

Ethnic Minority Women in English Organisations
Career Experiences and Opportunities

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This work is dedicated to my father, Emilios N. Kamenos

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Abstract

This thesis examines the career experiences and opportunities of ethnic minority women through a critical review and analysis of the current literature and new empirical work. It seeks to give visibility to ethnic minority women's experiences by adopting a qualitative methodology, which provides the participants with the time and space to convey, and reflect on, their views. The focus is placed on the participants' perceptions, attitudes or concerns with regard to their careers and how their career choices may impact on other aspects of their lives, such as family and community expectations and responsibilities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ethnic minority women as the main sample, with managers in two case study organisations and with a smaller sample of ethnic minority men, white women and men. The rationale for this was to provide an insight into the broader organisational context ethnic minority women work and strive to succeed.

It is argued that ethnic minority women's experiences at work has been an under-researched area, where research involving women in management has been generalised to include all women regardless of 'race', ethnicity or class. The theoretical framework adopted for this study acknowledges an interaction between the dimensions of structure, culture and agency in the analysis of career experiences and opportunities. The structural dimension includes organisational and family structure, and culture is divided into organisational and social group culture. Agency is the final dimension of the framework, where the effect of strategies and personal determination on career experiences and opportunities is examined. Ethnic minority women are seen as social actors within organisational and social group structures and cultures, which may affect their strategies and plans and may also be affected by them.

The empirical work undertaken for this study has indicated that the majority of ethnic minority women participants occupy lower levels of the organisational hierarchy, they face racial and gender stereotypes which are often exacerbated by stereotypical perceptions concerning their culture and religion, they have problems identifying mentors and are often excluded from influential networks. If these women ascribe to their cultural or religious expectations, they face tensions between balancing work and private life expectations. Ethnic minority women's agency, in the form of career strategies and determination, is deemed to be a crucial factor in their career experiences and opportunities.

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List of Abbreviations

CIPD	Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
CSA	Case Study A
CSB	Case Study B
EO	Equal Opportunities
HO	Head Office
HRM	Human Resource Management
IPD	Institute for Personnel and Development
MD	Managing Diversity
NHS	National Health Service

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In this introductory chapter, an overview of the research area is presented, providing the aims and objectives of this study in Section 1.2, followed by the rationale of the study which is woven through the following sections. The study examines ethnic minority women's¹ career experiences and opportunities in organisations and my aim here is to 'set the scene' and provide some contextual background to this area. In Section 1.3, therefore, an overview of race relations and migration literature in Britain is presented, in order to place this study in the historical context. This chapter continues, in Section 1.4, with situating ethnic minority women within the feminist literature and following this with an overview of their labour market and career experiences. The theoretical and methodological frameworks utilised to conduct this research, which are discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 4 respectively, are presented in Sections 1.5. Finally, in Section 1.6, an outline of the following chapters is provided to illustrate the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

A main aim, and objective, of this study was to fill a gap in a previously under-researched area and provide some illumination on the invisibility of ethnic minority women in organisations. A desired outcome of this thesis was to provide insights and a greater understanding of the career opportunities and experiences of ethnic minority women, investigating possible factors which may have an impact on their career and also personal lives.

¹ For the purpose of this study, the term ethnic minorities encompasses South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi), Afro-Caribbean and African groups. A number of writers use the term 'black' and, mainly in the US, the term 'people of colour', to encompass all ethnic minority groups. However, I believe that these terms under-emphasise the diversity of ethnic minorities by placing them in one seemingly homogeneous category.

An in-depth analysis of ethnic minority women's experiences was undertaken and these experiences were placed within the broader organisational context by including interviews with ethnic minority men, white men and women. A central aim was to examine organisational policies and practices and their effect on ethnic minority women's opportunities and experiences. A case study approach was under-taken with two organisations, one public and one private, and interviews were also conducted with an 'independent group' of ethnic minority women and men, in a range of organisations and industries.

The perceptions of ethnic minority women with regard to their career but also their private lives and their family, community and cultural/religious responsibilities were analysed. These experiences were examined utilising a theoretical framework which acknowledges structural, cultural and agency dimensions, through a qualitative methodological framework, which gave participants the time and space to discuss issues pertinent to their careers and reflect on their experiences.

It is also important to state that it was not the aim of this study to provide a pre-determined definition of career. The aim was to analyse the participants' own perceptions of their career and success and whether they were able to make choices appropriate to them and succeed having made these choices. Career success therefore, may encompass more traditional views of career, such as vertical progression or financial rewards, or it may be viewed in broader terms encompassing intrinsic satisfaction, personal and work-related development and success in balancing work and family life.

Although it was not the focus of this thesis to examine in detail a history of race relations in Britain, or issues around the migration of ethnic minorities, a background in this area is useful in placing ethnic minority women's present career experiences in context. This is therefore, the topic of the next section.

1.3 Race relations in Britain

Brown (1992: 46) contended that understanding the history of “racial minorities” at work in Britain, at least since the Second World War, is both simple and complex: “it is simple because just three factors have overwhelming importance: the requirements of the economy, white racism, and the enterprise of the racial minorities”. The complexity stems from “the changing ways in which those factors have been mediated through the actions of different individuals, groups and institutions” (Ibid.).

The proportion of ethnic minorities in Britain increased considerably as a result of West Indian and Asian immigration after 1945 and it reached just over 3 million, or 5.5% of the total population, at the time of the 1991 Census, which included for the first time a question on ethnic groups (Lester, 1998). After the Second World War, labour shortages were great and there was an acute need for labour in order to rebuild and reconstruct the UK economy (Brown, 1992). British employers advertised for labour in the Caribbean and in the Indian sub-continent and people from commonwealth countries were free to enter Britain until 1962 when restrictions were introduced. However, even after these restrictions took place, they were still granted entry into the UK in so as to meet the needs of the expanding British economy (Ibid.). The job vacancies were typically for work that the white population no longer found desirable and migrant workers moved into public service employment which was not as well paid as private industry employment, and also into industrial jobs with long hours, shiftwork and unpleasant conditions: “for employers and for the white workforce, the invitation to immigrant workers was not an open one, but a last resort” (Ibid.: 47).

