were matched formally and tracked by programme managers. However, minority-ethnic interviewees reported receiving a lack of support from the organisation for such mentorships. Importantly, even when entering into more informal mentoring arrangements, minority-ethnic managers seemed to prefer a more structured, formal and accountable type of mentoring:

"He was actually quite senior, he was actually my mentor but I will be very honest, there was no support, not as much as I would have expected. I think he was too busy with other things, the mentoring was there but I had to instigate it, it was too shambolic"

[Participant 4: Minority-Ethnic Female]

5.3.4 Line Manager Support

Interviewees from both groups discussed the significant role their line managers played in career success. However, minority- and majority-ethnic interviewees reported positive and negative experiences with line managers' level of sponsorship, career interest and career impeding behaviour, suggesting that employees' experiences may depend on the individual relationship between line manager and subordinate. An important difference between the groups was that minority-ethnic, but not majority-ethnic interviewees reported receiving low quality feedback from their line managers.

Sponsorship

In this study, sponsorship was identified as an important positive influence on career success by both minority- and majority-ethnic interviewees. Common examples described by managers included line managers acting as advocates for their employees to other hiring managers, and introducing them to senior decision makers

through informal networks. However, minority-ethnic interviewees reported incidents where their line managers, although acting as a sponsor for their direct team, did not afford them the same opportunity. Yet, minority-ethnic interviewees also reported line managers who offered far more support than others:

> *"[my line manager] was actively looking for opportunities for me, putting my name forward if something came up that she thought I would be good at, it felt like she was looking out for me"*
>
> [Participant 31, Majority-Ethnic, Female]

Career Interest

The second aspect of line manager support was the degree to which line managers expressed interest in interviewees' careers. Similar to the sponsorship role, useful line managers were reported as those who highlighted career opportunities, although this did not necessarily include notifying others in the organisation about the employees' suitability. However, several majority-ethnic interviewees reported that although they enjoyed such support they preferred to rely on informal network contacts and developmental relationships for career guidance, as well as, or instead of their line manager. Several minority-ethnic interviewees suggested that they were not supported by their line managers, yet others felt they had highly supportive line managers, who very much nurtured their career development:

> *"people saw me with* [line manager] *and she has kind of been my sponsor, and I tended to turn to for advice, in fact I have three people I turn to for advice. She was the sponsor, I was mentored by one of the very young successful people as a result of that and I go to the pub with another one of those and they are the people I go to when I need advice about jobs or when I need a job."*
>
> [Participant 21, Majority-Ethnic, Male]

> "*She was very supportive, in the discussions she very tactfully and subtly started me thinking about 'what do you really want to do', 'where do you see your career going....' "if so these are the avenues that are open to you", "you should be applying for these posts", "if not, just think wider". And she didn't actually say where to go for the posts; it was just that support that she gave me that I thought was a definite step change"*
>
> [Participant 20: Minority-Ethnic, Female]

Performance Evaluation

Performance evaluation was originally a higher order, *a priori* code in the template. However, although two minority-ethnic interviewees raised concerns about potential bias in performance evaluations, it did not feature in interviews with sufficient emphasis to warrant a separate level-one code in the template so was placed under the more general 'line manager support' code. Performance evaluation is one of the key areas of ethnicity research in organisational psychology (e.g. Dewberry, 2001; Stauffer & Buckley, 2005). However, if such bias does occur it may be that the respondents themselves would be less aware of it.

Several minority-ethnic interviewees did comment that the feedback they received from line managers typically focused on positive points of their work rather than any negative aspects. Importantly, this was not discussed by majority-ethnic interviewees. A lack of detailed feedback about areas where they were performing less well meant minority-ethnic interviewees reported having little chance to change or improve any poorer areas:

> "*There is nothing worse than saying 'well we think you are wonderful', because that doesn't help me - it doesn't tell me what more I need to do. I just got very fluffy feedback*"
>
> [Participant 10, Minority-Ethnic, Female]

Some of these minority-ethnic interviewees reported that they had experienced end of year appraisals that were surprising and suddenly unforgiving after receiving positive feedback throughout the year. They believed that line managers were apprehensive about providing negative verbal feedback, for fear of appearing discriminatory, but were more candid when providing feedback in written appraisal forms.

Career Impeding Behaviour

Many minority- and majority-ethnic interviewees reported that they had experienced line managers who blocked their requests for training, development and career moves. Whilst minority-ethnic interviewees described these behaviours as

deliberately exclusionary, majority-ethnic managers were more likely to attribute these instances to sources such as lack of budget.

> "*He has stopped them all, but I mean it has not stopped me from developing, because obviously if you do know how to, there are other ways of doing it, but yes, he has categorically said I can't attend the* [development course], *even though I was accepted on it*,"
>
> [Participant 18, Minority-Ethnic, Female]

The variation in the types of line management experiences reported by minority- and majority-ethnic interviewees suggest that outcomes may vary depending on the individual line manager and the relationship he or she has with each employee.

5.4 Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to examine the career experiences that minority-ethnic managers identify as important for their career success. Using qualitative methodology it was possible to draw on existing research, but also to explore minority-ethnic managers' career experiences to provide a more in-depth knowledge of differential career success than has thus far been established. By comparing the perceptions of minority- and majority-ethnic managers, it was also possible to determine the similarities and differences in their career experiences.

An obvious difference between minority- and majority-ethnic managers was that the former produced a greater amount of discourse. There are two possible reasons for this: Firstly, majority-ethnic interviewees reported encountering fewer career barriers even when prompted about specific incidents; indeed many felt they had been completely unimpeded in their career. Secondly, although managers were at the same hierarchical level and irrespective of whether minority-ethnic managers were actually worse off, minority-ethnic managers may have perceived experiences as more meaningful, unexpected, negative of challenging, stimulating a process of cognitive sense-making (e.g. Weick, 1995; Wong & Weiner, 1981).

Template analysis identified four themes that were important for career success: visibility, networks, development and line manager support. Some of these findings

corroborate existing research, and therefore add to an evidence base concerning factors that are important for differential career success. However, this study has also provided depth to existing findings, by detailing *how* some of these factors operate, their relevance to managers, and has also identified factors that have received less or no attention in the career and diversity literatures.

The visibility theme reflects research on occupational segregation, which has found that minority-ethnic employees may be directed or attracted to roles that may lack prestige or opportunity for advancement (e.g. diversity roles: Collins, 1993; Maume, 1999). However, existing research has given less consideration to why segregation occurs from employees' perspectives. By examining managers' experiences, this study identified possible reasons for occupational segregation (e.g. choice/lack of choice in career decisions). It was also found that perceived segregation can affect minority-ethnic employees' judgements about the extent to which the organisation values diversity, even when they themselves were not in segregated roles.

The visibility theme also supports existing findings that minority-ethnic groups perceive a lack of job discretion and autonomy, which has been associated with lower salary, promotions and career satisfaction (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Igbaria & Wormley, 1995). However, this study also identified the strategies minority-ethnic managers adopt in order to gain visibility (e.g. extra effort). Yet the findings also related to research on tokenism, suggesting that visibility can lead to enhanced scrutiny (Kanter, 1977). This study therefore highlights a paradox experienced by minority-ethnic managers; where they simultaneously value visibility, yet also experience its adverse effects. This suggests that they may have to manage a careful balancing act between the positive and negative consequences of visibility.

The negative aspects of visibility were not discussed by majority-ethnic managers, who were more concerned with enhancing their reputations. Whilst existing research has identified reputation as important for work and career outcomes (e.g. Liu et al., 2007), reputation has traditionally been considered as an outcome or by-product of performance or networking. Instead, majority-ethnic managers in this study reported using reputation as a tool to enhance networks, suggesting it is an important career strategy, rather than just an outcome.

The fact that both groups identified informal networks as important for career success is consistent with research that has found they are associated with salary, promotions and career satisfaction (e.g. Seibert et al, 2001). However, in this study, it was the promotion system, particularly the use of temporary promotions in the organisation, where networks were reported as having most impact. This suggests that a lack of clarity in organisational policies and processes can influence the role played by informal networks.

As with research on ethnicity and networking, minority-ethnic managers in this study reported having difficulties establishing career enhancing, hetereophilous (i.e. white) network contacts (e.g. Ibarra, 1995). However, in this study, it was not just access to these networks that minority-ethnic managers discussed; they also reported these informal networks and others' associated behaviour, such as self-promotion, as unfair, preferring to engage in networking in formal settings such as the support forum or development courses. In doing so, minority-ethnic managers' accounts also supported existing assertions about the benefits of formal support networks, for peer support and training (Friedman, 1996; Friedman & Holtom, 2002), as well as the negative reactions, or backlash, members may receive from others (Friedman & Carter, 1993; Friedman & Deinard, 1991).

The role of mentoring was also reported to be beneficial for career success, but similar to the mentoring literature, this study also identified that minority-ethnic managers may find it difficult to form career-enhancing mentorships (Thomas, 1990; Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). Yet, in this study, it was the type of mentoring that was important, suggesting that minority-ethnic managers may prefer, or be more able to form formal mentorships, as opposed to informal developmental relationships, which were utilised by majority-ethnic managers and have been identified as an important strategy for career success (Rock, 2006).

Reasons for engaging in development were also identified, and importantly, unlike existing human capital research (e.g. Judge et al., 2010; Wayne et al., 1999), rather than training and skill development, these emphasised the opportunity to network and gain prestige in the organisation. Positive action courses were also discussed by

minority-ethnic managers; existing research on affirmative action suggests that these development initiatives can create a backlash from other employees who perceive these courses as a form of special treatment (Heilman et al., 1992). However, in this study, minority-ethnic managers were more concerned with being channelled into these courses rather than mainstream training and development which would provide opportunities to network with powerful (typically white male) organisational members.

Minority-ethnic interviewees also reported experiencing less support from their line managers, and highlighted the important role of sponsorship and guidance for career success as found in existing ethnicity research (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Igbaria & Wormley, 1992). However, as identified by LMX research, it was also apparent that there were differing levels of support, suggesting that lower support was not simply related to ethnic dissimilarity between supervisor and subordinate but depended on individuals within each relationship. This suggests that deep level diversity, such as similarities in attitudes and values, may be important when considering the role of line managers in individuals' careers (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998).

When examining the differences between the experiences of minority- and majority-ethnic managers, there were a set of factors that were unique to the minority-ethnic group, such as those associated with recognition, positive development schemes and the assistance of formal networks. However, many of the factors were experienced by both minority- and majority-ethnic managers. What differed was their interpretation of these incidents and organisational experiences.

5.4.1 Overarching Theme: The Informal Organisation

The differences between minority- and majority-ethnic interviewees are reflected in an overarching or integrative theme (King, 2004) concerning their experiences of the informal nature of the organisation. Whilst majority-ethnic interviewees appeared to embrace informal processes, minority-ethnic interviewees seemed to place more faith in formal systems to advance their career. These differences permeated all four themes in the template.

In order to enhance their visibility, minority-ethnic interviewees focused on working harder within their roles, whereas majority-ethnic interviewees concentrated on proactively building their reputation outside of formal structures. Minority-ethnic interviewees reported experiencing difficulty in accessing informal networks, less likely to be introduced to networks by line managers, and instead seemed to rely on networking in structured environments, such as the support forum and development courses. In contrast, majority-ethnic interviewees described actively engaging in informal networks and adopting self-promotion as a strategy to develop contacts and navigate informal processes. Furthermore, whilst minority-ethnic interviewees reported a preference for formalised, structured mentoring, majority-ethnic interviewees described benefitting from a range of more informal developmental relationships.

When discussing the behaviours adopted relating to informal processes, such as self-promotion and informal networking, minority-ethnic interviewees perceived them as unfair, negative or even underhand. They also reported feeling frustrated when informal processes interfered with formal mechanisms, such as the use of temporary promotion in the organisation. However, majority-ethnic interviewees regarded these processes as a normal feature of organisational life, which had to be engaged with and navigated, in order to succeed.

The differences in experiences reported by minority- and majority-ethnic interviewees, suggest that the former may consider these informal processes and associated behaviour as political. Indeed, existing research does suggest that political behaviour can be perceived as legitimate, sanctioned by the organisation and beneficial to workgroups, (e.g. developing networks to increase resources for subordinates), but it can also be viewed as illegitimate, divisive and dysfunctional for organisations (e.g. favourtism-based salary or promotion decisions: Treadway et al., 2005). However, it is not clear why minority-ethnic interviewees' experiences fitted more closely with this latter description.

It is possible that minority-ethnic interviewees felt they had little control over these situations because they lacked power. Even though minority- and majority-ethnic

interviewees were matched for hierarchical level, power differences in wider society between ethnic groups can permeate organisations and influence how groups are treated in the workplace (Alderfer & Smith, 1982; Ragins, 2007b). As such, majority-ethnic individuals may find it easier to accept and participate in informal processes, because they have the power to influence them. Therefore, they may feel more confident that proactive strategies, such as self-promotion, building reputation and establishing developmental relationships will be beneficial. In contrast, minority-ethnic employees, who typically hold less power, may feel less able to engage in these informal processes and perceive barriers to their use of proactive 'political' behaviours, such as self-promotion or reputation building. Consequently, they may rely more on formal organisational procedures and perceive informal systems as unfair and unjust (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001).

One way of enhancing minority-ethnic individuals' power and control over informal processes may be to increase their political skill. Ferris et al (1993) propose that information about the set of skills, rules and context of politics are only passed to members of the majority group, usually white males. In-group (e.g. white male) newcomers are 'shown the ropes', whereas minority groups such as women and minority-ethnic employees are kept 'out of the loop' in terms of the rules of political games in the workplace. Lower levels of political skill amongst minority-ethnic employees may well explain why they are less willing or less able to engage in informal organisational processes. However, thus far, there has been no research on political skill and ethnicity.

Whilst it is beyond the scope of this study to identify why group differences occurred, what is clear, is that minority- and majority-ethnic managers at the same hierarchal level reported differences in their career experiences and how they perceived informal situations and behaviour, and these are worthy of further attention.

5.4.2 Strengths, Limitations and Future Research

The use of storytelling methodology was a strength of this research. Using a qualitative approach has provided an understanding about career experiences of minority-ethnic managers, giving voice to a group who have thus far been unheard. Importantly, this methodology has meant that these findings have not been constrained by the limited variables used in previous research on differential career success (e.g. Greenhaus et al., 1990; Igbaria & Wormley, 1995; Ng et al., 2005) and has been able to identify experiences that have impeded as well as enhanced career success. Furthermore, by interviewing managers, who hold a privileged position due to their skills, qualifications and experience, compared to lower level employees, this study has provided an understanding of how ethnicity influences workplace experiences, beyond those relating to organisational entry. Limiting the research to a single public sector organisation has also meant that findings can be interpreted in relation to the organisations' context and culture.

In the current study, line managers appeared to play a significant role in the career experiences of participating interviewees. Not only did they offer (or not) a sponsorship function, but they also had the power to provide career advice and access to development, assign work that enhanced visibility and introduce managers to informal networks and senior decision makers. Having this role means that managers must be aware of the importance of treating all subordinates fairly, particularly in terms of their informal actions, such as sponsorship. Therefore, future research should focus on understanding how to improve the quality of leader-member exchange relationships, particularly in racially dissimilar dyads, where there is little existing research (see Breland et al. (2007) for an exception).

This study has highlighted a number of other avenues for future research. For example, minority-ethnic interviewees in this study reported feeling channelled into positive action development courses. Future research should examine the worth of positive action development courses and how they are promoted in organisations. Research should also explore in greater detail, the causes for occupational segregation, as well as its effect on organisations' climate for diversity. However, although these are broad areas, which require greater understanding, given the

paucity of existing research on ethnicity and career success, each code within the templates could provide an important focus for researchers.

The key finding from this study has been that minority- and majority-ethnic interviewees appear to perceive the informal nature of organisations differently. Furthermore, this study has identified that minority-ethnic employees may be less able to engage in behaviours, such as self-promotion, informal networking and building reputation. But, to date, there has been little research examining how minority-ethnic groups react to, or navigate informal or political workplace environments. By using qualitative methodology, this study has offered a rich insight into these differences; however a limitation of qualitative research is the inability to collect data from large samples. Quantitative research provides the opportunity to test existing theory (e.g. differences in political skill) and measure group differences across wider samples. Therefore, the next chapter builds on the findings identified in this study, by examining group differences in political skill in a quantitative questionnaire study.

5.4.3 Summary

This study has provided a comparison of minority- and majority-ethnic managers' career experiences that they identify as important for their career sucecss. It has demonstrated the utility of qualitative methods for gaining a rich understanding of individuals' workplace experiences in ethnicity and career research. The study has highlighted the importance of the informal nature of organisations and the perceived role this has in employees' careers. It has also identified that the perceptions of such informal mechanisms may be a key differentiator in how groups navigate their careers. This last point is explored in greater detail in the next chapter.