The exploitation of immigrant workers was used as a significant strategy of capital accumulation in west European countries (Castles and Kosack, 1973). By the 1960s, large migrant communities were living in major cities of Britain, where they rapidly became the target of white racism (Miles and Phizacklea, 1984). There was an inherent assumption that non-whites were inferior people which, to a large

extent, underlined the pattern of recruitment discussed above. As Brown (1992: 47) has argued, racial discrimination in employment was lawful in Britain until 1968 and policies of “no coloureds” were common in private employment agencies as were discriminatory job advertisements.

By the 1960s, Britain realised that it had to deal with the multicultural nature of its society in order to alleviate discrimination and racism and the first statutory measures were enacted to combat race discrimination (Lester, 1998). However, despite the legislative measures embodied in the 1976 Race Relations Act, the law has had little impact on the situation and, as discussed in an edited collection on race relations in Britain (Blackstone *et al.*, 1998), there is no doubt that racial prejudice and discrimination persist in many areas of life in Britain (for example, Modood, 1998 on employment; Blackstone, 1998 on education; Alibhai-Brown, 1998 on media; Karn and Phillips, 1998 on housing). Jenkins (1986: 240) argued in the 1980s, and it can be contended that this situation is still prevalent today, that much of the discrimination “is neither strikingly visible nor necessarily self-consciously prejudiced and some of it is not even deliberate. Racism and ethnocentrism continue to characterise public discourse and private social practice and, at best, many white people only grudgingly tolerate the presence of black people. To be ‘really’ British is, it seems to be white”.

However, despite racial discrimination and disadvantage, it is argued that ethnic minorities have made progress in Britain, but some more than others. It is often ignored that power is a social relation and within the context of ethnic relations in Britain, the majority ethnic group does not have complete power or domination and the ethnic minority groups may invariably resist domination: “neither the ethnic majority nor the ethnic minority population in fact constitute homogeneous groups. The latter comprise -at least partially- distinct communities, whose members have little in common other than being subject to racial discrimination (Pilkington, 1998: 34). Pilkington also argued that cultural differences are central and should be acknowledged when examining the situation of different ethnic minority groups:

“for it is through their creative use of diverse cultural traditions that they are able to circumvent racial exclusion and in some cases, through strategies such as support for the pursuit of educational qualifications and self-employment, successfully resist racial discrimination” (Ibid.: 34).

The discussion above on race relations in Britain and the effect of discrimination on ethnic minorities employment opportunities, although informative, has nevertheless ignored gender differences. Gender discussions are often absent in readings around race relations (for example, Jenkins, 1986; Blackstone *et al.*, 1998). It is contended here, that if an analysis on divisions and discrimination is to be comprehensive, it should incorporate all components, be they ethnicity, ‘race’, gender or class. In this study, the main focus is placed on the interaction of ‘race’, ethnicity and gender, but class is also acknowledged, as it can be an important determinant of people’s experiences and career opportunities. Although I neither engage directly with class theorists nor provide a Marxist analysis, issues around class are discussed when relevant within the literature and the empirical work.

Before moving on, it is important to state that ‘race’ is seen as a debatable and contested term and it is therefore used in inverted commas. ‘Race’ and ethnicity are sometimes used interchangeably by different writers but they are viewed here as distinct but often interconnected terms. Within this study, ‘race’ is defined as the differences based on skin colour or biological characteristics. Although there has not been any persuasive empirical evidence which indicates that common psychological, moral or intellectual characteristics are ascribed to people on the basis of their skin colour or physiognomy (Donald and Rattansi, 1993), the *perceptions* of difference are very much prevalent, with the consequence of existing societal inequalities and racism. Ethnicity is based on a social construction of an origin as a basis for community or collectivity: “this origin, mythical or ‘real’, can be historically, territorially, culturally or physiognomically based” (Anthias, 1992: 423). Ethnicity is taken to encompass therefore a number of factors, including

cultural and 'racial' characteristics and it is viewed here as broader than 'race', encompassing cultural diversity, values and traditions.²

The next section, engages with the interaction of gender, 'race', ethnicity and focuses explicitly on ethnic minority women's experiences.

1.4 Interaction of gender, ethnicity and 'race'

It is useful to provide some background on the position of ethnic minority women within feminist literature and their labour market and career experiences before the conceptual framework is presented in Chapter 2, where ethnic minority women's careers are discussed and analysed in greater detail.

1.4.1 Placing ethnic minority women in feminist literature

Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992: 96) argue that the placing of gender as a main focus of attention within the theory and practice of the human sciences has been attributed to feminism as a political movement:

“For feminism a major task was the complete reappraisal of social theory through a thoroughgoing critique of the androcentric character of western society and western theory and science”.

Feminist thought has therefore been central in discussing inequality between the sexes, domestic and paid labour, sexuality, violence against women, etc. (Walby, 1990). In the 1970s, feminism - although divided into different categories or positions (namely, liberal, radical, Marxist and the dual-systems approach) - had a consensus over its fundamental issues, namely women's oppression and commitment to their emancipation (Webb, 1997). However, this consensus has broken down, partly due to the black feminist critique of the ethnocentric nature of white western feminist theory (Carby, 1982; Amos and Parmar, 1984; Anthias and

² It is not within the bounds of this study, to examine sociological debates on 'race' or ethnicity in depth, but the readers are guided to relevant literature (Bulmer and Solomos, 1996, 1998; Bilton *et al.*, 1996; Donald and Rattansi, 1993; Mason, 1996; Miles, 1982; Omi and Winant, 1986).

Yuval-Davis, 1992; hooks, 1984; Mirza, 1997; Webb, 1997). White western feminist literature has often neglected the fact that gender and class processes can have a distinct effect on women from different ethnic and racial backgrounds. Where ethnicity has been acknowledged in feminist writing however, “it merely points to the cultural or ethnic difference between groups rather than rethinking the project of feminism” (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992: 97). It therefore acknowledges differences among ethnic groups, but does not proceed to re-conceptualise existing feminist literature.

The black feminist critique of white feminism has been significant in providing the framework for considering the links between ‘race’, ethnicity, gender and class. Black feminists have criticised white western feminism for assuming not only a universality to women’s interests but defining these interests with reference to an ethnocentric notion of womanhood³ (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Gardiner 1997; Amos and Parmar, 1984; Carby 1982).

The concept of patriarchy is central within feminist literature and it is defined by Walby (1990: 20) as “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women”. Theories of patriarchy have, in general, assumed a universality of women, ignoring ‘race’, ethnicity and class and the possibility that ethnic minority women may have different experiences of subordination and disadvantage because of their ‘race’ and ethnicity. Moreover, black feminists (Carby, 1982; Amos and Parmar, 1984; Spellman, 1988) have criticised the term patriarchy for not acknowledging differences between white and ethnic minority men, the argument being that black men cannot benefit from patriarchal structures in the same way as white men due to racist social structures. Carby (1982: 80) argued that “black men have been dominated ‘patriarchally’ in different ways by men of different ‘colours’”.

³ For example, western feminism gives priorities for struggle on certain issues, such as abortion and the critique of the family, that do not take into account the experiences of Black or Third-World women (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992: 101).

Despite the problems with using 'patriarchy' as generating an all-encompassing experience for all women, Walby (1990) believed that patriarchy can still assume a sisterhood of all women when they are placed against men and that it can accommodate the experiences of all women regardless of 'race', ethnicity and class. She has, nevertheless, acknowledged that racism may be of overriding political concern to women of colour (Walby, 1990: 14) and this in turn, can affect the way those women experience patriarchy. Bhopal (1997), for example, examined South Asian women's experiences adopting a structural approach, which focuses on patriarchal structures in the public and private sphere.

The discussion will now move on to focus more explicitly on ethnic minority women's position in the labour market.

1.4.2 Ethnic minority women in the labour market

Brah (1994:151) has argued that gender is a key element in the formation of labour markets and that it:

“underpins such aspects as the definition of skill, the construction of the division between full-time and part-time work, the differential between men's and women's wages, segregation of the labour market into 'men's jobs' and 'women's jobs', the nature and type of hierarchies sustained by cultures of the workplace, and the experience of paid work in the formation of identities.”

However, discussions on gender in the labour market have often ignored ethnic minority women's experiences, and made naïve assumptions of homogeneity among all women (Bruegel, 1989; Bhavnani, 1994; Walby, 1990); “much less attention has been paid to issues associated with 'race', culture and ethnicity in the gendering of labour markets” (Brah, 1994: 151). Walby (1990) argued that the experiences of ethnic minority women in the labour market are different from those of their white counterparts due to the racist structures present in employment. Bhavnani (1994) extended this argument when she contended that black women's labour market experience is specific and differentiated from white women, black men and white men. It is also different due to the ethnicity and the national origin

of the various groups of ethnic minority women. At the same time, she argued, black women's experience cannot always be assumed to be different from those of other groups at all times and in all contexts. There is an interplay of factors such as 'race', gender, class, age and disability which create a multiplicity of discriminations (Bhavnani, 1994: viii).

Westwood (1984) and Phizacklea (1990) produced two of the early studies which focused specifically on ethnic minority women's experiences in the UK labour market. Both authors examined the interconnection of class, gender and 'race' at the shopfloor level. Westwood (1984) argued that patriarchy has a material base, in the way in which men control and exploit women's labour power, and also in the way in which patriarchal ideologies intervene at the economic level. She stated that patriarchal relations oppress all women but acknowledged the need to be sensitive to the specificities surrounding the position of black women. Organisational cultures and the processes which form gender identities have different implications for black women of a culture formed in a specific cultural and historical setting (Westwood, 1984: 9). Westwood (1984) went on to suggest that patriarchal relations are important for both black and white women and contemporary capitalism creates a bond among them if they share the same class position. She stated however that this capitalism is post-colonial capitalism and in its institutions it is deeply racist (Westwood, 1994: 10). Phizacklea (1990) contended that racist and sexist practices have been enshrined in British immigration legislation which reproduces patriarchal expectations of women's dependency on men.

One of the major criticisms against the white feminist literature on women's position in the labour market focuses on the emphasis that has been placed on the importance of the part-time/full-time divide in characterising the position of women in the labour market and the associated importance attached to domestic responsibilities as the prime determinant of that position. Bruegel (1989) and Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) have argued that the work experiences of migrant and ethnic minority women are different from white women's experiences; in spite

of patriarchal social relations, the former have a greater tendency to full-time work. There are also differences within ethnic minority groups of women which Modood *et al.* (1997) emphasised. These authors pointed to the diversity of ethnic minority groups and their different economic positions in the UK labour market. Different groups of black women have different experiences in the British labour market, they face different constraints and they draw from different resources in order to deal with discrimination and disadvantage. Therefore, ethnic minority women cannot be placed in a homogeneous category with their experiences examined as one common group.

As a conclusion to this section, it can be stated that the case of ethnic employment highlights the link between ethnic, class and gender divisions. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) argued that ethnic minority women tend to be the losers, because they are at the meeting point of the intersection of class, ethnicity, and gender disadvantage and exclusion.

1.4.3 Careers of ethnic minority women

As discussed above, with a few exceptions, labour market research on women has typically ignored ethnic minority women's experiences in the workplace. Similarly, business and management literature on women has typically assumed a homogeneous category of women, neglecting ethnic minority women's experiences at work. Furthermore, ethnic minority women often occupy lower levels of the organisation hierarchy (Davidson, 1997) and therefore research on women, which typically focuses at managerial levels, would in effect generally exclude their experiences.