Chapter Six: Differential Political Skill and Career Success

6.1 Introduction

This study builds on the findings from study two, which identified the importance of informal organisational mechanisms in interviewees' career experiences. The minority-ethnic interviewees in study two appeared less able to engage in these informal processes, or adopt behaviour that may be perceived as political, such as informal networking, reputation building or self-promotion. There is increasing evidence that behaving politically and developing political skill can enhance career success (Todd et al, 2009). However, there has been very little research examining these factors in minority-ethnic employees. Researchers have even hypothesised, but not yet tested, that minority-ethnic individuals may be 'deficient' in certain political skills because of socialisation and group behaviour within organisations (Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, et al., 1996). Therefore, this study aimed to determine whether minority-ethnic employees have lower levels of political skill and whether this may be associated with differential career success. In doing so it contributes towards ethnicity and career success research by exploring the psychological factors, which may influence how minority-ethnic groups engage in informal organisational processes.

6.1.1 Politics in Organisations

Organisations have been defined as 'political arenas', where individuals and groups engage in political activity to compete for power, influence and resources (Bies & Tripp, 1995; Ferris, Harrell-Cook, & Dulebohn, 2000; Mintzberg, 1985; Pettigrew, 1973; Pfeffer, 1981). Research suggests that many organisational processes are indeed political in nature, such as selection (Ferris & Judge, 1991; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989), performance evaluation (Wayne & Kacmar, 1991; Wayne & Liden, 1995), salary (Dreher et al., 1989) and promotion decisions (Ferris, Buckley, & Allen, 1992; Thacker & Wayne, 1995). Thus, political behaviour is often regarded as essential to gain organisational and career success (Ferris, Davidson, et al., 2005; Judge & Bretz, 1994). Examples of such behaviour include lobbying hiring managers, bypassing formal channels in order to gain approval and resources and adopting tactics such as

ingratiation or self-promotion to influence others (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003).

Some political behaviour is regarded as illegitimate, divisive and dysfunctional for organisations, such as favouritism-based salary or promotion decisions. As such, many definitions of political behaviour highlight the role of self-interest, for example, Kacmar and Baron (1999, p.4) define political behaviour as "actions by individuals directed towards the goal of furthering their own self-interests without regard for the well-being of others or their organization". However, political behaviour can also be viewed as legitimate, sanctioned by the organisation and beneficial to workgroups, such as developing network relationships to increase resources for subordinates (Treadway et al., 2005). This study focuses on 'political skill', which researchers argue is a neutral form of political behaviour, having positive or negative outcomes, depending on the context (Ammeter, Douglas, Gardner, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2002).

6.1.2 Political Skill

Ferris' political skill (Ferris, Davidson, et al., 2005; Ferris, Fedor, & King, 1994; Ferris et al., 2007) is a construct that has received a great deal of attention in the management and organisational literature in recent years (Blickle, Ferris, et al., 2011; Brouer, Duke, Treadway, & Ferris, 2009; Kolodinsky, Treadway, & Ferris, 2007). Political skill is regarded as an asset which can enhance organisational and career outcomes (Ferris, Davidson, et al., 2005) and has been defined as "the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives" (Ahearn, Ferris, Hochwarter, Douglas, & Ammeter, 2004, p. 311). Individuals who are politically skilled are purported to have an understanding of social situations and knowledge about when to use appropriate political behaviours (Ferris, Davidson, et al., 2005).

Ferris has proposed that political skill comprises four dimensions: social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability and apparent sincerity (Ferris, Treadway, et al., 2005). Social astuteness refers to understanding social interactions and

interpreting behaviour. Interpersonal influence is the ability to persuade and influence others and being able to adapt the approach in different situations. Networking ability relates to those who are skilled in developing diverse network ties and are able to build coalitions and alliances at work. Lastly, apparent sincerity refers to those individuals who appear to be trustful, authentic and genuine. This aspect of political skill is argued to determine the success of influence attempts because those high in apparent sincerity do not appear self-serving and are able to hide ulterior motives (Ferris, Davidson, et al., 2005).

Ferris, Treadway et al (2005) developed and validated the political skill inventory that measures the four dimensions and has been the primary tool for examining political skill in the literature (e.g. Breland, Treadway, Duke, & Adams, 2007; Harris, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Shaw, 2007; Todd et al, 2009). Ferris, Treadway et al (2005) demonstrated evidence for the scale's construct validity, finding that it was positively related to political savvy, emotional intelligence and self-monitoring, but not enough to suggest construct redundancy. They also established that political skill had a negative relationship with trait anxiety, but no relationship with general mental ability. Evidence for criterion-related validity comes from studies examining work and career outcomes, which are discussed in the following section.

Workplace Benefits of Political Skill

Theoretically, individuals who are high on political skill are able to understand their own and others' behaviour in social situations and adapt their responses accordingly. They are also purportedly able to inspire trust in others by being perceived as sincere, genuine and confident (Ferris et al., 2007). Pfeffer (1992) argues that political skill can therefore help individuals to accomplish personal and professional goals by gaining resources that increase their power within the workplace. As such, political skill is particularly relevant for minority-ethnic employees who may lack power in organisations (Ragins, 2007b).

The types of resources that political skill can enhance include knowledge, information, social support, credit or even self-esteem (Ferris et al., 2007).

Accordingly, political skill has been associated with a variety of positive organisational outcomes, such as higher supervisory and performance ratings, and enhanced reputation (e.g. Harris et al., 2007; Liu et al., 2007; Semadar, Robins, & Ferris, 2006).

According to Ferris, Davidson et al (2005), political skill may result in such positive outcomes because individuals are more successful at impression management and understand when to display appropriate behaviours. It is also suggested that the apparent sincerity and social astuteness aspects of political skill mean that individuals can conceal ulterior motives from others and therefore gain a reputation as trustworthy, likeable, credible and competent (Ferris et al., 2007; Treadway, Ferris, Duke, Adams, & Thatcher, 2007).

Perrewé et al (2004) suggests that political skill also acts as an antidote to stressors, such as role conflict, role overload and job tension because it reduces the anxiety associated with impression management and self-presentation, and provides individuals with coping resources, including control. Theoretically, political skill enables individuals to not only build resources such as self-efficacy and social support, which allow them to cope with workplace stressors, but also to accurately assess the political environment and implement those resources effectively (Ferris, Davidson, et al., 2005).

Political skill is also claimed to help individuals develop coalitions of useful workplace contacts and understand how and when to take advantage of their social capital (Ferris, Perrewé, Anthony, & Gilmore, 2000; Pfeffer, 1992). For example, politically skilled individuals may increase or decrease their contact with certain network ties depending on their value (Ferris et al., 2007). In a study of 291 retail managers, those who rated themselves higher on political skill were more likely to engage in career and community networking behaviour (Treadway, Breland, Adams, Duke, & Williams, 2010). These type of behaviours are likely to provide politically skilled individuals with access to important career-related resources (Borgatti & Foster, 2003; Podolny & Baron, 1997; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001; Wolff & Moser, 2008).

Political skill and Career Success

Given the association between political skill and outcomes such as performance ratings, influence tactics and networking behaviour, it is not surprising that political skill has been linked to both subjective and objective career success. Using the political skill inventory, Todd et al (2009) measured the political skill of 191 alumni from a private U.S. university, in a range of occupations, including teachers, accountants, engineers and executives. Todd et al (2009) examined five career success outcomes: total compensation, total promotions, career satisfaction, life satisfaction and perceived external job mobility. They found that political skill was significantly related to all outcomes except total compensation. However, unlike many other political skill studies, they also examined the role of the political skill sub-dimensions, rather than just the overall construct. In doing so, they found that networking ability was strongly associated with all five outcomes. Apparent sincerity was related to career and life satisfaction, whereas interpersonal influence and social astuteness were not significantly related to any of the career outcomes.

In a longitudinal study examining political skill in university alumni from German universities, Ferris et al (2008) found that networking ability and social astuteness predicted hierarchical position and they, as well as interpersonal influence, were related to career satisfaction. Only networking ability predicted income, and contrary to Todd et al (2009), no relationship was found between apparent sincerity and any career outcome. Although they reveal different findings, these studies highlight the importance of examining the individual dimensions of political skill rather than the overall construct. Whilst they demonstrate the importance of political skill in career success and the dominance of networking ability in predicting career outcomes it is also clear that more research is necessary to establish the role of the other dimensions. Furthermore, as organisational politics is inextricably linked with organisational culture, rather than examining political skill across a range of occupations and organisations, it is important that research contextualises analyses by focusing on the effect of political skill within individual organisations. Therefore this study examines the political skill of employees within a single, large, public sector organisation.

Political Skill Deficiency

Ferris argues that, although certain aspects of political skill may be dispositional, political skill can be developed through interactions such as mentoring, networking and sponsorship (Blass, Brouer, Perrewé, & Ferris, 2007; Ferris, Anthony, & Kolodinsky, 2002). Therefore, Ferris, Frink and Galang (1993) suggest that certain groups may be disadvantaged in their access to developing political skill because it is an understanding that is selectively passed through an organisation. That is, in white-majority organisations, information may be passed down to majority group members only, through informal interactions. For example, in-group newcomers are 'shown the ropes' and are taught how to play the political game by experienced organisational members. This ensures that minority groups are kept 'out of the loop' in terms of the rules of political games in the workplace (Ferris, Frink, Bhawuk, et al., 1996; Ferris, Frink, Galang, et al., 1996). It is argued that this may leave minority-ethnic employees unable to develop political skill and therefore incapable of successfully navigating the political aspects of organisational life. It also implies that minority-ethnic groups are less able to interpret political situations correctly, akin to being in a foreign country and being unable to understand the language (Ferris et al 1993).

Whilst there has been no research examining minority-ethnic groups and political skill, lack of 'political clout' has been identified as a possible career barrier for African-American women (Burlew & Johnson, 1992). Evidence also suggests that proposed methods of developing political skill, such as networking and mentoring with majority-ethnic employees may also be restricted for minority-ethnic groups (Blass et al., 2007; Ibarra, 1993, 1995; Ragins, 2007b). Given that researchers have advocated the use of political skill in selection and promotion evaluations (Ferris, Davidson, et al., 2005; Gentry, Gilmore, Shuffler, & Leslie, 2011) and the implications of the political skill dimensions for career success, it is important to test the political skill deficiency explanation. Therefore this study uses the political skill inventory to establish whether minority-ethnic employees have differential levels of political skill. Because of the importance of the political skill sub-dimensions for career success, these were tested rather than the aggregated scale.

H_1: Minority-ethnic employees will score lower on a) networking ability, b) interpersonal influence, c) social astuteness and d) apparent sincerity than majority-ethnic employees

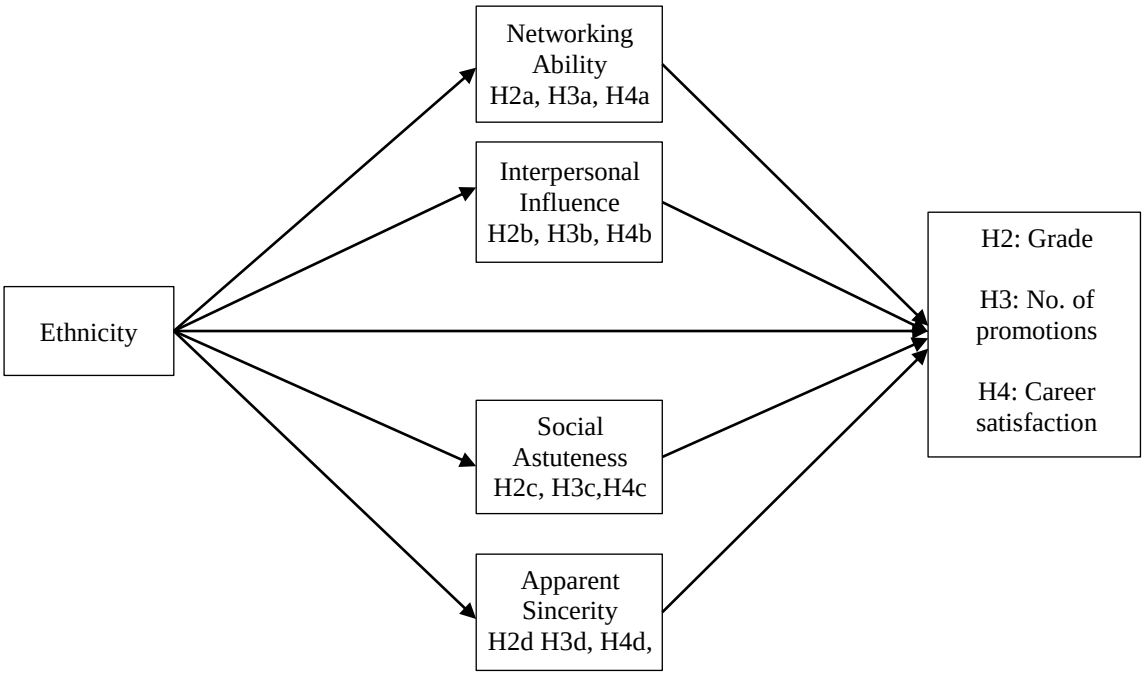
Furthermore, based on the political skill deficiency explanation (Ferris et al., 1993) and research that suggests political skill affects objective and subjective career success (e.g. Ferris et al., 2008; Todd et al., 2009), this study also tests whether the political skill dimensions mediate the relationship between ethnicity and three career success outcomes; grade, number of promotions and career satisfaction. That is to say, it is expected that minority-ethnic employees will experience lower career success outcomes than the majority-ethnic group due to their lower scores on each of the political skill dimensions (see Figure 6.1).

H_2: The relationship between ethnicity and grade will be mediated by a) networking ability, b) interpersonal influence, c) social astuteness and d) apparent sincerity.

H_3: The relationship between ethnicity and number of promotions will be mediated by a) networking ability, b) interpersonal influence, c) social astuteness and d) apparent sincerity.

H_4: The relationship between ethnicity and career satisfaction will be mediated by a) networking ability, b) interpersonal influence, c) social astuteness and d) apparent sincerity.

Figure 6.1 Proposed Multiple Mediation



6.2 Method

6.2.1 Sample and Procedure

Participants were recruited from the large public sector organisation introduced in chapter three, which has approximately 2,800 employees. Participants completed a questionnaire that was administered using an online survey provider. A hyperlink to this online survey was added to an email, which provided an overview of the research (Appendix 6). The beginning of the questionnaire assured participants that their responses were confidential and anonymous; it also provided information on how they could withdraw their data from the study at a later date, should they wish. The questionnaire also included information about how to receive a summary report upon the completion of the research. This last point required participants to provide their email in a separate survey, which meant that their previous responses could not be linked to their name or contact details (see Appendix 7 for the questionnaire).

A mixture of purposive and snowball sampling was used, which is arguably necessary to gain enough participants in applied ethnicity research (Cox, 2004). To ensure that there was a large enough minority-ethnic sample for meaningful statistical analyses the email was distributed to the minority-ethnic staff support network. It was also sent to six HR business partners, who were asked to forward it to the employees within their division and all participants were encouraged to send on the questionnaire hyperlink to other employees.

A total of 372 questionnaire responses were received, which, based on the maximum number of employees who could have been sent the email and hyperlink, indicates the response rate was 13.29%, similar to existing research on politics in organisations (e.g. Todd et al (2009) report a 9.6% response rate). However, as snowball sampling was used, an accurate response rate cannot be calculated. For example, it may be that several of the HR business partners did not in fact forward the questionnaire. Furthermore, there was no opportunity to send a second mail-shot to employees to increase this sample, as the organisation had strict guidelines on survey use to prevent 'survey fatigue' amongst its staff. However, the online survey provider did record each time the link was clicked, and of those 372 responses, 311 (83.60% response rate) had complete data. This is a similar sample size to previous research examining organisational politics and career success (e.g. Ferris et al., 2008, N = 336; Todd et al., 2009, N=191).

The sample comprised 197 majority-ethnic and 114 minority-ethnic employees. Of the majority-ethnic participants 102 were female and this figure was 81 for the minority-ethnic group. The largest proportion of majority-ethnic participants were aged between 24 and 35 years (42.1%), similar to the minority-ethnic group (41.2%). The average organisational tenure for the majority-ethnic group was 76.51 months (approximately six years) and was 68.74 months (approximately 5 and a half years) for the minority-ethnic group. The average grade was 3.99 (SD = 1.58) for the majority-ethnic group and 3.58 (SD = 1.57) for the minority-ethnic group (where grade 1 = administrative and grade 8 = senior management).