Research which focused on women in management has often reflected and repeated the same "exclusivity error" that it purports to correct when challenging gender biases in the male-dominated corporate hierarchy (Bell *et al.*, 1993: 105). Research on women in organisations and management may therefore be generalising findings

of typically white women managers to all women, regardless of 'race', ethnicity and class.

Furthermore, 'standard' career theory has been criticised for its gender bias (Halford *et al.*, 1997; Crompton and Sanderson, 1990; Evetts, 1994):

"In theory the concept of career has been typically androcentric - based on male work life patterns but presented as a gender-neutral concept - whilst, in practice, the accomplishment of this type of career has been more open to men than women." (Halford *et al.*, 1997: 109)

This is a well-founded criticism, but it nevertheless assumes a race-neutral position. It has also been suggested that new theories of career must give equal value to male and female aspects of being (Marshall, 1989: 281). However, this suggestion does not acknowledge that "male and female aspects of being" are not necessarily homogeneous and that ethnic minority men and women may have different experiences from white men and women. If career theory is androcentric, it is also ethnocentric. It is, therefore, not only based on a male career model, but on a *white* male career model (Kamenou, 2000). The concept of a linear career, with hierarchical advancements, can be even less attainable for ethnic minority women than it is for white women. Ethnic minority women often have to deal with additional barriers in terms of career opportunities and progression due to racist attitudes and stereotypes in their organisations.

With few exceptions (Davidson, 1997; Bell *et al.*, 1993; Bell, 1990; Nkomo, 1988), the career experiences of ethnic minority women are not well documented. The influence of racism and sexism in the career development of ethnic minority women is an under-researched area. Research conducted on African-American women in the workplace, shows that these women are exposed to both racist and sexist processes which place them in occupational "double jeopardy" (Beal, 1970; Bond & Perry, 1970) and at a "developmental plateau" (Evans and Herr, 1991: 131), and also subject them to more discrimination than black men or white women (Gurin and Pruitt, 1978).

American research has devoted some degree of attention to the career situation of ethnic minority women⁴. However, the scope of such research is limited since it has focused mainly on African-American women, with only a few writers acknowledging the diversity of ethnic minority groups (Fernandez, 1981; Bell *et al.*, 1993; Reskin and Padavic, 1994). With a few notable exceptions (Davidson, 1997; Bhavnani and Coyle, 2000; Liff and Dale, 1994; Brah and Shaw, 1992; Rana *et al.*, 1998; Bhavnani, 1994; Kyriacou, 2000) the experiences of ethnic minority women have received even less attention in Britain. Ethnic minority women managers are under-represented in the majority of UK organisations, specifically at middle and higher managerial levels, typically occupying lower non-managerial positions (Davidson, 1997). These women face a stronger barrier than the ‘glass ceiling’ that their white counterparts face. Morrison and von Glinow (1990) describe the glass ceiling as a barrier subtle enough to be transparent and yet very resistant. Ethnic minority women are confronted with a concrete ceiling, where their progression opportunities are blocked to such an extent that senior positions are invisible to them. Furthermore, the concrete ceiling can sometimes be so low that ethnic minority women are situated on a ‘sticky floor’, where any form of advancement is non-existent (Berheide, 1992).

‘Job ghettoisation’ and blocked career progression are part of ethnic minority women’s working lives in British organisations (Davidson, 1997). In the organisations she investigated, Davidson (1997) found that a proportion of ethnic minority women managers were ‘ghettoised’ into ‘black’ jobs. Bhavnani (1994) confirmed this situation when she argued that horizontal and vertical segregation are both racialised and gendered, and ethnic minority women are typically clustered in specific jobs with limited opportunities for advancement.

⁴ It has to be recognised that the US context is historically and culturally different, with its own legislation and politics. Nevertheless, I believe it is useful to examine ethnic minority women’s experiences of gender and ‘race’ albeit in different contexts, which may illuminate a generally under-researched area. This US literature, however is used with caution, acknowledging the difference in context with the UK.

The discussion presented above will be analysed in more depth within the conceptual framework in Chapter 2, which examines ethnic minority women's experiences in dealing with their careers and their personal life, which may encompass family, community and religious responsibilities. A brief outline of this framework is presented within the next section.

1.5 Theoretical and methodological frameworks

The aim of this section is to introduce the theoretical and methodological frameworks utilised for examining ethnic minority women's careers.

The theoretical or conceptual framework acknowledges an interaction between three dimensions; structure, culture and agency, in the analysis of career experiences and opportunities. It therefore acknowledges organisational structures, which include organisational policies, initiatives and career structures, and family structures, encompassing division of domestic labour and childcare responsibilities. The framework also includes a cultural dimension, which for the purpose of this study, is divided into organisational culture, encompassing beliefs and ideologies of individuals in organisations, and social group culture, which may include family ideologies, community and cultural/religious expectations and responsibilities. These two factors interact with agency, the third dimension of this framework, where strategies and personal determination are seen as crucial for career success. Ethnic minority women are seen as social actors within organisational and social group structures and cultures, which may affect their strategies and plans and are also affected by them. There is therefore an interaction of these three dimensions and this framework subsequently informs the methodological philosophy adopted for this study.

Consequently, it is important for the adopted research methodology to be in line with the theoretical framework. The methodology adopted is based on Berger and Luckman's (1967) and Bhaskar's (1979; 1989) realist framework, which is

discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Reality is seen as internal to individual actors and hence an inductive approach which focuses on perceptions and experiences of the participants is appropriate for this study. In the same vein, researchers are also social actors with their own perceptions and attitudes which may be affected by their ethnicity, gender or class. Within this study, therefore, reflexivity is crucial and I examine my own position within the research as a white woman academic interviewing ethnic minority and white participants in a range of occupations, levels and organisations.