6.2.2 Measures

Ethnicity

Participants were asked to indicate their ethnicity based on Office for National Statistics ethnic group categories, such as Black African, Pakistani, White British (ONS, 2005: See Appendix 7). However, for the analyses, these were collapsed into majority-ethnic (coded as 0), who were White British, White Irish and White Other, and minority-ethnic (coded as 1) who were all other ethnicities. Because the definition of minority-ethnic used in this thesis encompassed all non-white groups, participants who indicated they were mixed race were also included in the minority-ethnic category. Greater distinction between different ethnicities was not possible in the analyses because there were not sufficient numbers of each ethnic group to conduct meaningful statistical analyses.

Political Skill

Political skill was measured using the 18-item political skill inventory (Ferris, Treadway et al. (2005). It is a self-report questionnaire that measures the four sub-dimensions of political skill: networking ability, interpersonal influence, social astuteness and apparent sincerity. Research has demonstrated that these sub-dimensions can be treated as individual constructs (e.g. Blass et al., 2007; Todd et al., 2009). Responses were recorded on a likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and high values represented high levels of each construct. Example items are: *"At work, I know a lot of important people and am well connected*" (networking ability); *"I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me*" (interpersonal influence); *"I understand people very well"* (social astuteness); and *"I try to show a genuine interest in other people"* (apparent sincerity). The full scale is provided in Appendix 8. Existing research (Ferris, Treadway et al., 2005) has found good reliability for each subscale, (Cronbach's alpha coefficients for this study are shown in parentheses), where α = .83 (α = .76) for networking ability, α = .77 (α = .76) for interpersonal influence, α = .79 (α = .73) for social astuteness and α = .73 (α = .79) for apparent sincerity.

Career Success

Three measures were used to indicate career success. Objective measures of career success were grade and number of promotions. Career satisfaction was used to measure subjective career success. Other measures, such as job satisfaction, were not included because of organisational restrictions on the questionnaire's length.

Grade

The host organisation had eight levels or grades of seniority linked to salary, ranging from administrative to senior management roles. This information was obtained by asking all participants their grade title. Grade was also linked to salary band, so a separate measure of salary or annual compensation was deemed unnecessary. The organisation assigns different grading to technical and generalist staff; however, as these are also linked to salary, they were amalgamated into the appropriate generalist grade. Eight categories were therefore used in the analysis, where category 1 represented the administration and clerical grades and category 8 represented senior management.

Number of Promotions

Two items were used to measure total promotions: "*How many promotions have you received in your current organisation?*" and *"How many promotions have you received in organisations other than your current organisation?*". These were then added to create an overall number of promotions for each participant, the same approach taken by Todd et al, (2009) and Seibert, Crant & Kraimer (1999) when examining career success.

Career Satisfaction

Career satisfaction was measured using the five-item scale developed by Greenhaus et al. (1990). Responses were recorded on a likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for the five items, which were then averaged to produce an overall career satisfaction score. The scale has been found to have similar levels of reliability across other career success studies (Seibert, Kraimer, &

Crant, 2001; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001; Todd et al., 2009). An example item is *"I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals"*. Existing research has found good reliability (α = .88: Greenhaus et al., 1990), which was replicated in this study (α = .88).

Control Variables

Several variables were controlled for, as previous research has suggested they may influence perceptions of politics or have a logically expected impact on the outcome variables (e.g. Douglas & Ammeter, 2004; Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1989; Judge & Bretz, 1994). These were gender (0 = male, 1 = female), organisational tenure (measured in months) and age, which was measured in categories to conform to the organisation's guidelines for distributing surveys (16-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, >55 years) and was therefore dummy coded before analyses, using the group 25-34 as a reference category, which all other categories were compared to. Grade was used as a control variable in hypothesis one because previous research has found that politics is perceived to be greater in senior roles (e.g. Gandz & Murray, 1980). Therefore, controlling for grade ensured that actual differences were due to ethnicity, rather than participants' position in the organisation.

6.3 Analysis and Results

6.3.1 Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one proposed that minority-ethnic participants would score lower on a) networking ability, b) interpersonal influence, c) social astuteness and d) apparent sincerity than majority-ethnic participants. To test this, a multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVA) was used with a bias corrected and accelerated bootstrap, where resampling was conducted 10,000 times using a stratified technique based on each ethnicity and gender group[1]. Each political skill dimension was treated as a separate dependent variable, and the analysis controlled for the effects of gender and grade. Box's test was non-significant, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity

[1] For more information on this analysis technique see section 4.3.2

of covariance matrices across groups had been met (Box's M = 16.79, F(10, 262422) = 1.65, p = .09).

After controlling for the effect of gender (V= .03, F(4, 304) = 2.64, p = .03, η_p^2 =.03) and grade (V = .21, F(4,304) = 20.44, p <.001, η_p^2 =.21), there was a significant main effect of ethnicity, although the effect size was only small[1] (V = .06, F(4, 304) = 4.46, p<.01, η_p^2 =.06). Results, presented in Table 6.1 show that the minority-ethnic group scored themselves significantly lower on networking ability, with a small effect[2], supporting hypothesis 1a. Hypothesis 1b was not supported, as there was no significant difference between groups on interpersonal influence, and the effect size was small. The difference between minority- and majority-ethnic groups for social astuteness was approaching significance, and had a small effect size; however, hypothesis 1c was not supported. Contrary to hypothesis 1d, minority-ethnic participants rated themselves significantly *higher* on apparent sincerity, with a small to medium sized effect. It was also found that women scored significantly higher on networking ability and social astuteness than men, which were small effects.

Table 6.1 MANCOVA: Main Effect of Ethnicity and Covariate Effects for Political Skill

	Ethnicity				Gender			
	Minority-Ethnic M (SD)	Majority-Ethnic M (SD)	F	d	Male M (SD)	Female M (SD)	F	d
NA	3.13 (.62)	3.28 (.53)	3.94*	-.26	3.19 (.54)	3.31 (.58)	7.75**	-.21
II	3.95 (.52)	3.91 (.53)	.67	.08	3.88 (.54)	3.95 (.51)	.47	-.13
SA	3.73 (.53)	3.61 (.54)	3.63†	.22	3.55 (.58)	3.72 (.50)	4.51*	-.31
AS	4.33 (.49)	4.14 (.57)	10.56**	.36	4.15 (.61)	4.25 (.49)	.48	-.18

Note. NA = Networking Ability, II = Interpersonal Influence, SA = Social Astuteness, AS = Apparent Sincerity. Based on 10,000 bias accelerated and corrected bootstrap samples, N=311
†p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01

[1] η_p^2 = .01 is small, η_p^2 = .09 is medium and η_p^2 = .25 is a large effect size (Levine & Hullett, 2002)
[2] Cohen's d = .2 is small, d = .5 is medium and d = .8 is a large effect size (Cohen, 1988)

6.3.2 Mediation Analyses

Table 6.2 provides the means, standard deviations and intercorrelations among the study variables. As expected, ethnicity (coded 0 = majority-ethnic and 1 = minority-ethnic) was negatively correlated with grade and career satisfaction. However, there was no significant relationship with number of promotions, which had its strongest correlation with tenure ($r = .37$, $p<.01$). Ethnicity was also positively related to social astuteness and apparent sincerity, but negatively related to networking ability, there was no significant correlation between ethnicity and interpersonal influence. All four political skill subscales were positively associated with grade and career satisfaction, but not number of promotions.

Table 6.2 Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations of Study Variables

		M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	Age 16-24	—	—	—												
2	Age 35-44	—	—	-.19**	—											
3	Age 45-54	—	—	-.13*	-.29**	—										
4	Age 55+	—	—	-.06	-.13*	-.08	—									
5	Gender	—	—	.01	-.06	-.05	-.02	—								
6	Ethnicity	—	—	-.10†	.07	.04	-.07	.19**	—							
7	Tenure (months)	73.66	84.16	-.23**	.18**	.23**	.07	-.30**	-.02	—						
8	PS: Networking Ability	3.23	.57	.07	-.16**	.01	.11†	.17**	-.11†	-.11†	—					
9	PS: Interpersonal Influence	3.92	.52	-.13*	.00	.08	.12*	.08	.04	.07	.33**	—				
10	PS: Social Astuteness	3.65	.54	-.03	.01	.05	.14*	.17**	.12*	-.03	.37**	.59**	—			
11	PS: Apparent Sincerity	4.21	.55	-.15**	.01	.00	.12*	.08	.17**	.03	.10†	.51**	.43	—		
12	Grade	3.84	1.59	-.01	-.11*	.01	.09†	.11†	-.13*	-.09	.45**	.13*	.18**	.17**	—	
13	No.of Promotions	.96	1.32	-.03	.03	.04	-.01	-.23**	-.02	.37**	.05	.01	-.01	.04	.12*	—
14	Career Satisfaction	3.28	.85	.11†	-.16**	-.05	.04	.14*	-.16**	-.15**	.48**	.16**	.18**	.12*	.37**	.10†

Note. † p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01
Ethnicity coded 0 = Majority-Ethnic, 1 = Minority-Ethnic, Gender coded 0= Male, 1= Female. Minority-Ethnic *n* = 114, Majority-Ethnic *n* = 197. Correlations for dichotomous variables are Spearman's Rho, all other coefficients are Pearson's r. PS = Political Skill

Hypotheses two, three and four proposed that the relationship between ethnicity and grade (H_2), number of promotions (H_3) and career satisfaction (H_4) would be mediated by a) networking ability, b) interpersonal influence, c) social astuteness and d) apparent sincerity. To test this, three multiple mediation analyses were conducted for each of the hypotheses, using Preacher, and Hayes' (2008) SPSS macro 'INDIRECT'. This allows for multiple mediators to be tested within the same model, and can therefore provide an overall indirect effect (the combined effect of all four mediating political skill dimensions), as well as a specific indirect effect for each individual mediator and compare each mediator's relative impact. By allowing multiple mediators to be compared in the same model, this method also eliminates potential problems associated with conducting a set of single mediation models, such as biased parameter estimates due to omitted variables (Judd & Kenny, 1981; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). It is a technique increasingly used in organisational psychology (e.g. Boezeman & Ellemers, 2009; Hsiung, Lin, & Lin, 2011).

Ethnicity was used as the predictor variable, the political skill subscales were included as mediators, and the model was run three times, once for each career success outcome (grade, number of promotions and career satisfaction). Each model controlled for the effects of gender, tenure and age. For the sake of clarity, only the results for main effects are provided below, results for control variables can be found in Appendix 9. Assumption tests suggested there was no mulicollinearity between dimensions: tolerance values were above .1, the lowest being .56 and the variance inflation factors were well below 10, the value at which multicollinearity becomes a concern (Field, 2009).

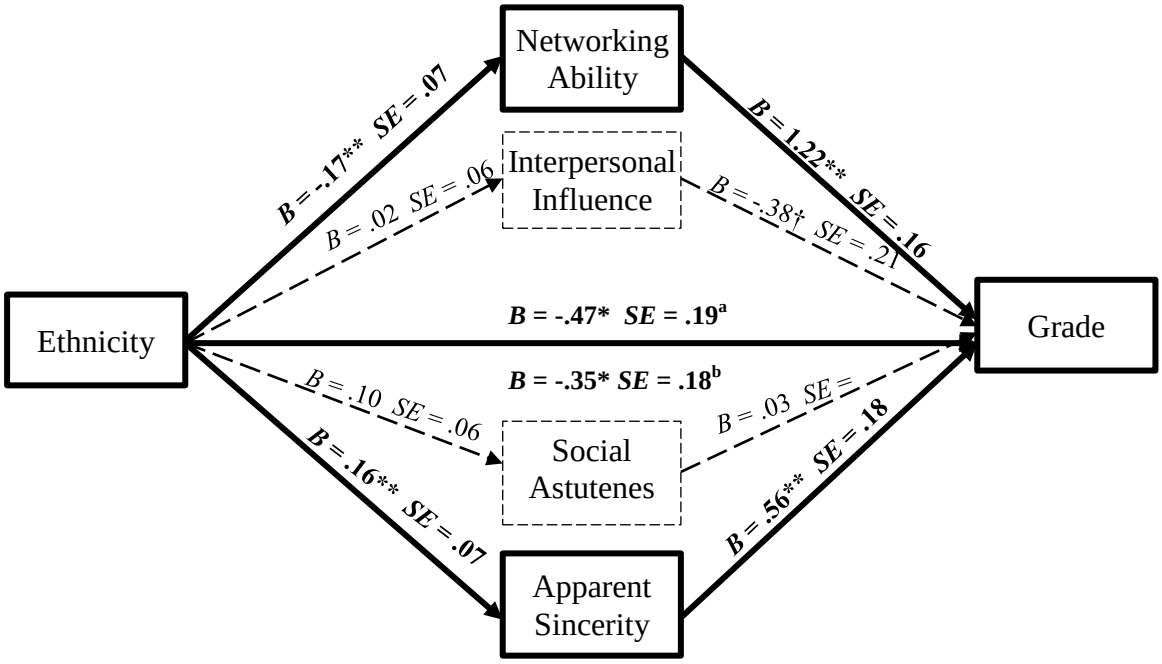
The analyses were conducted using bootstrapping with 10,000 samples, meaning that the data from the original sample was resampled with replacement, 10,000 times. This results in 10,000 estimates of the indirect effects which are used to generate 95% confidence intervals (CI). Confidence intervals that do not cross zero (i.e. when upper and lower confidence intervals are both positive, or both negative) indicate that the effect has a significance level of $p<.05$, if at the 95% level (Hayes, 2009). This approach to estimating indirect effects has been found to be more powerful and reliable than the Sobel test (Mackinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004; Williams &

Mackinnon, 2008). Therefore it is increasingly being adopted in psychological research (e.g. Alvarez & Juang, 2010; Brandt & Reyna, 2010; Roelofs, Huibers, Peeters, Arntz, & van Os, 2008). The analysis is presented below for each career success outcome.

Hypothesis Two: Grade

The overall model was significant (R^2 = .24, F(11, 298) = 8.76, p<.001), and the total effect of ethnicity on grade was significant (B = -.47, SE = .19, t(309)=-2.47, p<.05) suggesting that being minority-ethnic was associated with a lower grade. This relationship remained significant when the political skill mediators were included in the model (direct effect of ethnicity: B = -.35, SE = .18, t(309) = -1.97, p=.05). As can be seen in Figure 6.2, of the political skill subscales, only networking ability (B= 1.22, SE = .16, t(309)=7.58, p<.01) and apparent sincerity (B = .56, SE = .18, t(309) = 3.14, p<.01) were significant predictors of grade.

Figure 6.2 Multiple Mediation Test of Ethnicity and Grade



R^2 = .24, F(11, 298) = 8.76, p<.001

Note. All coefficients represent unstandardized regression coefficients while controlling for gender, age and tenure. Dashed lines highlight non-significant relationships and solid lines highlight significant relationships. [a] = Total Effect, [b] = Direct effect (once mediators are included)
† p<.10, *p < .05, **p < .01.

The total indirect effect (i.e. the difference between total and direct effects) was also non-significant with a point estimate of -.12 and a 95% BCa (bias corrected and accelerated; see Efron & Tibshirani, 1993) bootstrap confidence interval of -.32 to .05, indicating there was no overall mediation effect. However, in multiple mediation models, the total indirect effect is only of interest if the specific indirect effects of each mediator all operate in the same direction. As can be seen in Figure 6.2, in this model for example, the direction of the relationship between apparent sincerity and grade is positive, but for interpersonal influence is negative which is potentially affecting the total indirect effect (Hayes, 2009; Preacher et al., 2007).

Of greater interest are the specific indirect effects, presented in Table 6.3. These demonstrate that only networking ability and apparent sincerity were significant mediators, as the 95% BCa confidence intervals do not cross zero, suggesting support for Hypothesis 2a and 2d, but no support for hypotheses 2b and 2c. The negative indirect effect of networking ability suggests that being minority-ethnic is associated with having a lower grade, via their lower networking ability scores. Conversely, the positive indirect effect of apparent sincerity indicates that being minority-ethnic is associated with a higher grade, via their increased apparent sincerity scores. Contrasts between networking ability and apparent sincerity revealed that the specific indirect effect through networking ability was larger than that of apparent sincerity with a point estimate of -.29 (SE = .10) and BCa 95% CI of -.51 to -.12. This suggests that the influence of ethnicity on grade is primarily influenced by networking ability.