1.6 Structure of thesis

This thesis is organised in eight inter-connected chapters. The following chapter, Chapter 2, presents the theoretical framework of structure, culture and agency in detail, and utilises it in analysing ethnic minority women's experiences, presenting literature on stereotyping, work and career experiences, including mentoring and networking and, also looking at family and community responsibilities and expectations.

Chapter 3 builds on the framework presented in Chapter 2 and places ethnic minority women's career experiences within the Human Resource Management (HRM) and equality literature. This chapter discusses equality within the HRM literature, presenting debates on culture management and around Equal Opportunities (EO) versus Managing Diversity (MD). Towards the end of this chapter, the research questions for this study are presented, which are informed by the literature in Chapters 1 to 3.

The study moves on to the methodological framework and implementation of the empirical work in Chapter 4. It is important to link the theoretical framework with the methodological philosophy; the methodology adopted therefore acknowledges, through critical realism, that reality is internal to individual actors. The chapter justifies the use of qualitative methodology and methods for the study, followed by an examination of feminist and 'race' and ethnicity in research literature. The

position of the researcher in the research is acknowledged and discussed and the chapter then proceeds to discuss the practical implementation of the empirical work, including issues of access, data collection, sampling and data analysis.

The thesis then proceeds to the data analysis of the empirical work in Chapters 5 to 7. Chapter 5 deals with the perceptions and views of managers in the two case study organisations, and Chapters 6 and 7, focus on ethnic minority women's perceptions of their careers, but also incorporate the views and experiences of ethnic minority men, white women and men.

Chapter 8 is the final chapter of this thesis where the research questions are revisited, within the theoretical and methodological frameworks. The contribution of this study is presented, followed by implications for HR practice, and a critical evaluation of the study. The chapter draws to a close with a number of recommendations for further research and a final conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

Theorising Career Experiences and Opportunities

2.1 Introduction

Following the background to this study in Chapter 1, the aim of this chapter is to discuss the theoretical framework adopted within which the career experiences and opportunities of ethnic minority women are analysed. The conceptual framework used to theorise ethnic minority women's career experiences and opportunities is discussed, and this is followed by a more detailed analysis of the careers of ethnic minority women which utilises the aforementioned framework.

This framework acknowledges the discriminatory organisational structures and the often non-accommodating culture of organisations in which ethnic minority women work in. There is also a recognition of ethnic minority women's family structures and responsibilities incorporating their own culture and community/religious expectations and the effect these may have on their career opportunities and aspirations. The agency and strategies employed by these women in relation to their career development and advancement and in balancing their career and personal life is the last dimension of the conceptual framework.

The next section engages with providing a detailed analysis of this framework, before moving on in Section 2.3 to utilise the dimensions of the framework in examining ethnic minority women's career and broader life experiences. This section encompasses a discussion on the stereotypes ethnic minority women face, their work and career experiences, including issues of mentoring and networking. A discussion on ethnic minority women's private life experiences, including family and community responsibilities and demands, and their efforts in balancing work and personal life are also analysed within Section 2.3.

2.2 Theoretical framework: agency, structure and culture

Following the discussions in Chapter 1 on feminism, labour market and career experiences of ethnic minority women, the theoretical framework for examining ethnic minority women's career, but also broader life, experiences will be developed and discussed.

This framework consists of three features: agency, structure and culture. The debates around structure and agency are first presented and the links are then made between these two dimensions and the cultural dimension of the framework.

The agency (or action) versus structure debate in sociological theory concerns the issue of:

“how far are we creative human actors, actively controlling the conditions in our lives? Or is most of what we do the result of general social forces outside our control?” (Giddens, 1997: 567).

Different theoretical approaches in sociology reflect different positions in the above debate. Functionalism, structuralism and Marxism (with the exception of some variants of Marxism) emphasise the constraining nature of social influences in individual actions (Giddens, 1984). These approaches are thus based on the belief that social structures determine the characteristics and actions of individuals. On the other hand, symbolic interactionism stresses the active, creative components of human behaviour. This approach argues that individuals have agency, they have reasons for what they do, and they inhabit a social world permeated by cultural meanings (Giddens, 1997: 569).

There are constraints placed on individuals by social institutions but at the same time individuals do live, work and interact within these institutions with at least some agency and power. Berger and Luckman (1967) provided a helpful analysis of this compromise between the above opposing views of agency versus structure, avoiding both the idea of a structure determining individuals and also that of

individuals independently creating their world. Bhaskar (1979; 1989) has also investigated the relationship between individuals and structures and within 'critical realism' he argued that there are deep social structures which contain a duality of both structure and action. Berger and Luckman's (1967) argument concerning the dialectical process involved in the meaning-given exercise engaged in by individuals in their interpretation of their world, is that these meanings then become institutionalised or turned into social structures, and the structures then become part of the meaning-systems employed by individuals (Kamenou and Fearfull, 2001):

“Thus a somewhat circular argument or process is represented which nonetheless indicates an element of agency which might enable or disable people dependent upon the meanings arrived at in their reflection and the degree to which they choose to, or believe they can, act upon the outcomes of their reflection” (Ibid.: 8)

Sikka (1991: 23) has also argued that all concepts, knowledge, discourses and conventions are located in particular social formations and structures. In theorising gender, 'race' and ethnicity, it is crucial to recognise that these are socially constructed terms and thus ethnic minority women are social actors within social structures and institutions. Therefore by adopting the 'realist' framework (Bhaskar, 1989; Berger and Luckman, 1976), the interaction of society and individual relations is conceptualised when examining the labour market, and specifically the career experiences of ethnic minority women.

Evetts (1992), in her study on the dimensions of career in sociological research, acknowledges both organisational and individual levels of analysis; the structural and agency factors respectively. Evetts uses Gunz's (1989) classification to describe these dimensions: at the organisational levels, careers are seen as structures and routes; as the processes by which organisations renew themselves, and at the individual levels of analysis, the focus is on subjective careers and career strategies (Gunz, 1989: 226). Evetts (1992) argued that during the 1970s and 1980s there have been attempts to integrate these two dimensions of reference and a new dimension was produced which linked action and system. Within this dimension,

career structures are viewed as the outcome of individual strategies (Evetts, 1992: 3), hence acknowledging an interaction between structure and agency.

Up to this point, the discussion has focused on the debates between structure and agency, or action. Culture however is an important component of the framework adopted for this study, in order to examine ethnic minority women's experiences and opportunities in organisations. There has been limited work in recognising and demonstrating the links between structure, agency and culture, but Evetts is one of the influential writers who acknowledges this interaction when examining women's careers. Her framework is partly adopted but developed further to accommodate ethnic minority women's experiences.

Evetts (2000), building on her earlier work (1992), developed a framework in order to analyse change in women's careers. She outlined and illustrated three dimensions of explanations about women's career: action, structural and, at this point, cultural dimensions. Structural dimensions encompass an examination of family structures and organisational processes; cultural dimensions include family and feminine ideologies and organisational cultures, and the action dimensions are linked to women's choices and strategies.

Evetts (2000) conceptualised the cultural dimension as mainly the ideologies and beliefs of individuals and the structural determinants as representing promotion ladders and division of labour within both, organisations and families. She argued (Ibid.: 59) that although the structural and cultural dimensions are interrelated, and typically linked by many researchers, they are different kinds of determinants:

“the cultural aspects...are analytically distinct from the structural determinants. The analysis is undertaken to clarify the different dimensions and elements but also to indicate how the dimensions are inextricably linked and interrelated. Culture and structure elements are analytically distinct, different in kind and mutually supporting, although they are sometimes difficult to disentangle in practice.”

Evetts (2000) also emphasised the action dimension of choice and agency when analysing women's career changes. She acknowledged the interaction of agency with structural and cultural dimensions, but argued that agency is not *determined* (original emphasis) by these forces. She contended that women make choices and they have strategies for dealing with constraints and opportunities in regards to their careers:

*“In action or agency interpretations, [...] [cultural and structural] forces are mediated in their impact by processes of social interaction; cultures and structures are **experienced** (original emphasis) individuals respond and react in diverse ways; people construct their own meanings, make choices and develop strategies.”* (Evetts, 2000: 63).

Analysis of careers is not restricted to the promotion or progression element and it can encompass broader experiences such as other roles and responsibilities women take on either actively or more reluctantly (Finch, 1993). This is discussed further in Section 2.3, where it is argued that careers cannot be viewed in isolation from ethnic minority women's broader life experiences.

There is evidence of tension between writers who concentrate on the structural and cultural dimensions when examining women's careers (for example, Walby, 1983; 1986) and those who emphasise the agency dimension, i.e. the choices and actions women make with regard to their career (for example, Hakim, 1991; 1995). Within this study, all dimensions are equally important and needed “for a full explanation of women's career experiences, of aspects of change as well as continuity in women's careers” (Evetts, 2000: 58).

By integrating the structural, cultural and action dimensions, Evetts (2000) provided a useful framework in which to examine women's careers and career changes. She has, however, assumed women as a homogeneous category and therefore did not acknowledge racial or ethnic differences. The effect of 'race' and ethnicity on all three dimensions of structure, culture and agency is thus ignored.

This present study is grounded in a framework which acknowledges a number of factors as being crucial for understanding the links between gender, 'race' and ethnicity. Structural factors such as organisational structures, progression ladders and policies are deemed as central factors for ethnic minority women's career experiences. Family structures in terms of family responsibilities, sharing domestic work and child care are also part of the framework.

As argued above (Evetts, 2000), culture should be seen as a distinct but inter-linked dimension to structure. In the context of career opportunities of ethnic minority women and for the purpose of this study, the cultural dimension is divided into organisational culture, which, particularly the culture of management, is perceived as strongly masculine (Evetts, 2000), and social group culture, i.e. the culture of ethnic minority women. Social group culture encompasses Evetts's (2000) family and feminine ideologies and Bhopal's (1997: 4) definition of ethnic minority women's culture is also adopted: "Culture [...] is a complex term, frequently important to people's sense and identity of self [...] The diverse bases of cultural differentiation include ethnicity, class, gender, religion, language and dress. Culture and ethnicity are defining and determining features of women's lives". Hall's (1993: 394) definition of cultural identity is also useful in conceptualising social group culture within the framework:

"Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories ... they are subjected to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power ... identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past"

Furthermore, within this study's framework, agency is an important factor, in terms of recognising ethnic minority women as social actors within organisational and social group structures and cultures. Within the agency dimension of the framework, it can be argued that ethnic minority women can develop career plans or strategies for their careers. Strategy, in this context, is seen as the process by which individuals perceive, and deal with, opportunities and constraints with regard to their career; "making career plans and working through alternatives in order to

achieve their goals” (Kamenou and Fearfull, 2000: 19). It is also important to examine the extent to which ethnic minority women have agency, both in terms of dealing and fighting racism and sexism and in terms of being determined to progress, being confident and ambitious.

2.3 Ethnic minority women’s experiences: interaction of gender, ‘race’ and ethnicity

This section utilises the structure, culture and agency framework to analyse ethnic minority women’s career experiences. However, it is acknowledged that ‘career life’ cannot be examined in a vacuum, assuming that it does not have an effect or is not affected by ethnic minority women’s broader life experiences. There are issues around balancing work/career and personal life, the latter possibly encompassing family life, family responsibilities and community and religious expectations. This section will be sub-divided in a number of different but inter-related areas, within which ethnic minority women’s experiences are analysed, making links to the theoretical framework.

2.3.1 Stereotypes

Within the structural and cultural dimensions of the theoretical framework adopted, stereotypes about certain social groups can be seen as a main constraint for ethnic minority women’s career opportunities. Stereotyping is the process of placing an individual into a particular group and attributing a set of characteristics to the individual on the basis of the group membership (Davidson, 1997: 40).