Table 6.3 Indirect Effects of Mediators

Hypothesis		Indirect Effect	BCa 95% Confidence Intervals	
		Point Estimate (SE)	Lower	Upper
			Grade	
	Total Indirect Effect	-.12 (.09)	-.32	.05
H2a	**Networking Ability**	**-.21 (.09)**	**-.40**	**-.05**
H2b	Interpersonal Influence	-.01 (.03)	-.08	.04
H2c	Social Astuteness	.00 (.02)	-.04	.06
H2d	**Apparent Sincerity**	**.09 (.04)**	**.02**	**.20**
			Number of Promotions	
	Total Indirect Effect	-.03 (.05)	-.13	.05
H3a	**Networking Ability**	**-.05 (.03)**	**-.15**	**-.01**
H3b	Interpersonal Influence	-.00 (.02)	-.06	.01
H3c	Social Astuteness	-.01 (.02)	-.07	.01
H3d	Apparent Sincerity	.03 (.03)	-.01	.11
			Career Satisfaction	
	Total Indirect Effect	-.08 (.05)	-.19	.03
H4a	**Networking Ability**	**-.11 (.05)**	**-.21**	**-.02**
H4b	Interpersonal Influence	-.00 (.01)	-.03	.01
H4c	Social Astuteness	-.01 (.02)	-.03	.03
H4d	**Apparent Sincerity**	**.03 (.02)**	**.002**	**.09**

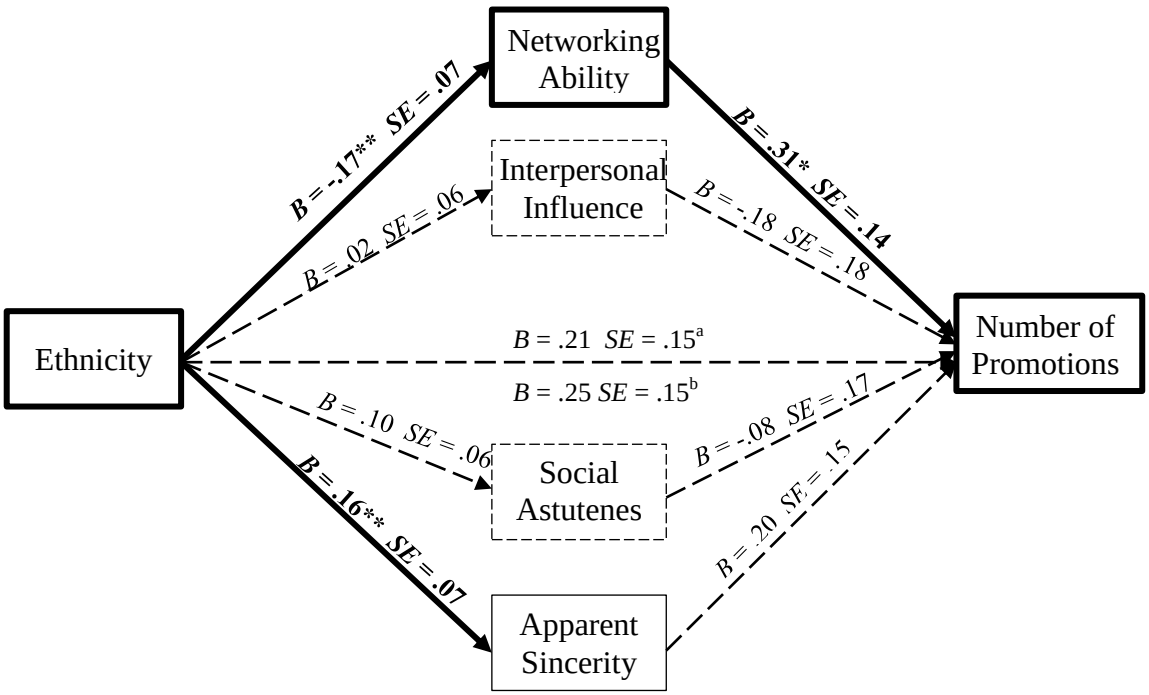
Note. Boldface type highlights a significant effect as determined by the 95% BCa confidence interval, with 10,000 samples

Hypothesis Three: Number of Promotions

The overall model was significant (R^2 = .22, F(11, 297) = 7.45, p<.001), however, the total effect (*B* = .21, SE = .15, t(308) = 1.46 p= .15) was non-significant, suggesting that ethnicity has no significant association with number of promotions. However, it is possible for predictor variables, which do not have a direct relationship with outcome variables, to still influence them indirectly (Hayes, 2009). Figure 6.3 demonstrates that of the four political skill subscales, just networking ability had a significant association with number of promotions (B = .31, SE = .14, t(308) = 2.23, p<.05).

The direct effect (*B* = .25, SE = .15, t(308) = 1.65, *p* = .10) and total indirect effect (see Table 6.3) were non-significant, indicating no overall mediation. The specific indirect effects, presented in Table 6.3 demonstrate that only networking ability was a significant mediator, providing support for hypothesis 3a, but no support for hypothesis 3b, 3c or 3d. The negative direction of the indirect effect of networking ability suggests that being minority-ethnic is associated with having a fewer promotions, via lower networking ability scores.

Figure 6.3 Multiple Mediation Test of Ethnicity and Number of Promotions



R^2 = .22, F(11, 297) = 7.45, p<.001

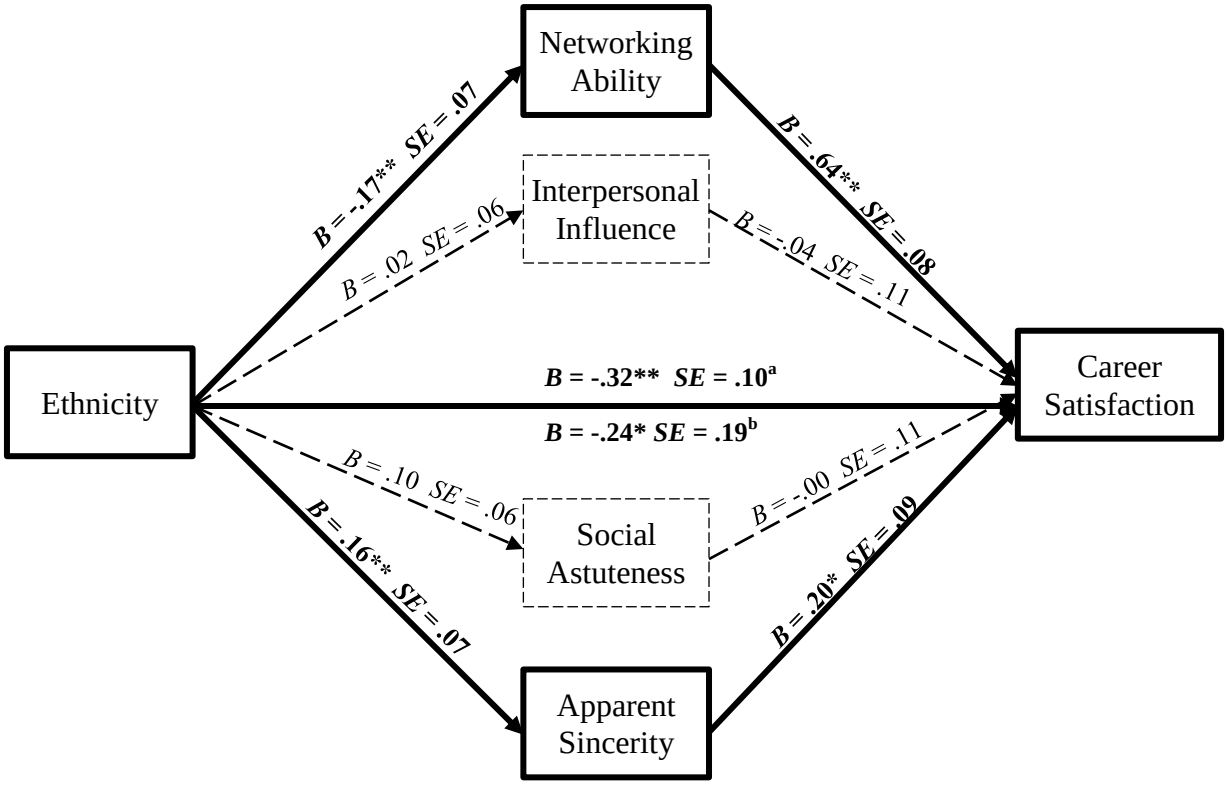
Note. All coefficients represent unstandardized regression coefficients while controlling for gender, age and tenure. Dashed lines highlight non-significant relationships and solid lines highlight significant relationships.
† p<.10, *p < .05, **p < .01.
[a] = Total Effect, [b] = Direct effect (once mediators are included)

Hypothesis Four: Career Satisfaction

The overall model was significant (R^2 = .27, F(11, 298) = 10.15, p<.001), as was the total effect (*B* = -.32, SE = .10, t(309) = -3.21, p< .01) indicating that being minority-

ethnic is associated with lower career satisfaction. As can be seen in Figure 6.4, of the four political skill subscales, just networking ability (B =.65, SE = .08, t(309) = 7.66, p<.01) and apparent sincerity (B =.20, SE = .09, t(309) = 2.17, p<.05) were significantly associated with career satisfaction.

Figure 6.4 Multiple Mediation Test of Ethnicity and Career Satisfaction



R^2 = .27, F(11, 298) = 10.15, p<.001

Note. All coefficients represent unstandardized regression coefficients while controlling for gender, age and tenure. Dashed lines highlight non-significant relationships and solid lines highlight significant relationships.

† p<.10, *p < .05, **p < .01.

[a] = Total Effect, [b] = Direct effect (once mediators are included)

The direct effect (B = -.24, SE = .09, t(309) = -2.62, p<.01) was also significant, although the total indirect effect (see Table 6.3) was non-significant, indicating no overall mediation. Table 6.3 shows that only networking ability and apparent sincerity had significant indirect effects providing support for hypotheses 4a and 4d respectively, but the analysis found no support for hypotheses 4b and 4c.. Again, being minority-ethnic was associated with a decrease in career satisfaction, via

decreased networking ability. However, being minority-ethnic was also associated with an increase in career satisfaction, via an increase in apparent sincerity. A contrast between these mediators revealed that the specific indirect effect through networking ability was larger than that of apparent sincerity, with a point estimate of -.14 (SE = .05) and BCa 95% CI of -.26 to -.05.

Summary of Multiple Mediation Analyses

The mediation analyses provided partial support for Hypothesis 2. Networking ability mediated the relationship between ethnicity and grade, number of promotions and career satisfaction, indicating that minority-ethnic participants' achieve lower levels of these three outcomes, via lower networking ability scores. Apparent sincerity mediated the relationship between ethnicity and grade and career satisfaction, but not number of promotions. Results indicated that minority-ethnic groups may experience increased levels of these career success outcomes, due to their higher apparent sincerity scores. However, contrasts demonstrated that networking ability was the strongest mediator in all three analyses suggesting it has more influence over career success. Interpersonal influence and social astuteness were not significant mediators.

6.4 Discussion

This study builds on the qualitative findings from study two, which highlighted that minority-ethnic employees may be less willing or less able to engage in informal organisational processes. Despite speculation that there may be differences in minority- and majority-ethnic employees' level of political skill, which may afford employees more control and power in informal organisational processes, this study provides the first test of this theoretical assumption. It also examined whether levels of political skill can provide insight into the differential career success of minority-ethnic employees. Beyond examining ethnicity, this study contributes to organisational politics research by examining the role of each dimension of political skill within these relationships, rather than the aggregated scale. Using a questionnaire to measure political skill and career success in a single organisation (N=311), it was found that:

- Minority-ethnic employees rate their networking ability lower, but their apparent sincerity higher than majority-ethnic employees, which provided support for hypothesis 1a, but not 1b, 1c or 1d.
- Minority-ethnic employees' networking ability and apparent sincerity mediated the relationship with their grade and career satisfaction, supporting hypotheses 2a, 2d, 4a and 4d. Only networking ability mediated their relationship with number of promotions, providing support for hypothesis 3a.

6.4.1 Networking Ability

Networking ability was found to have the strongest association with grade, number of promotions and career satisfaction. These findings provide further support for the assertion that career success outcomes are largely driven by networking ability rather than the other political skill dimensions (Ferris et al., 2008; Todd et al., 2009). They are also in line with existing research on the benefits of networking in organisations. For example, networking has been found to provide individuals with power and resources, such as advice, information and social support and has been linked to outcomes such as job performance, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, turnover, salary, promotions and career satisfaction (Brass, 1984; Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve, & Tsai, 2004; Kilduff & Krackhardt, 1994; E. W. Morrison, 2002; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001; Settoon & Mossholder, 2002; Sparrowe et al., 2001).

This study revealed that minority-ethnic employees rated themselves lower on the networking ability scale, which was associated with lower career success outcomes. This finding provides support for the political skill deficiency explanation which suggests that political skill is a form of tacit knowledge passed selectively through organisations via interactions with members of the in-group (i.e. white males), leaving minority groups disadvantaged in developing political skill. Findings from study two indicated that minority-ethnic employees feel less supported by line management, have difficulty forming successful mentoring relationships, and may lack sponsorship. Existing research also suggests that minority-ethnic employees may be less likely to form constructive informal relationships with in-group colleagues and senior figures in organisations, such as high quality LMX (Scandura

& Lankau, 1996) and mentoring (Ragins, 2007b). These are all factors that have been identified as important for developing political skill and being impeded in forming and maintaining such relationships may provide an explanation for lower networking ability scores.

However, existing networking research has found that individuals prefer to form homophilous (i.e. same race) relationships (Ibarra, 1995; Mollica, Gray, & Trevino, 2003). As white males tend to dominate senior organisational positions, minority-ethnic groups may find it difficult to form network relationships with influential or powerful groups (Ibarra, 1995). Importantly, this study measured political skill using self-report, with items from the networking ability scale including *'At work, I know a lot of important people and am well connected'* and *'I am good at using my connections and network to make things happen at work'*. As a result, it is possible that the minority-ethnic group in this study rated their access to networks, rather than their ability or skill. Nevertheless, the clear association with both objective and subjective career outcomes suggests that networking ability is an important dimension for career interventions to target.

6.4.2 Apparent Sincerity

Whilst networking ability was found to be the dominant predictor of career success, apparent sincerity was also positively associated with grade and career satisfaction. However, the dimension was not related to number of promotions. This outcome was measured by asking candidates how many promotions they had received inside and outside of the current organisation. Although used in existing research (e.g. Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999; Todd et al., 2009), this measure of number of promotions may not be a suitable indicator of career success, or at least upwards progression. Some organisations are more hierarchical than others, meaning that some employees may have had career histories with a higher number of promotions, yet have reached a similar grade. In the current organisation, it was also possible to jump grades, and therefore be at a higher organisational level, with fewer promotions. Certainly for the host organisation, perhaps grade was a better measure of upwards advancement. It is important that future research considers these contextual factors when considering career success.

The lack of significant relationship between apparent sincerity and number of promotions may also indicate support for previous research, which has found that apparent sincerity has a stronger relationship with subjective success. For example, Todd et al (2009) found that the dimension was related to life and career satisfaction, but not promotions, or total compensation.

Contrary to the political skill deficiency explanation, minority-ethnic employees in this study rated their apparent sincerity significantly *higher* than did the majority-ethnic group. There are several possible explanations for these scores and their positive relationship with career success, which stem from the different types of behaviour adopted by politically skilled individuals. Ferris, Davidson et al (2005) suggest that there are two types of characters that score high on political skill: 'deceivers' and 'believers'. 'Deceivers' are individuals who adopt surface-acting behaviours to influence others, where they modify their display without changing their inner beliefs and feelings. 'Believers' are those who adopt either deep-acting or genuine emotion, where they either try to, or actually internalise what they display to others. The apparent sincerity scale does not easily enable this distinction, as its three items were: *"When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do", "It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do",* and *"I try to show a genuine interest in other people*". Nevertheless, deep and surface acting have potential negative outcomes for employees due to the inherent emotional labour of adopting these strategies.

If a high score reflects 'deceiving', or surface-acting, there are two possible explanations for minority-ethnic employees' higher scores. Ferris, Treadway et al (2005) propose that positive relationships between apparent sincerity and career outcomes are because individuals who score high on apparent sincerity are able to *appear* sincere and genuine, and inspire trust in others, which enables them to be successful in their influence attempts and disguise hidden agendas. Therefore, the first 'deceiving' explanation suggests that minority-ethnic participants felt they were particularly capable of adopting a strategy of *appearing* authentic and genuine to conceal ulterior motives.

A second 'deceiving', or surface-acting, explanation, suggests that higher apparent sincerity scores could reflect the impression management strategies that minority-ethnic employees might adopt in order to gain acceptance in organisations (Reed & Kelly, 1993). Individuals whose personal, social or cultural identity differs from the group that holds power within an organisation (i.e. white male) may feel they have to conceal aspects of their identity in order to enhance their acceptance and interaction with the dominant group (Essed, 1991; Nkomo & Cox, 1999). For example, minority-ethnic employees may change their style of dress, their topics of conversation and hide details about their home lives when at work (Pettigrew & Martin, 1987). Therefore higher apparent sincerity scores could indicate that, rather than hiding ulterior motives, minority-ethnic employees are practiced at filtering information about their own cultural and social identity.

However, if the apparent sincerity scale is reflecting a 'deceiving' approach, whether that is identity management, or an attempt to disguise hidden agendas, it may lead to dissonance between displaying emotions and behaviours that are not necessarily felt (Morris & Feldman 1996; Sutton, 1991). Within the emotional labour literature, dissonance is associated with outcomes such as emotional exhaustion and lower job satisfaction (Morris & Feldman, 1996). Research has also found that the effort taken to disguise aspects of identity and maintain this over time can result in enhanced stress levels (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003). Furthermore, 'deceiving', in the long term, could lead to lower self-efficacy, because individuals may not feel they have achieved outcomes as their true, authentic self. Therefore, although this study found a positive association between apparent sincerity and career satisfaction and grade, it may be that, (if apparent sincerity reflects a 'deceiving' strategy), over time, scoring high on the scale may relate to lower levels of career success, due to the negative emotional consequences of this strategy.

An alternative explanation is that a high score on apparent sincerity may indicate 'believing', which may be deep-acting or even genuine emotion (Gardner, Fisher & Hunt, 2009). Therefore, rather than *apparent* sincerity, the scale may be simply measuring a preference for behaving sincerely and genuinely. This supports the positive relationships between apparent sincerity, grade, and career satisfaction, as previous research has found that individuals are rated more favourably when they

exhibit genuine displays of emotion (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). However, having a preference for sincerity and genuineness may lead to the Machiavellian aspects of organisational politics being perceived as more threatening and stressful. Accordingly, research suggests that individuals who hold strong beliefs about justice and reciprocity experience enhanced negative effects in political situations (Andrews, Witt, & Kacmar, 2003). Therefore, if the apparent sincerity scale reflects 'believing', whilst it may engender positive career outcomes, due to being perceived as authentic, it may also enhance the possibility that minority-ethnic employees perceive informal organisational processes as negative or political.

6.4.4 Limitations and Future Research

Whilst this study has identified important differences in how minority-ethnic groups perceive and navigate political environments, findings are based on self-reported data. It is therefore possible that relationships between variables may be inflated due to factors such as social desirability, positive or negative affectivity or respondent consistency (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). However, research suggests that factual data used in career success research, such as grade, number of promotions, or salary are less susceptible to common method bias (Crampton & Wagner, 1994; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). For example, Judge, Cable Boudreau and Bretz (1995) found that there were no significant differences between common-method and different-method data when examining the predictors of executive career success.

Nonetheless, based on the findings from this research, the measurement of the political skill dimensions may be a source of concern. It is unclear whether the networking ability scale is measuring access or skill, and if the apparent sincerity scale is representing a 'deceiving' or 'believing' strategy. Ferris et al (2008) have suggested that ratings from other sources may be more accurate, or at least aid interpretation of self-rated political skill. However, political skill is a subtle interpersonal style and therefore may be best suited to self-report and may not be accurately perceived by others. For example, as those high in apparent sincerity are purported to use their sincerity to disguise ulterior motives, it would be difficult to determine whether others would be rating an individual's actual or apparent

sincerity. Studies that have examined other-rated political skill have focused on the overall construct (e.g. Blickle et al., 2011) so it is important that future research examines whether multisource ratings of each dimension are valid and achievable.

This study has revealed important implications in relation to the measurement of political skill. For example, it is necessary to determine whether the networking ability scale is related to access or ability, and if it is more beneficial to use networking ability to gain social support, instrumental resources or both for career success. By examining political skill in minority-ethnic employees, this study has also revealed that the apparent sincerity scale may simply be measuring sincerity, or be operating differently in relation to identity management tactics for these groups. Therefore future research should aim to provide a clearer understanding of the content and construct validity of the individual dimensions, rather than focus on the aggregated scale.

Other measurement issues concern the items used for the number of promotions outcome. As they are susceptible to organisational structure, future research should focus on different measurements of promotions. For example, a ratio measure of promotions applied for and achieved would be more accurate in assessing success.

Longitudinal research is necessary to understand cause and effect as it is difficult to determine whether political skill leads to successful career outcomes, or vice versa. Further research is also required to determine the generalizability of these findings. By its nature, organisational politics is likely to be unique to each workplace due to different organisational hierarchies, power relations and demographies. Research should also consider a range of career success outcomes beyond what has been studied here, such as perceived mobility, as these may be more important for minority-ethnic employees. It is also important to note that women in this study rated themselves significantly higher on networking ability and social astuteness than men. These findings suggest that the interaction between ethnicity and gender is an important relationship for future research to examine.

Given the finding that minority-ethnic employees have differential levels of political skill, it is important that research examines methods of training and developing

political skill. Ferris, Davidson et al (2005) suggests that political skill can be developed through mentoring, drama based training, coaching and LMX. This may enhance individuals' career success and minimise the impact of negative stressors such as organisational politics. However, interventions must consider the importance of the political skill dimensions; according to this study, it may be beneficial to focus training on networking ability. It is also necessary to consider the potential difficulties that minority-ethnic employees may face with some of these methods. For example, demographic dissimilarity may mean that it is more difficult for minority-ethnic employees to form successful LMX or mentoring relationships with majority-ethnic individuals who can help them enhance their political skill (Brouer et al., 2009; Ragins, 2007b; Scandura & Lankau, 1996).

6.4.5 Summary

This study built on findings from study two concerning how minority-ethnic groups perceive and navigate informal organisational processes. This study tested the political skill deficiency explanation and demonstrated that minority-ethnic participant have differential levels of political skill, which influence their career success. This is particularly important considering researchers have advocated the use of political skill in selection and promotion (Gentry et al., 2011; Todd et al., 2009). This study has identified the importance of examining the political skill dimensions, rather than the aggregated scale, and identified the need for future research on the content and construct validity of these items.

Chapter Seven: Discussion and Conclusion

Despite the advantages a diverse workforce can offer organisations and the importance of addressing differential career success for minority-ethnic individuals, there has been a paucity of ethnicity research within organisational psychology. This has led to a lack of knowledge about how minority-ethnic individuals experience the workplace and navigate their careers. The research in this thesis therefore focused on the perceptions and beliefs of minority-ethnic employees in relation to their career experiences. This chapter summarises the findings of the three studies before considering the implications for research and practice. The strengths and limitations of the research are also discussed before introducing suggestions for future research.

7.1 Summary of the Findings

7.1.1 Study One

An important limitation of the existing career success literature is that there are very few studies that have examined the career experiences of minority-ethnic managers, and little knowledge about how these managers interpret and make sense of those career experiences. Previous research has suggested that the way individuals attribute the causes of career experiences may influence their future career behaviour and laboratory research has suggested there may be group differences in attributional style based on ethnicity (Albert & Luzzo, 1999; Major et al., 1994; Weiner, 2005). However, no existing research has examined the causal attributions made by minority-ethnic managers in the workplace.

To address this, study one examined the differences in the intrapersonal causal attributions minority- and majority-ethnic managers made for their career experiences. Whilst existing research has examined minority-ethnic attributions in artificial laboratory settings, this study investigated the spontaneous causal attributions made by managers in an interview setting. Using the Leeds Attributional Coding System, causal attributions for positive and negative career experiences were extracted from qualitative interview transcripts and then numerically coded. Two hypotheses were tested, based on existing laboratory research on diversity and

attributional ambiguity (e.g. Crocker & Major, 1989): It was hypothesised that 1) minority-ethnic managers would attribute negative career experiences to more external, uncontrollable causes than majority-ethnic managers and 2) minority-ethnic managers would attribute positive career experiences to more external, uncontrollable causes than majority-ethnic managers.

Analysis revealed that:

- Minority-ethnic managers made significantly more attributions per interview and proportionally more attributions that described negative career experiences, than majority-ethnic managers
- Minority-ethnic managers attributed negative events to significantly more external and uncontrollable causes.
- Minority-ethnic managers attributed positive events to significantly more stable and controllable and more personal causes than majority-ethnic managers.

These findings have several implications for differential career success. Whilst these attributions may act to protect minority-ethnic managers' self-esteem in the short term, they may damage self-efficacy and motivation to persevere with career barriers in the long term. If communicated to others, this attributional style may also lead minority-ethnic individuals to be perceived as less willing to take responsibility for negative experiences, and over-promote their positive achievements. However, an important consideration is that it cannot be determined whether these attributions accurately reflect minority-ethnic managers' actual experiences, or represent a cognitive bias. Nevertheless, this study demonstrates important group differences in the perceptions of career experiences between minority- and majority-ethnic managers.

7.1.2 Study Two

Study two built on the previous study by examining the content of managers' career experiences to address the research questions:

- What are the career experiences minority-ethnic managers identify as important for their career success?

- How do these compare with the experiences identified by majority-ethnic managers?

In a reflexive process, template analysis was used to analyse the interview transcripts from the 20 minority- ethnic and 20 majority-ethnic managers to develop two templates. The analysis revealed four themes that were common across transcripts from both groups: visibility, networks, development and line manager support.

Visibility

Both sets of managers reported that the type of work they were given and the amount of discretion in their roles was important. However, minority-ethnic managers felt they received negative outcomes related to visibility, such as increased scrutiny, but also negative outcomes related to less visibility, such as lack of credit for work. They also reported striving to enhance their visibility through increased effort. Majority-ethnic managers placed importance on actively building their reputation across the organisation to enhance visibility and career success.

Networks

The network theme was consistent with existing research concerning the importance of informal networking for career success (e.g. Seibert et al, 2001). The minority-ethnic group reported that they had difficulty accessing informal networks and reported grievances over selection and promotion being based on informal relationships. However, the majority-ethnic group were more accepting of these features and felt that promoting themselves to others was a necessary part of navigating their careers. Minority-ethnic managers also reported receiving support from the formal support network in the organisation, but were also concerned about the potential negative repercussions for belonging to such groups.

Development

Development opportunities were important for both groups of managers, but primarily for the networking opportunities and prestige that courses offered. However, majority-ethnic managers relied more on informal relationships than minority-ethnic managers, who preferred structured mentoring. Minority-ethnic managers also reported that whilst positive action development courses were useful, they reported being channelled into such courses, which had the potential to ghettoise employees.

Line Managers Support

In support of research concerning the importance of LMX (e.g. Breland et al, 2007), line manager support was important for both groups because it offered the functions of sponsorship and career guidance. Importantly, both groups felt that line managers had impeded their careers by blocking training and development or career moves. However, the two groups of managers reported different experiences; for example, the majority-ethnic group reported that this was more often due to time or budget constraints rather than deliberate actions on the part of supervisors. Interviewees' experiences of line management appeared to be dependent on the individual leader and subordinate within the relationship.

Overall Findings

A theme that permeated all other themes in the template was the interviewees' experiences of the informal organisation. Majority-ethnic interviewees proactively engaged with informal processes through behaviours such as self-promotion, building reputation and establishing informal developmental and network relationships. However, minority-ethnic interviewees reported being less able to engage in informal processes and reported them as unfair. These findings suggest that minority-ethnic managers may lack power or control over these informal situations.

The study has demonstrated that minority- and majority-ethnic managers at the same hierarchical level report important differences in their career experiences, which are worthy of further attention. This study is important because it has given voice to minority-ethnic managers who have previously been unheard in the career success and ethnicity literature.

7.1.3 Study Three

Study three built on the findings from study two, which suggested that minority-ethnic managers may feel less able to engage in informal organisational processes and may perceive certain types of behaviour as political. One way to enhance power and control over informal processes is to develop political skill (Ferris, Davidson et al., 2005). Existing research has also suggested, but has not yet tested, that minority-ethnic employees may be deficient in political skill (Ferris, et al, 1993). Therefore, this study used a questionnaire (N=311) to examine the relationship between levels of political skill of minority- and majority-ethnic employees and three measures of career success: grade, number of promotions and career satisfaction, and found that:

- Minority-ethnic employees rated their networking ability lower, but their apparent sincerity higher than majority-ethnic employees
- Minority-ethnic employees' networking ability and apparent sincerity mediated the relationship with their grade and career satisfaction. Although, only networking ability mediated their relationship with number of promotions.

The findings highlight the importance of political behaviour for career success. Results suggested minority-ethnic employees may be less skilled in building and mobilising coalitions within the workplace but conversely, are particularly skilled in appearing genuine and sincere to others, which aids their career success. However, it was unclear whether networking ability was measuring their access into informal networks or their actual skill or ability to network. There were also a number of possible reasons for minority-ethnic employees' higher apparent sincerity, including: 1) they may be better at impression management, coming across sincerely whilst hiding ulterior motives, 2) they may be more practiced in appearing sincere because

they are used to disguising aspects of their cultural and social identity, or 3) they may simply have a preference for sincere and genuine behaviour. Whatever the cause, their ratings suggest that there are important group differences on political skill which have implications for career success. From these findings, improving access to networks, or networking ability, offers an important mechanism for addressing differential career success.

7.2 Research Implications

Having provided a summary of the findings from each of the three studies, this section will now examine the theoretical implications of the findings. The important themes from the studies will be discussed, providing a summary and extension of the research implications already identified in the individual chapters.

7.2.1 Perceived Control

A theme that permeated all three studies in this thesis was differences in perceived control between minority- and majority-ethnic employees. Perceived control is a subjective evaluation of an individual's power and control over themselves and/or environments, which can affect behaviour and emotions (Ross & Mirowsky, 1989; Spector, 1982). Study one found that minority-ethnic managers attributed negative career experiences to uncontrollable causes to a greater extent than majority-ethnic managers. Minority-ethnic managers appeared to experience less control and power over informal organisational processes in study two. Control was also evident in study three, which examined political skill: Ferris et al (2008) argues that political skill provides individuals with control over their behaviour, resources and interpersonal relationships. Importantly, research has found that control is reflected most in the networking ability dimension of political skill, which was also the dimension on which minority-ethnic employees rated themselves lower than majority-ethnic employees in this thesis (Ferris et al, 2008). Being a self-reported scale, this suggests that minority-ethnic employees may perceive lower levels of control or power over their network relationships.

Existing research demonstrates that there are racial differences in perceived control, where minority-ethnic individuals across all age groups typically feel less in control than majority-ethnic groups (e.g. Ross & Mirowsky, 1989; Shaw & Krause, 2001; Wolinsky & Stump, 1996). Research has also linked locus of control with various career success outcomes because those with an internal locus of control are more likely to persevere and overcome career obstacles, have greater motivation, perceive more control over the types of career paths they pursue, and have higher self-efficacy, which has been associated with career goals and actions (Judge & Bono, 2001; Ng, Sorensen, & Eby, 2006). For example, in their meta-analysis of predictors of career success, Ng et al (2005) found that locus of control was associated with both salary and career satisfaction. Locus of control is also considered to be an important component of individuals' core self-evaluations (CSE), which are assessments individuals make about themselves and incorporate self-esteem, locus of control, generalised self-efficacy and emotional stability (Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998). A growing area of research has associated CSEs with job satisfaction, pay, occupational status and steeper career trajectories (Judge, 2009; Judge & Bono, 2001; Judge & Hurst, 2008).

A perceived lack of control may indicate that minority-ethnic employees have experienced more career events that have been beyond their control. Importantly, research suggests that repeated experience of uncontrollable events may lead to psychological disengagement, learned helplessness or alienation (Bell & Staw, 1989; Z. King, 2004). In fact, a continued perceived lack of control may mean minority-ethnic employees lose motivation to persevere with career barriers, give up or endure their differential success, or become dependent on methods of progression where they perceive greater control (Z. King, 2004). For example, minority-ethnic employees in study two reported relying more heavily on formal systems (e.g. assessment centres) to progress, rather than informal organisational mechanisms and behaviours (e.g. networking). However, locus of control is not only influenced by past experiences, but also social interactions, status and prestige (Ng et al., 2006; Wheaton, 1980). Therefore, minority-ethnic employees' perceptions of control may reflect a lack of power due to their non-dominant status in society, as well as their low representation at senior organisational levels (Alderfer & Smith, 1982; Ng et al., 2006; Ragins, 2007b).

Nevertheless, it is difficult to establish whether a perceived lack of control over career experiences and the environment accurately reflects minority-ethnic employees' experiences, a lack of power, or cognitive bias. However, this thesis has shown that minority-ethnic employees rate themselves lower on the networking ability dimension of political skill, a construct that is also purported to augment individuals' power and control over career resources (Ferris, Davidson, et al., 2005). Therefore, enhancing and developing networking ability, as well as the other dimensions of political skill, may be an important method for minority-ethnic employees to gain power and control in organisations and to reduce the likelihood of differential career success.