In relation to ethnic minority individuals, Rana *et al.* (1998: 227) have argued that “the persistence of stereotypes by British society, which view ethnic minorities as being inferior to the dominant white culture appears to be carried forward to the workplace”. Stereotyping and the identities that are ascribed to people are “the result of an interplay, down the centuries, between people’s views on different cultures, gender roles and even nations’ roles through colonialism” (Kamenou and Fearfull, 2001: 22).

Stereotypes about ethnic minority women stem from an interaction of their status as both females and ethnic minorities. As Liff and Dale (1994: 195) argued, black women:

“were subjected to domestic stereotypes by their managers... [which] were distinctive and drew on views of Asian and Afro-Caribbean families... the racism they faced often drew on ethnically specific notions of femininity.”

Davidson (1997) also illustrated that these stereotypes are still ‘alive and well’ in today’s organisations. She stated that in her study of ethnic minority women, African and Afro-Caribbean women were often stereotyped as being the “aggressive, black female mamma” type and Asian women as the “timid Asian flower” (Ibid.: 41). These racial and sexual stereotypes have a direct effect on how these women are perceived in their organisations, what roles they are expected to adopt and consequently on the opportunities given to them.

Stereotypes can extend however, beyond gender and ethnicity, to culture and religion. As Rana *et al.* (1998) have argued, Asian women’s cultural and religious backgrounds are often used to stereotype them as submissive and with no career ambitions and this, in turn, has negative repercussions on their career opportunities. There is therefore an interaction of gender and ethnicity, reinforced in this case by perceptions of culture and religion.

Stereotypes based on religion are central for Muslim people in the West. ‘Islamophobia’, a term coined in the late 1980s¹, refers to “unfounded hostility towards Islam” and therefore, “to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims” (Runnymede Trust, 1997: 4). The Runnymede Trust report on Islamophobia (1997: 1) argues that such “dread or dislike” has become “more explicit, more extreme and more dangerous [...] Within Britain it means that Muslims are frequently excluded from the economic, social and public life of the nation [...] and are frequently victims of discrimination and harassment”. The discrimination Muslims face stems

¹ First known use in print being in February 1991 in a periodical in the US (Runnymede Trust, 1997).

from a number of distinct but inter-linked facets; religious, cultural, racial, ethnic and national origin. The September 11, 2001 attacks on America by Muslim terrorists has exacerbated the stereotypes and blind hatred towards Muslims in the West. Muslim women have suffered due to increased harassment and violence towards them since September 11. There have been around 300 assaults on Muslims in Britain in the aftermath of September 11, and most of the victims were women (Chrisafis, Guardian Weekend, Dec. 8, 2001: 23).

Afshar (1994: 134) has argued that morality is a central issue for Muslim women and in practical terms it is often articulated in terms of sexual purity and apparent modesty:

“In this domain garments acquire an extraordinary importance; the good woman is the one who covers her hair and her legs. Modesty is defined by the head-scarf, the shalwar kamiz and the length of a girl’s hair and it’s style”

Kyriacou (2000) in her research involving ethnic minority women accountants, discussed religious stereotypes with regard to Muslim female accountants. The author discussed the stereotypes one of her participants experienced when she started wearing the hijab, a “long loose garment topped with a large plain scarf securely fastened so no hair, ears or neck show through” (Soueif, 2001:32). This individual was perceived as passive or as a fundamentalist and as Kyriacou (2000: 207) argued: “the hijab gives her visibility through it making her ‘difference’ highly visible”.

Moving into broader discussions on stereotypes, Thomas and Aldefer’s (1989) debate on inter-group theory and identity versus work groups may be useful when examining stereotypes and the detrimental effect on career opportunities. This argument is articulated well by Thomas and Higgins (1996: 271) and therefore their own interpretation is presented:

“When there’s a high degree of correlation between identity- and work-group memberships, and when this mirrors power relations and social stratification at more macro levels, such as society or the community, a state of congruent embeddedness exists. Such is the case when, for example, racial minorities predominate in low-status, low-skilled positions, with only token representation in managerial or executive jobs. In these instances, corporate norms, values and practices are likely to affirm the cultural tastes of whites and to treat whiteness as normative and being a nonwhite as a deficit. Under these conditions, racist stereotypes and assumptions are also more likely to go unexamined and to influence careers.”

Stereotyping can also have a negative effect on ethnic minority women’s confidence. Ethnic minorities may internalise negative evaluations and stereotypes to the point where they limit themselves and turn down future opportunities because they are anxious they will not succeed (Ilgen and Youtz, 1986). Internalising racial and sexual stereotypes may be linked to the ‘fear-of-success’ imagery (Savage *et al.*, 1979) which will have a detrimental effect on ethnic minority women’s confidence and hence on their career aspirations and ambitions. Furthermore, and probably as a result of the internalisation of negative evaluations about them, ethnic minorities sometimes feel they have to downplay their own cultural identity and adopt a white value system, as a way of getting ahead (Jones, 1986).

This section engaged with stereotypical views about ethnic minority women and their effect on their career. This discussion needs to remain ‘active’ when moving on the following sections, as stereotypes are a central factor within every dimension I engage with below.

2.3.2 Work and career experiences

As discussed in Chapter 1, the career experiences of ethnic minority women are not well documented. The majority of the research takes place in America, within a different legislative and societal context. Within this section, I present relevant US and UK literature and studies with regard to ethnic minority careers and provide the links with the agency, structure and culture framework. The stereotypes these women face and deal with, on an everyday basis in their work organisations and

personal lives, were discussed above. This section is dealing with the experiences of ethnic minority women with regard to the structural constraints they may face, the organisational culture they are in, and the career strategies they may adopt. It also engages with a discussion on factors which may have a determining effect on ethnic minority women's development and career opportunities, namely networking and mentoring.