7.2.2 Socio-Cognitive Perspective

As discussed in chapter two, the theoretical perspectives used to explain career success have typically suggested that success is due to individuals' stable individual differences (e.g. personality, cognitive ability), human capital (e.g. education, training), or their ability to attract the sponsorship and support of others in organisations. Theories used to examine ethnicity in wider organisational research have focused on the role of discrimination and bias in group interactions (e.g. social categorisation theory, similarity attraction theory). The research in this thesis suggests that although these theories may be relevant to differential career success, it is also important to consider individuals' perspectives and how they experience and make sense of their careers. This thesis has therefore demonstrated the utility of the socio-cognitive perspective for studying differential career success.

Study one confirmed the importance of the socio-cognitive perspective by examining attributions. The study has provided an evidence base, finding important group differences in attibutional style. Based on existing research examining attributional style, these findings may have important associations with other socio-cognitive variables, such as self-esteem and self-efficacy, which have a range of possible implications for career success. The importance of a socio-cognitive perspective was also support by the relevance of perceived control across all three studies in this thesis.

Recent research has identified that there is a stronger link between initial intrinsic success (e.g. satisfaction) and later extrinsic success (e.g. salary), than vice versa (Abele & Spurk, 2009a). These findings suggest that the way individuals perceive their careers may influence their subsequent confidence, motivation, control and other socio-cognitive variables, which may lead to later extrinsic success. The importance of the socio-cognitive perspective for understanding career success is also evidenced by the increasing interest in core self-evaluations, which reflect many of the concepts discussed in this thesis (self-efficacy, locus of control, self-esteem and emotional stability: Judge & Bono, 2001). However, few studies have examined differences in ethnicity, career success and socio-cognitive variables, therefore this thesis has demonstrated the importance of socio-cognitive research for differential career success, and highlighted the need for future ethnicity research to adopt this perspective.

7.2.2 The Formal and Informal Organisation

An implication of this thesis for organisational psychology is the distinction between the formal and informal organisation, evident across the research studies. Interviewees from both groups in study two discussed the importance of informal organisational processes and associated behaviour for career success. For example, they reported that informal networking, the use of informal promotion systems (e.g. temporary promotion), enhancing visibility, reputation, self-promotion and informal developmental relationships were all important for career success. These factors typically bypassed the formal aspects of the organisation (e.g. assessment centres, formal selection). Furthermore, study three found that political skill, which is purported to aid individuals to navigate these informal environments, by developing networks and coalitions and using successful impression management strategies, is also associated with grade, number of promotions and career satisfaction.

Despite the significance of the informal nature of organisations, organisational psychology, particularly in the UK, has focused on the quantifiable aspects of differential career success, such as formal selection and promotion assessment, or appraisal ratings (Kenny & Briner, 2007). This may because of the ease of

identifying practical solutions to differential treatment in formal situations. It may also reflect the traditional positivist stance in organisational psychology; researchers may find acknowledging that individuals might perceive informal situations differently as problematic. Nevertheless, it is important that organisational psychology engages with these aspects of organisational life to understand how minority-ethnic employees perceive and experience organisations.

Ethnicity research from other disciplines has given more attention to the informal nature of organisations. For example, there is an extensive literature concerning informal networking relationships and their importance for career success from sociology (e.g. Ibarra, 1995). However, there is less research on the psychological mechanisms that operate within informal contexts, such as the attitudes and behaviours that influence informal interactions. Therefore, it is important that organisational psychologists engage in interdisciplinary research to enhance knowledge about the role of informal processes for differential career success.

7.2.4 Political Capital and Power

Whilst research has typically examined the role of human capital and social capital, this thesis has highlighted the importance of political capital for career success. Harvey and Novicevic (2004) argue that whilst social capital comprises the interpersonal relationships that provide information and support to ensure success, political capital relates to the development of political skill and includes the reputation of individuals and the use of power to gain the support of others (Ferris et al., 2007). The research in this thesis found that minority-ethnic employees may feel less control over informal situations. They did not report engaging in behaviours such as building reputation, or self-promotion, and rated their networking ability lower than majority-ethnic employees. This suggests that they may find it more difficult to develop political capital.

This may be because minority-ethnic employees are likely to hold lower levels of power in organisations. Researchers have argued that the power groups held in society, can be reflected in organisations and affect the status, power and social interaction of minority-ethnic employees (Alderfer & Smith, 1982; Deschamps,

1982; Ragins, 2007b). Although power was not directly measured in this thesis, the findings relating to control over informal situations and political skill suggest that it is an important theoretical perspective for differential career success research to consider. Although minority-ethnic employees may find it difficult to develop political skill because of a lack of power, according to Ferris, Davidson et al (2005) political skill can also enhance power. Therefore engaging in activities to increase political skill may help minority-ethnic employees develop political capital and enhance their career success.

7.3 Practical Implications

Given the importance of the informal nature of organisations demonstrated by the research findings, interventions and practical initiatives are harder to identify, target and implement than those on formal, measurable career stages (e.g. adverse impact of assessment tests). This is a possible explanation as to why organisational psychology has concentrated on the formal aspects of minority-ethnic career success. Nevertheless, discussed below are some practical initiatives that can aid the career success of minority-ethnic employees in organisations.

7.3.1 Political Skill Training

The findings from study three and existing research on political skill and career success (e.g. Todd et al 2009) suggest it is important that practical career interventions focus on developing individuals' political skill. Given the findings from this thesis, the networking ability dimension of political skill should be given highest priority in development activities. Whilst there has been no empirical research examining the effectiveness of political skill training, Ferris, Davidson et al (2005) propose a range of methods for developing skill. For example, they suggest executive coaching can help individuals develop strategy about who to target when creating network contacts and how to be effective in interpersonal relationships. The authors also suggest that team based or drama based training can help employees understand how to others develop relationships with people who hold important career resources. Learning negotiation techniques can also enable individuals to exchange resources. Individuals can also engage in behaviours such as volunteering

and working promptly and reliably to become a more desirable network contact for others. Importantly Ferris, Davidson et al (2005) emphasise that individuals must be mindful that developing networks is a long term strategy meaning network contacts must be maintained overtime and relationships must be reciprocal.

7.3.2 Mentoring

Mentoring is seen as an important device for career sponsorship, provision of feedback and advice, exposure to important decision makers and networks, role modelling and friendship (Allen et al, 2004). It is also considered important for developing political skill (Blass et al., 2007; Ferris, Davidson et al., 2005). Because minority-ethnic employees may find it difficult gaining access to mentors who possess the power and resources to offer these functions, formal mentoring is becoming increasingly popular in organisations (Bearman, Blake-Beard, Hunt, & Crosby, 2007). Some argue that formal mentoring is not as effective for career success as informal developmental relationships (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). However, research suggests that deep level diversity (e.g. attitudes, beliefs and values) may overcome initial difficulties in forming successful cross-race mentorships (Blake-Beard, 2001; Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989). Furthermore, the short time scales often used in formal mentoring programmes (e.g. six months) may not allow for mentoring functions to fully develop (Chao, 1997; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Therefore, organisations should consider deep-level diversity when matching mentees and mentors, by considering similarity in attitudes and values. Organisational mentoring programmes should also promote long term mentoring relationships to enhance the career success of minority-ethnic employees.

7.3.3 Formal Networks

Given that minority-ethnic employees may feel more able to engage with formal networking schemes, and may find it difficult to gain access into informal networks, organisations should look to implementing formal networks to enhance minority-ethnic career success. Formal networks can provide social support and career advice to their members and include activities such as seminars, conferences, workshops and social gatherings (Friedman & Craig, 2004; Friedman et al, 1998). However,

these groups are often based on race or gender and whilst this may offer certain career resources, such as social support and self-help activities, such networks may also be perceived negatively by others in the organisation (Friedman & Carter, 1993). Furthermore, they are less likely to include members from high status positions (Ragins, 2007b). Therefore, organisations should look to implement cross-race formal networks and encourage key decision makers and senior level employees to participate and network with members from a range of backgrounds.

7.3.4 Diversity Training

Diversity training is an increasingly popular method to enhance awareness, attitudes and skills around diversity (Cocchiara, Connerley, & Bell, 2010) . The aims of such programmes are to make employees aware of their own and others' bias and discrimination, to enhance understanding of organisational diversity initiatives, to improve attitudes towards the importance of diversity and attitudes towards specific demographic groups, and to enable individuals to learn and implement interpersonal skills to work effectively in diverse organisations (Kulik & Roberson, 2008). However, evaluation studies have found mixed outcomes (e.g. Hood, Muller, & Seitz, 2001; Roberson, Kulik, & Pepper, 2002) and findings suggest that white employees are less likely to engage in transfer of training than minority-ethnic individuals (Roberson, Kulik, & Pepper, 2003).

Importantly, research is unclear about what makes diversity training effective, and what the key aims of training should be. However, the results from this thesis demonstrate that individuals' relationship with their line manager can influence a range of factors that may be important for career success, such as career guidance, sponsorship, quality of feedback and access to development. Therefore, targeting diversity training at managers has the potential to enhance the quality of leader-member exchange relationships. However, given the importance of the informal nature of organisations, training should focus on how diversity can influence every day interactions, rather than focus on legal concerns, organisational policies or accuse managers of inherent bias. Instead training should focus on communication between leader-subordinate dyads. This could promote understanding about deep-level diversity and overcome initial barriers to developing high quality relationships

with line managers (DiTomaso & Hooijberg, 1996; DiTomaso, Post, & Parks-Yancy, 2007).

7.3.5 Political Skill and Networking Toolkit

An important output from this thesis has been the development of a toolkit for the host organisation, which is provided in Appendix 10. The toolkit provides an overview of the findings and details methods to improve political skill and develop networks. Firstly, the importance of the informal side of the organisation is discussed and is linked to the findings from study two and three; that minority-ethnic employees may feel they have less control over these situations. The findings from study three, in relation to differential levels of political skill are introduced, as well as a practical task that allows individuals to map their networks. This task is based on existing networking literature (e.g. Ibarra, 1995; Podolny & Baron, 1997; Seibert et al., 2001) and provides a step by step process for individuals to gain knowledge about the types of networks they have. They are asked to map the number of ties within their network, the status of these ties (e.g. powerful/non-powerful organisational members), whether the ties are used for social support and/or career outcomes and the extent of homophily (based on ethnicity) within their network. By identifying these patterns individuals are able to enhance their understanding about the qualities of their network and areas that may need strengthening. It also provides recommendations for the use of formal networks and mentoring.

The toolkit was piloted on a group of 75 minority- and majority-ethnic individuals outside of the organisation in a workshop scenario. The workshop received positive feedback, which suggested that the toolkit was valuable to aid individuals' awareness about the composition of their networks and to develop strategy about where their networks needed strengthening. For example, a number of participants were surprised about the extent of homophily in their networks and the lack of powerful network ties, which gave them a focus for future networking activities.

7.4 Strengths of this Thesis

7.4.1 Mixed Methods

A strength of this thesis is the use of a mixed methods approach. Using qualitative and quantitative methods meant that collecting and analysing both interview and numerical data was time and resource intensive. However, using qualitative methods allowed rich, contextualised data to be collected. This enhanced knowledge about minority-ethnic managers' careers beyond the predefined variables used in existing career success research, which have been developed on majority-ethnic samples. Qualitative methods also gave voice to minority-ethnic managers, a group previously unheard in differential career success research. Quantitative analysis allowed the political skill deficiency explanation to be tested and for study three to build on the concepts concerning the informal organisation from study two. These findings can therefore be better generalised and encompass a wider sample of political skill across the organisation.

A pragmatist stance was particularly appropriate for this research. Pragmatism allows researchers to examine topics that do not fit neatly into positivist/constructivist or quantitative/qualitative frameworks (Armitage, 2007). This was relevant throughout the thesis. For example, research on race of interviewer effects suggests that different interviewers may receive different responses from the same participant (Gunaratnam, 2003). Therefore, rather than taking a positivist stance and assuming there was one objective truth, it was possible to acknowledge this in this research and be reflexive about the researchers' social and demographic background when interpreting findings (see section 7.6 for a discussion). A pragmatist approach was also useful for analysing attributions which can be both quantifiable reflections of internal cognitions, but can also be shared publicly and have their meanings interpreted differently by others. Furthermore, by identifying differences in individuals' perceptions of the informal nature of the organisation suggests that, rather than one objective truth, there are multiple, legitimate perspectives. Adopting a pragmatist stance, where these factors could be acknowledged, was arguably more meaningful than strictly adhering to the positivist stance that dominates organisational psychology (Johnson & Cassell, 2001)

7.4.2 Research Context

The research in this thesis was conducted within a single public sector organisation in the U.K. As identified by Kenny and Briner (2007), there are very few studies on ethnicity in U.K. organisational psychology, therefore this research contributes to a currently under-researched area. Much of the existing career success and ethnicity literature has been developed in the U.S. Whilst this has provided an understanding of some of the key issues relating to ethnicity in the workplace, it raises concerns about its generalizability. The types of careers people choose, what career behaviours are important and how they define success has been found to vary across cultures and countries (e.g. Claes & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1998). The U.S. has also has a distinct social and historical background; different ethnic groups and power relations between those groups in society mean that findings are not necessarily applicable to minority-ethnic groups in the U.K. By examining the career success of minority-ethnic employees in a single U.K organisation, it was possible to identify factors that were important to a U.K. setting.

Additionally, all the research in this thesis was conducted in a single public sector organisation. This meant that, unlike many existing career success studies, which often examine career success across organisations (e.g. Cox & Nkomo, 1991; Ferris et al., 2008; Judge et al., 2010; Todd et al., 2009), findings from the studies in this thesis could be interpreted with consideration of the organisation's structure and culture. This is particularly relevant for research on career success, because the potential to advance may be dependent on the organisation's hierarchy and formal processes, such as promotion policies. Organisational culture and climate may also influence the experiences of minority-ethnic employees, as well as the use of political behaviour in organisations.

7.4.3 Minority-Ethnic Managers

Study one and two of this thesis examined the career experiences of minority-ethnic managers. This is an important area of research, as existing studies on differential career success have focused on large scale surveys of lower level employees (e.g. Cox & Nkomo, 1991; Fearfull & Kamenou, 2006). Interviewing minority-ethnic

managers offers an insight into the role of ethnicity in individual's careers because they straddle two power roles: they simultaneously have high status in the organisation, because of their work role, but also have lower power, due to the non-dominant status their demographic group have in society. By interviewing managers, the research in this thesis has therefore been able to provide a rich, contextualised understanding of the role of ethnicity in organisations. It has offered information about how those individuals have navigated their careers thus far, and successfully obtained management positions.

7.5 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

7.5.1 Treatment of Ethic Groups

The chief limitation of this thesis is that the research was not able to differentiate between different ethnic groups which are likely to vary in their experiences of organisations. For example, Huffcutt and Roth (1998) established that Hispanic, black but not Asian employees received lower ratings from white interviewers. In the UK, Dewberry (2001) has identified that Black Caribbean and Black Africans were more likely to obtain poorer grades on a training course, than were other ethnic minorities. The different stereotypes individuals hold about different groups is also likely to impact their career experiences. For example, Asian Americans have received little attention in academic research, because they are perceived as 'model minorities' who do well educationally and economically and do not warrant investigation (Cheng, 1997; Maddux, Galinsky, Cuddy, & Polifroni, 2008). Research has also demonstrated that different cultures have different career expectations, and career behaviour (Lindberg, 2009; Schein, 1984; Spector et al, 2007). For example employees from collectivist cultures may be more committed to organisations and less likely to change roles than employees in individualistic cultures (e.g. Albrecht, 2001; Gannon & Newman, 2002; Kao & Sek Hong, 1993).

Examining the differences between ethnic groups may be particularly important when researching organisational politics. Whilst the research on organisational politics makes little reference to power differences between individuals and groups, this is likely to influence how the informal nature of organisations is perceived

(Silvester, 2008). For minority-ethnic groups power is particularly important because they are likely to hold a lower power status in organisations and in wider society (Ragins, 2007b). Different ethnic groups are likely to vary in the power they hold across these two status positions and therefore potentially vary in their ability to engage in organisational politics or the informal side of organisations.

However, examining specific ethnic backgrounds may not be easily achievable. For example, when the research was conducted for this thesis, the organisation had only two Black African individuals in senior management[1]. Therefore, gaining enough participants from specific groups to reach meaningful conclusions is a difficult task and accounts for the lack of existing ethnicity research, particularly on senior level employees (Cox, 2004). Furthermore, dividing groups into clear cut categories is not as simple as it appears. Some of the official (e.g. ONS, 2005) categories are broad, for example Black African can include individuals from South Africa, Morocco, or Somalia, which have widely varying cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, this research focused on British born minority-ethnic groups which cannot be clearly divided into collectivist or individualist categories as they may be second or third generation (or more) immigrants and may have resided in Britain longer than many White British individuals. Grouping individuals into categories may also be problematic as increasing numbers of individuals are identifying themselves as mixed race (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001)

Rather than categorising individuals, future research should therefore consider the extent individuals identify with their ethnic and cultural identity (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996). For example Roberson and Block (2001) suggest that perceptions of racial climate and discrimination within organisations can be influenced by the individual's degree of identification with either white or black culture. It is therefore important that ethnicity research acknowledges these different perspectives and looks beyond treating race and ethnicity as nominal measures (Cox et al., 2001).

[1] of those who had completed ethnic background monitoring data

7.5.2 Intersectionalities

The research in this thesis has not examined intersectionalities, such as the relationship between ethnicity and religion, social class, nationality, age or gender. This is for the same reasons that no differentiation between ethnicities was made; because, particularly at senior levels, it is difficult to achieve sufficient sample sizes and decide how to divide individuals into various demographic categories. However, these interactions are important, for example, particularly within a U.K. context, social class has the potential to significantly influence individuals' career trajectories. Individuals also hold different stereotypes about different religious groups, which may affect their treatment in organisations (Baumann, 1999; Fadil, 1995). U.S. researchers have also suggested that interactions between gender and ethnicity can affect managerial promotions (e.g. Bell, 1990; Elliott & Smith, 2004; Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002).

Given the difficulties of accounting for all the possible demographic groups individuals may belong to, it is important that researchers remain reflexive about the different roles that religion, class, age, gender and other factors may play. In this thesis the role of gender was particularly important, as women made up the majority of both the sample in studies one and two (male n = 11, female n = 29) as well as study three (male n = 128, female n = 183). For the qualitative research, the researcher remained reflexive about whether there were experiences that were unique to the women in the sample. Whilst it was possible to statistically control for the effect of gender in study one and study three, there were gender differences in the findings from these studies. This suggests that there may be interactions between gender and ethnicity which deserve attention in future research.

Given the gender composition of the samples in this thesis, it is important to consider why the majority of participants were female. Although it cannot be determined why more women than men participated there are several possible reasons. It may be that there were more minority-ethnic women at senior levels of the organisation, although statistics to confirm this were not available. It may also be that women were more willing, or had more time to participate in the research than men. Women may also have held greater concerns about their career success than men, and were therefore

more engaged in the research. Given these possible implications of these participation rates, it is important that future research examine intersectionalities, particularly the interaction between ethnicity and gender.

7.5.3 Self-Report Data

The research across all three studies in this thesis used self-report data. In study three this may have meant that responses were influenced by social desirability, inconsistency or positive or negative affectivity (Podsakoff et al, 2003). However, career success researchers argue that 'objective' measures collected using self-report, such as grade, or number of promotions, are less sensitive to common method bias (e.g. Judge et al 1995).

Study one and study two also utilised self-reported accounts of career experiences. These may have been influenced by social desirability or affectivity, for example, participants may have wanted to use the opportunity to air grievances. They were also retrospective accounts, meaning that they may be less accurate representations of individuals' experiences because of lapses of memory, cognitive bias or oversimplifications (Golden, 1992; Miller, Cardinal, & Glick, 1997). Self-report data also meant that the experiences, which they reported had influenced their career success, may have had no actual impact. Nevertheless, the research in these studies aimed to give voice to minority-ethnic managers, to gain a greater knowledge of their experiences and perceptions, which are arguably as important for career success, as concrete, observable and measurable factors (Albert & Luzzo, 1999; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1996b; Weiner, 1995).

7.5.4 Longitudinal Research

The research in this thesis was cross-sectional, and whilst this has provided an important insight into the career experiences of minority-ethnic managers and employees, future research should also examine differential career success longitudinally. Longitudinal research may be particularly challenging when investigating ethnicity, because the initial participant pool is smaller than in majority-ethnic research, and even small drop-out rates, may mean that there are not

sufficient participants to use meaningful statistical analysis (Cox, 2004). Nevertheless, given that the nature of careers means they develop over time, it is important to examine how individuals' perceptions of career experiences change. For example, examining the causal attributions of minority- and majority-ethnic employees at several time points, such as organisational entry, and before and after key career events, may provide important information about the types of experiences minority-ethnic employees encounter, and how these influence the process of sensemaking and future career behaviour.

Longitudinal research is also necessary to determine the relationship between political skill and career success. Although existing research suggests political skill is a predictor of career success, it may well be an outcome. For example, individuals may gain access to sources for developing their political skill, once they have achieved a certain level of success. Tracking individuals' political skill and career experiences may shed light on the process of developing political skill and the influence this has on career trajectory.

7.5.5 Research on Differential Political Skill

The findings from study three of this thesis suggest that it is important for future research to gain greater knowledge of the content of political skill, and how it can be developed through informal socialisation processes, as well as formal training. Research has associated political skill with a range of workplace outcomes, such as job performance, salary, career satisfaction (Ferris et al., 2008; Harris et al., 2007; Todd et al., 2009) and some have even suggested it may be useful as a selection tool (Blickle, Below, & Johannen, 2011). However, this thesis has found evidence of differential political skill for minority-ethnic groups and therefore understanding how these differences arise and how they can be tackled is imperative for future research.

One method of gaining a greater insight into differential political skill is to examine other-rated political skill of minority-ethnic employees. Although there may be challenges to this approach, such as determining whether others can accurately rate political skill, given that many of its components reflect covert behaviour,

researchers have begun to use 360 political skill measures (e.g. Blickle, Ferris, et al., 2011). By asking others to rate the political skill of minority-ethnic participants may uncover important information about how they are perceived by others; additionally any mismatches in self and other ratings can identify areas for development.

The relationship between political skill and a range of other variables is also important to consider. For example, in this research, majority-ethnic interviewees reported using proactive strategies to enhance their career, such as self-promotion and building reputation. Therefore, examining the relationship between proactive personality and political skill is important. Particularly considering existing research has found that proactive personality is associated with political knowledge (Seibert, et al, 2001) and network building activities (Thomson, 2005). It is also important to determine whether different groups perceive potentially political workplace environments differently, whether they have the same level of political understanding and political knowledge and the relationship these factors have with political skill.

7.5.6 Measures of Career Success

The research in this thesis has measured career success using somewhat traditional measures of career satisfaction, grade and number of promotions. Whilst these capture information about extrinsic and intrinsic career success, it is important that future research uses a greater range of success measures. For example, research has begun to examine differences between self-referent success, where success is compared against an individual's aspirations, and other-referent success, where success is compared against colleagues or others in the same industry (Heslin, 2003). These types of success measures may be particularly relevant for differential career success. Besides comparing themselves to others of similar age, grade or education level, minority-ethic employees' career satisfaction may be dependent on whether they compare themselves to majority-ethnic employees (who may experience less difficulty in progression) or minority-ethnic employees (who may experience differential career outcomes).

There are also a number of other success measures that should be examined in future research on differential career success. For example, whilst existing career satisfaction measures typically measure satisfaction-with-objective measures (e.g. satisfaction with salary: Greenhaus et al, 1990), career success may also be measured using subjective outcomes such as enjoyment, psychological fulfilment, challenge at work or achievement of work life balance. It is also important that career success measures are contextualised. For example, the research in this thesis was conducted between 2007 and 2009, a time of economic instability in the U.K., meaning that perceptions of success may have been more closely tied to job security and retention, rather than advancement.

7.6 Reflections

As a female, White British researcher, I feel it is important that I acknowledge and reflect on the role that my ethnicity has played in this research. On starting the PhD I identified three key points where I thought my ethnicity may influence the research process: (1) gaining participants' support, (2) collecting data and (3) providing feedback.

7.6.1 Gaining Participants' Support

Although I had a great deal of support from the organisation and senior HR members for the project, as an 'outsider' in terms of the organisation and my ethnicity, I anticipated finding it difficult to gain the trust and cooperation of minority-ethnic participants. However, I was surprised at how supportive the minority-ethnic employees were of the research. Instead the chief difficulty I had was the number of potential minority-ethnic participants in the organisation. This was particularly challenging in study one, where participants were minority-ethnic managers, whose representation was much lower; a catch-22 of research on differential career success. This even meant I had to abandon one of my original study plans. Yet, by gaining the support of minority-ethnic support forum early on in the research, I was able to gain sufficient numbers of participants to continue with the remaining studies. Gaining their support was a crucial stage of this research, however, I found it a careful balancing act. As I was working with the occupational psychology team in

the organisation I had to ensure that, whilst seen as less of an outsider, I also wanted to remain objective and cautioned against becoming too embedded in the organisation's culture.

7.6.2 Collecting Data

It has been suggested that researchers who are ethnically dissimilar to their participants will influence data collection in two ways: (1) by influencing the accuracy and truthfulness of participants' responses and (2) by not possessing the cultural perspective to fully comprehend participants' experiences (Gunaratnam, 2003; Rhodes, 1994).

The concept of race of interviewer effects (RIE) has received considerable attention in the US literature (e.g. Campbell, 2007; Moorman, Newman, Millikan, Tse, & Sandler, 1999; Schumann & Converse, 1971). Researchers in this field argue that any distrust between ethnic groups that exists because of historical and societal differences will be extended to the research scenario. Consequently, interview and survey accounts will be less accurate and genuine when researchers and participants are racially dissimilar. For example, a black participant interviewed by a black researcher may offer opinions that reflect their attitudes more closely than when interviewed by a white researcher (Davis, 2007; Hatchett & Schuman, 1975; Sudman & Bradburn, 1974).

There are three topic areas that have been demonstrated to enhance RIE; those with implications for social desirability or prestige, those examining political opinions and those focusing on racial issues (Schaeffer, 1980). However, studies showing strong RIE have asked questions that tackle racial differences directly, such as black militancy, and feelings of hostility towards white groups and perceptions of discrimination (e.g. Krysan & Couper, 2006; Schumann & Converse, 1971). Moreover, broader race-related topics have shown no RIE in similar questionnaire and survey research (Campbell, 2007; Schaeffer, 1980; Schumann & Converse, 1971).

Nevertheless, I was particularly concerned about my role as a white female researcher. Several strategies have been suggested to enable white researchers to perform ethnicity research more effectively. The first is to employ minority-ethnic interviewers; I felt this was inappropriate because it may mislead participants to believe that the interviewer had overall control of the research (Phoenix, 1994). Edwards (1990) suggests openly acknowledging 'racial' differences and experiences during data collection to encourage rapport building. However, Andersen (1993) found that this approach actively racialised the interview and made differences between researcher and participant more salient, I therefore did not adopt this approach.

Edwards (1990) also advocates building a relationship with participants over multiple interviews so they feel confident in revealing more sensitive information. In this research, as with much organisational research, data collection had to occur alongside employees' working days and therefore had to be succinct in order to allow people to participate. For this reason, I only interviewed participants once; however, approaching the minority-ethnic support forum I was able to form a relationship with the minority-ethnic community in the organisation. I found this approach particularly useful because it meant that I was not associated with an academic or organisational institution, that may have been perceived as white, middle class and with suspicion (Edwards, 1990; Gunaratnam, 2003). Therefore, although RIE is a concern for ethnicity-based research with minority-ethnic participants, in this research programme, I used clear research objectives and methods to gain trust and build rapport with participants to minimise RIE.

On reflection I do not think that RIE were problematic in this research. Interviewees gave me very detailed, emotive accounts of their career experiences and discussed sensitive information and events.

7.6.3 Providing Feedback

I found that providing feedback to the minority-ethnic participants challenging. I used several different methods of feedback, including presentations, reports and one to one meetings with senior diversity leaders. However, I found that the expectations

from the project were high. Many of the participants felt that my research should solve differential career success in the organisation and found it difficult to accept that, although I could make recommendations, I had no power to change policy. This stage of the research was the point where I felt most like an outsider. However, by continuing the working relationship with the organisation and engaging more with the diversity strategy team, I feel that my research is having a positive impact.

I have also found presenting the research to minority-ethnic groups outside of the organisation challenging and sometimes have been concerned that I may be perceived as lacking legitimacy, as a white researcher However, I also feel that being a white researcher examining ethnicity, has given me a unique perspective on differential career success, as I have been able to step back and take an objective stance. However, throughout the research process I have had to remain reflexive about any potential bias that I may bring to the process, as a white middle class, female researcher.

7.7 A Final Note

In summary, this thesis has examined differential career success across three studies. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, these studies have offered a unique and important insight into the career experiences of minority-ethnic employees. Yet, ethnicity remains an under-researched area of organisational psychology. Future research needs to build on the evidence base provided in this thesis and continue to examine the role of ethnicity in organisations beyond the selection stage.

8. References

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9.1 Appendix 1:

Email to Encourage Participation in Study One and Two

The organisation is sponsoring a research project that will examine perceptions of career success at [organisation]. We are interested in finding out more about the career experiences of managers (Grade 6-8). This is an important and interesting area of research as it can improve our understanding of how the organisation can develop, appraise and promote its employees.

The project will involve a 40-50 minute one-to-one interview, which will be fully confidential. The interview will focus on your career history and key events that you think have positively or negative influenced your career success.

If you would like to participate, or would like more information about the project, please contact Maddy Dipper from City University London on maddy.dipper.1@city.ac.uk or m.dipper@[organisation]

Thank you in advance for your participation.

9.2 Appendix 2: Information Sheet for Study One and Two

Investigating the Career Experiences of [organisation] Employees

Principal Investigator: Madeleine Dipper

The purpose of the study is to investigate the career experiences of Black and Minority-Ethnic employees and compare these to the experiences of white employees. Potential participants will be contacted through [the support forum], and will be a mixture of male and female BME and white staff.

Findings from the research will be used to guide organisational policy and guidelines, potentially leading to reviewing existing career mechanisms. The research involves 40-50 minute interviews to examine critical events in employees' career paths. Each interview will involve questions around events that have affected career direction.

Any data from the interviews will be stored securely at the [organisation] and will not be taken off site. They will only be accessed by the researcher (Madeleine Dipper) who will destroy all materials after the study is complete.

Participation is voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any stage. If you feel questions are too personal or intrusive you can avoid answering them. Overall findings from the study will be shared with all participants, even those who choose to withdraw.

Publications may be made using the findings of the research, but all data will be kept anonymous. The [organisation] will have sight of written outputs prior to publication. Any publications that are made will also carry any disclaimers that the [organisation] requires.

For further information about this study please contact: Madeleine.dipper@[organisation]

If there is an aspect of the study which concerns you, you may make a complaint. City University has established a complaints procedure via the Secretary to the Research Ethics Committee. To complain about the study, you need to phone 020 7040 ****. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary of the Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is:. **Investigating the Career Experiences of [organisation] Employees**

You could also write to the Secretary at:

[address]

9.3 Appendix 3: Informed Consent Study One and Two

Project Title: Career Experiences of [organisation] Employees.

I agree to take part in the above City University research project. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information sheet, which I may keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- be interviewed by the researcher
- allow the interview to be audiotaped

Confidentiality:

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other organisation

Right to Withdraw:

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Name: .....(please print)

Signature: .....……Date: .....

9.4 Appendix 4: Interview Schedule

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. This is part of a series of interviews which will form the first stage of a three year research project, which is being co-sponsored by the [organisation].

The purpose of <u>this</u> interview is to collect information in relation to your career. I am interested in your experiences and perspective. During the interview I would like you to talk about the events that you identified in the interview preparation. The interview should take approximately 40-50 minutes.

For the purpose of analysis the interviews will be recorded and transcribed. During this process any names will be removed from the data and the tapes will then be destroyed. . No information about you, or anyone discussed, as an individual will be disclosed in reports or to any other party.

Is this OK?

Do you have any questions?

1. Can you tell me a little about your current role?
    a. What is your grade equivalent?

2. Can you briefly describe your career path to date?
    a. How many organisations have you worked in?
    b. What was your first work role?
    c. How have you progressed since then?

3. Can you describe one of the events on your timeline that has had a positive influence on your career?
        a. What happened?
        b. What did you do?
        c. Why do you think you were (un)successful
        d. What kind of support did you receive?
        e. Could anyone have been more helpful?
        f. What would you have done differently?
        g. What have you learnt from this experience?

4. Can you describe one of the events on your timeline that has had a negative influence on your career?
    a. What happened?
    b. What did you do?
    c. Why do you think you were unsuccessful
    d. What kind of support did you receive?
    e. Could anyone have been more helpful?
    f. What would you have done differently?
    g. What have you learnt from this experience?

5. Can you describe another significant event?
    a. What happened?
    b. What did you do?
    c. Why do you think you were unsuccessful
    d. What kind of support did you receive?
    e. Could anyone have been more helpful?
    f. What would you have done differently?
    g. What have you learnt from this experience?

6. Are there any career opportunities you have tried to pursue?
    a. What happened?
    b. What did you do?
    c. Is there anything you would have done differently?

7. What do you want to achieve from your career?

Thank you for your time – Do you have any questions?

9.5 Appendix 5: Kolmogorov-Smirnov Tests of Normality for Attribution Dimensions

	Minority-Ethnic		Majority-Ethnic	
	Positive Events	Negative Events	Positive Events	Negative Events
Number of Attributions	.15	.17	.11	.20*
Mean Dimension Scores				
Stable – Unstable	.17	.12	.12	.25**
Internal – External	.12	.12	.15	.19
Controllable – Uncontrollable	.18	.17	.15	.30**
Global-Specific	.13	.14	.14	.20*
Personal- Universal	.14	15	.11	.13

Note. Values reported are Kolmogorov-Smirnov *D*

*p<.05, **p<.01

9.6 Appendix 6: Email Shot for Study Three

The organisation is sponsoring a research project, which is examining the career experiences, career success and mobility in the organisation. This is an important and interesting area of research as it can improve our understanding of how the organisation can develop, appraise and promote its employees.

The research involves completing a short questionnaire, which should take 10-20 minutes. The questionnaire will ask you for some demographic information, some questions about your career to date and information about career behaviours.

Participation is voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any stage. If you would like to participate the questionnaire can be found here [link]

If you would like to participate, or would like more information about the project, please contact Maddy Dipper from City University London on maddy.dipper.1@city.ac.uk or m.dipper@**********

9.7 Appendix 7: Questionnaire for Study Three

This questionnaire is part of research by City University London to examine employees' career experiences and their career success and mobility within the organisation. In particular, we are aiming to identify whether there are differences in how employees from different ethnic groups and backgrounds experience organisational careers. This is an important area to address as there has been relatively little research in this field.

Findings from the research will be used to guide organisational policy and guidelines, potentially leading to reviewing existing career mechanisms. If you choose to take part, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire which consists of two sections; the first enables you to provide some important background information, so we can interpret findings more meaningfully. The second section aims to collect information about your career behaviours The questionnaire should take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete.

Any data from the questionnaires will be stored securely at the [organisation], on the secure [server] system and will not be taken off site.. Data will only be accessed by the researcher (Madeleine Dipper) who will destroy all materials after the research is complete.

Participation is voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any stage. If you feel questions are too personal or intrusive you can avoid answering them. Overall findings from the study will be shared with all participants, even those who choose to withdraw.

Publications may be made using the findings of the research, but all data will be kept anonymous. The [organisation] will have sight of written outputs prior to publication. Any publications that are made will also carry any disclaimers that the Home Office requires.

For further information about this study please contact: XXXX

If there is an aspect of the study which concerns you, you may make a complaint. City University has established a complaints procedure via the Secretary to the Research Ethics Committee. To complain about the study, you need to phone 020 7040 ****. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary of the Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is: **Career Experiences of [organisation] Employees.**

You could also write to the Secretary at:
[address]

Informed Consent

Project Title: Career Experiences of [organisation] Employees.

I agree to take part in the above City University research project. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information page. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to complete questionnaires asking me about my career experiences, demographic information and behaviour at work.

Confidentiality:

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports

on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other organisation

Right to Withdraw:

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I consent to participate

Yes ☐

No ☐

What is the name of your organisation?	Click here to enter text.			
Gender	Male ☐ Female ☐			
Ethnicity	White British	☒	Indian	☐
	White Irish	☐	Pakistani	☐
	White Other	☐	Bangladeshi	☐
	Black Caribbean	☐	Chinese	☐
	Black African	☐	Any other Asian background	☐
	Black British	☐	Mixed background	☐
	Black Asian	☐	Other (please specify)	
	Any other black background	☐	Click here to enter text.	
Age	16-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55+ ☐			
How long have you worked in the current organisation?	Click here to enter text.			
What is your current grade?	Click here to enter text.			
How many promotions have you received in your current organisation?	Click here to enter text.			
How many promotions have you received in organisations other than your current organisation?	Click here to enter text.			

Please rate each question on the following 5-point scale, indicating the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Try to answer as honestly as possible

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I spend a lot of time and effort at work networking with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for income	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is easy for me to develop good rapport with most people	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I understand people very well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for advancement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am good at building relationships with influential people at work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates at work whom I can call on for support when I really need to get things done	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At work, I know a lot of important people and am well connected	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I spend a lot of time at work developing connections with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am good at getting people to like me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I try to show a genuine interest in other people	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I am good at using my connections and network to make things happen at work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have good intuition or savvy about how to present myself to others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I always seem to instinctively know the right things to say or do to influence others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I pay close attention to people's facial expressions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you for participating in the research. If you would like more information about the research, or would like to withdraw from the study, please contact maddy.dipper.1@city.ac.uk

If you would like to receive a summary report of the findings, please provide your email addres in this survey [link]. Collecting email addresses using this method means that they are in no way linked to your responses on this questionnaire.

9.8 Appendix 8: Political Skill Inventory

Networking Ability α = .76
I spend a lot of time and effort at work networking with others
I am good at building relationships with influential people at work
I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates at work whom I can call on for support when I really need to get things done
At work, I know a lot of important people and am well connected
I spend a lot of time at work developing connections with others
I am good at using my connections and network to make things happen at work
Interpersonal Influence α = .76
I am able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around me
I am able to communicate easily and effectively with others
It is easy for me to develop good rapport with most people
I am good at getting people to like me
Social Astuteness α = .73
I understand people very well
I am particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others
I have good intuition or savvy about how to present myself to others
I always seem to instinctively know the right things to say or do to influence others
I pay close attention to people's facial expressions
Apparent Sincerity α = .79
When communicating with others, I try to be genuine in what I say and do
It is important that people believe I am sincere in what I say and do
I try to show a genuine interest in other people

Note. Sourced from Ferris et al (2005)

9.9 Appendix 9: Full Statistical Analysis for Study Three

9.9.1 Full Analysis for Multiple Mediation for Grade

Effect of Ethnicity on Grade				
	B	SE	t	p
Total Effect	-.47	.19	-2.47	.01
Direct Effect	-.35	.18	-1.97	.05

Partial Effect of Control Variables on Grade				
	B	SE	t	p
Gender	.12	.18	.68	.50
Tenure	-.00	.00	-.47	.64
Age 16-24	-.25	.32	-.79	.43
Age 35-44	-.12	.20	-.61	.54
Age 45-54	.10	.25	.39	.69
Age 55 +	.44	.45	.98	.33

Effect of Ethnicity on Mediators				
	B	SE	t	p
Networking Ability	-.17	.07	-2.52	.01
Interpersonal Influence	.02	.06	.28	.78
Social Astuteness	.10	.06	1.51	.13
Apparent Sincerity	.16	.07	2.42	.02

Effect of Mediators on Grade				
	B	SE	t	p
Networking Ability	1.22	.16	7.58	<.001
Interpersonal Influence	-.38	.21	-1.82	.07
Social Astuteness	.03	.20	.14	.89
Apparent Sincerity	.56	.18	3.14	<.01

Indirect Effects				
	Point Estimate	SE	Lower CI	Upper CI
Total Indirect Effect	-.12	.09	-.32	.05
Networking Ability	-.21	.09	-.40	-.05
Interpersonal Influence	-.01	.03	-.08	.04
Social Astuteness	.00	.02	-.04	.06
Apparent Sincerity	.09	.04	.02	.20

9.9.2 Full Analysis for Multiple Mediation for Number of Promotions

Effect of Ethnicity on Number of Promotions				
	B	SE	t	p
Total Effect	.21	.15	1.46	.16
Direct Effect	.25	.15	1.65	.10

Partial Effect of Control Variables on Number of Promotions				
	B	SE	t	p
Gender	-.32	.15	-2.10	.04
Tenure	.01	.00	7.55	<.001
Age 16-24	.02	.27	.07	.95
Age 35-44	-.19	.17	-1.11	.27
Age 45-54	-.35	.21	-1.67	.10
Age 55 +	.08	.38	.21	.83

Effect of Ethnicity on Mediators				
	B	SE	t	p
Networking Ability	-.17	.07	-2.59	.01
Interpersonal Influence	.02	.06	.39	.70
Social Astuteness	.10	.06	1.61	.11
Apparent Sincerity	.16	.07	2.51	.01

Effect of Mediators on Number of Promotions				
	B	SE	t	p
Networking Ability	.31	.14	2.23	.03
Interpersonal Influence	-.19	.18	-1.07	.29
Social Astuteness	-.08	.17	-.48	.63
Apparent Sincerity	.20	.15	1.31	.19

Indirect Effects				
	Point Estimate	SE	Lower CI	Upper CI
Total Indirect Effect	-.03	.05	-.13	.05
Networking Ability	-.05	.03	-.15	-.01
Interpersonal Influence	-.00	.02	-.06	.01
Social Astuteness	-.01	.02	-.07	.01
Apparent Sincerity	.03	.03	-.01	.11

Note. Confidence Intervals are 95% with bias corrected and accelerated bootstrap with 10,000 samples

9.9.3 Full Analysis for Multiple Mediation for Career Satisfaction

Effect of Ethnicity on Career Satisfaction				
	B	SE	t	p
Total Effect	-.32	.10	-3.21	<.01
Direct Effect	-.24	.09	-2.63	.01

Partial Effect of Control Variables on Career Satisfaction				
	B	SE	t	p
Gender	.08	.09	.82	.41
Tenure	-.00	.00	-.89	.37
Age 16-24	.15	.17	.92	.36
Age 35-44	-.15	.11	-1.47	.14
Age 45-54	-.12	.13	-.88	.38
Age 55 +	-.18	.24	-.77	.44

Effect of Ethnicity on Mediators				
	B	SE	t	p
Networking Ability	-.17	.07	-2.52	.01
Interpersonal Influence	.02	.06	.28	.78
Social Astuteness	.10	.06	1.51	.13
Apparent Sincerity	.16	.07	2.42	.02

Effect of Mediators on Career Satisfaction				
	B	SE	t	p
Networking Ability	.65	.08	7.66	<.001
Interpersonal Influence	-.04	.11	-.36	.72
Social Astuteness	-.00	.10	-.05	.96
Apparent Sincerity	.20	.09	2.17	.03

Indirect Effects				
	Point Estimate	SE	Lower CI	Upper CI
Total Indirect Effect	-.08	.05	-.19	.03
Networking Ability	-.11	.05	-.21	-.02
Interpersonal Influence	-.00	.01	-.03	.01
Social Astuteness	-.01	.02	-.03	.03
Apparent Sincerity	.03	.02	.00	.09

Note. Confidence Intervals are 95% with bias corrected and accelerated bootstrap with 10,000 samples

9.10 Appendix 10: Toolkit

Connecting across Difference: Networking, Mentoring and the Psychology of Diversity

Maddy Wyatt

maddy.wyatt.1@city.ac.uk

1

Overview

- Informal nature of organisations
- Political behaviour
- Networking
  - Your networks
  - Ethnicity and networking
  - Networking strategies
- Strategies for developing network contacts

2

Nature of Organisations

Formal	Informal
Selection & assessment tools	Selection and promotion processes
Mentoring & development programmes	Developmental relationships
Line manager	Sponsorship
Support groups	Informal networking
'What you know'	'Who you know'

3

Political Behaviour

- Necessary to navigate the informal organisation
- *"actions by individuals directed towards the goal of furthering their own self-interests without regard for the well-being of others or their organization"* (Kacmar & Baron, 1999, p. 4)

- Lobbying hiring managers
- Bypassing formal channels
- Influence tactics e.g. self-promotion
- Informal networking

4

Politics in Organisations

5

Political Skill

- Rules of the political game

"the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives"

- Not 'shown the ropes'
- Networking ability predicts
  - Salary
  - Grade
  - Promotions
  - Career satisfaction
- Skill or Access?

(Ahearn et al, 2004, p. 311)

6

Networking

- Career related function
  - Information
  - Career guidance
  - Resource exchange
- Social support function
  - Role models
  - Friendship

7

Network Ties

- Relationships that when linked together create a network
- Strong ties
  - e.g. co-workers, mentors
  - Frequent Interaction
- Weak ties
  - Infrequent contact
  - Less intense relationship
  - Unique information

8

Exercise: Your Networks

- Identify your own network
- Exercise – help visualise your network
- Key areas of development
- Identify gaps in your network
- Improve strength of your network for career

9

Exercise: Your Networks

1) Identify people you go to for **information & resources to help your career**

2) Identify people you go to for **Social Support**

3) Identify **influential** people in organisation

10

Your Networks

4) Identify ties that are similar ethnicity

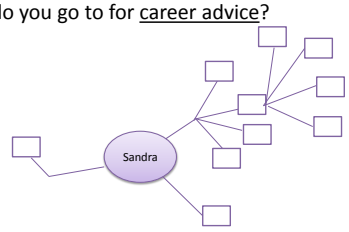
5) Identify tie strength

- Strong tie
- Weak tie

11

Example Step 1

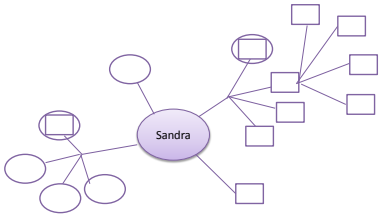
Who do you go to for career advice?



12

Example Step 2

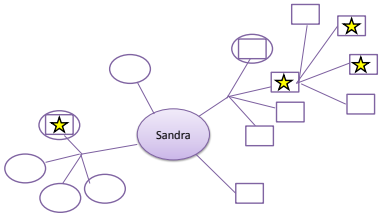
Who do you go for social support?



13

Example Step 3

Identify influential people



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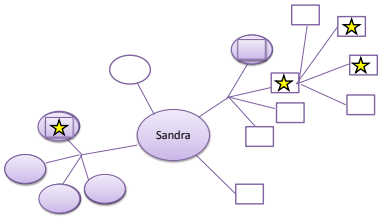
Example Step 4

Identify those who are similar ethnicity



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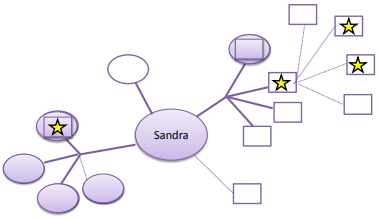
Example Step 5

Identify strength of ties



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Ethnicity & Networking

- Homophily
  - Fewer potential contacts
  - Wider networks
  - Inter-organisational
    - Unique resources
  - Power & status of contacts

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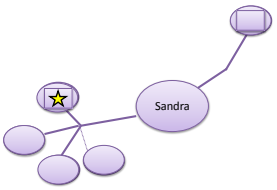
Sandra

- Homophilous Network



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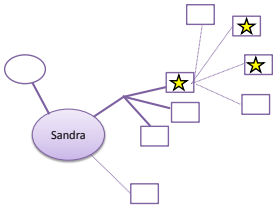
Sandra

- Heterophilous Network



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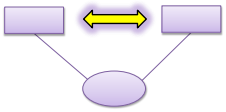
Networking Strategies

- Weak vs Strong ties
  - Balance
  - Choose those to strengthen
- 'Structural Holes'
- Long term



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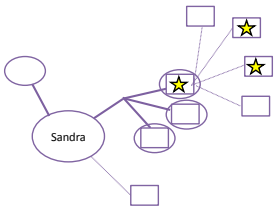

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Formal Networks

- Self-help e.g. training, seminars
- Social support
- Role Models
- Backlash
- Recommendations:
  - Inclusive formal networks
  - Engage key decision makers

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Networking Strategies

- 'Assimilation'
  - Difficult to establish: contacts are looking for exchange of resources
  - Effort to maintain: lack of psychosocial support
- 'Functional differentiation' (2 networks)
  1) Social support
  2) Career related resources
  - More time and effort

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Mentoring

- Sponsorship, career guidance
- Role modelling, friendship
- Develops political skill
- Enhances networks
- Difficult to access high status mentors
- Formal Mentoring
  - Focus on 'deep level' diversity
    - Match mentees and mentors on attitudes and values
    - Long term relationships

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Recommended Reading

Ferris, G. R., Davidson, S. L., & Perrewé, P. L. (2005). *Political skill at work: Impact on work effectiveness*. Davies-Black Publishing

Ibarra, H. (1995). Race, opportunity, and diversity of social circles in managerial networks. *Academy of Management Journal*, *38*(3), 673-703.

Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Liden, R. C. (2001). A Social Capital Theory of Career Success, *Academy of Management Journal 44*(2), 219-237.

Thomas, D. A., Gabarro, J.J. (1999) *Breaking Through: The Making of Minority Executives in Corporate America.* Harvard Business School Press Boston, Massachusetts

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