The literature presented in Chapter 1 focuses mainly on organisational structures and cultures, neglecting ethnic minority women's agency and strategy and, often their social group culture. As stated above, this section provides links between the first two dimensions and these women's strategies and career plans. The following sections engage with social group culture, family and community responsibilities and expectations.

Structural and cultural constraints were identified as determining factors in Liff and Dale's (1994) work on ethnic minority women's careers. The authors investigated the effect of a local authority's policies and practices on the opportunities of ethnic minority women managers. Lip service to equal opportunities and lack of awareness of the issues ethnic minority women faced in the organisation were apparent from their study. The authors argued that there was policy failure at three levels: failure to apply the rules in practice; to distort less obvious parts of procedures to achieve a desired result; and lastly, the fact that managers "chose to observe or ignore discretionary aspects of the policy in ways which served their own interests" (Ibid.: 187). Despite the fact that the formal policies were in place and disseminated effectively, the structure and culture of the organisation within which implementation was located and policy breaches were reported were central in hindering real opportunities for black women (Ibid.: 191). White male work norms were difficult to challenge and hence, the structure and culture of the organisation also remained fundamentally unchallenged.

Collinson *et al.* (1990) and Cockburn (1991) cited similar findings in their studies where they found that the dominant group re-creates the organisational structure and culture to their advantage. As Cockburn (1991: 172) argued, gender and 'race' inequalities are reproduced through the organisational culture:

“the upper hierarchies in which class power is deployed are visibly peopled not just by men but by white men- primarily heterosexual and non-disabled men- a narrow self-producing monoculture”.

Collinson *et al.* (1990: 15), rejected overly deterministic and structuralist approaches to managerial and male power within the labour market. They aimed to:

“retrieve the agency of human beings and the dynamic and changing character of their social relations from the all-pervasive and invariably static forms of analysis which afford conceptual priority to social power, control and structured inequalities” (Ibid.: 15)

Hakim's (1991; 1995) controversial interpretation of women's careers, focused entirely on agency, completely dismissing structural and cultural constraints. She suggested that there are “at least two qualitatively different groups” in relation to work commitment (Hakim, 1991: 113). The first main group “has work commitment similar to that of men leading to long-term workplans and almost continuous full-time work often in jobs with higher status and earnings than are typical for women”; the second “has little or no commitment to paid work and a clear preference for the homemaker role” (Ibid.:113). Like many others writing in the area of career opportunities, Hakim did not adopt an ethnic dimension within her work. Furthermore, as Kamenou and Fearfull (2001) argued, it is clear that not all women choose to follow a career path nor is this decision freely made. Women often have to make their choices bound by their family circumstances and responsibilities. Such a situation applies in both white western and ethnic minority communities.

Just as not all women strive for a career, it is also clear that not all who do choose such a path are successful in their mission. For ethnic minority women, often trapped in jobs without promotional opportunities, this situation represents an even stronger negative bind, often making it a harder to exercise agency within tightly defined structures. As argued above, Hakim (1991; 1995) has been criticised for focusing exclusively on the agency and actions of women, dismissing structural constraints (Ginn *et al.*, 1996; Devine, 1994). At the other extreme, some writers analysing women's position in the labour market have focused explicitly on the limitations imposed by structures for women's opportunities and advancement (Walby, 1983, 1986; Bhopal, 1997). Walby's theory of patriarchy (1983; 1986) has been criticised for the indifference to the practices and motivation of individuals (Collinson *et al.*, 1990). As Collinson *et al.* (1990: 48) argued, Walby is "unable to explain how these social structures are constituted, and this inevitably results in a theory of patriarchy which is heavily deterministic as well as economistic". Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992: 107) were also critical of patriarchy in that it "generally assumed a relation where women are passive receivers of an oppression that is exercised upon them", therefore ignoring the agency of women to create and control their world. Although Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) undertook a more sociological perspective and did not engage in an explicit discussion on ethnic minority women's careers, their argument relates well to the acknowledgement that these women do not passively accept the status quo in their organisations, and can develop and adopt strategies and actions in relation to their careers.

2.3.2.1 Mentoring

White's (1990) research revealed that having a strategy was a main component for black women's success in organisations and this could be used to counteract the negative effect of racism and discrimination. Successful strategies included risk taking, in order to gain the attention of upper management; campaigning, where self-promotion was central; networking and mentoring. Taking mentoring as an example of a career strategy, it could then be argued that ethnic minority women would actively seek mentors who can provide coaching, guidance and advice for

their career. One, however, should be sceptical of the idea that ethnic minority women or any group can 'obtain' a suitable mentor merely by deciding to do so. Mentors in high position of organisations, who can provide support for ethnic minority women's careers are commonly white men, and research has shown that this group would typically mentor people of their own image; other white men (Thomas, 1990; Nkomo and Cox, 1989). As a result, the inability of an ethnic minority woman to find an influential mentor could be another example of an organisation's structural or cultural constraints. Blake-Beard (1999) has argued that there is limited literature on the importance and effect of mentoring on ethnic minority women. Research has acknowledged that mentoring is a critical success factor for women, but these studies, however used samples which were not racially or ethnically differentiated or not specified (Scott, 1989; Ragins and McFarlin, 1990; Riley and Wrench, 1985). As Blake-Beard (1999: 21) has argued, "in effect, within the mentoring and gender literatures, the voices of women of color have been excluded and unacknowledged, leaving a gap in the knowledge of the effects of race and gender on mentoring relationships". In addition to Blake-Beard (1999), there has been some limited recent literature on mentoring and ethnic minority women, but it is nevertheless in the vast majority American (for example, Smith, 2000; Enomoto *et al.*, 2000). Smith (2000: 376) has argued that black women are denied mentors and hence the opportunity to be "coached, counseled, pushed, and supported into senior positions". The author contended that ethnic minority women are not given the opportunity to initiate mentoring relationships with senior, and hence more experienced, and powerful colleagues and this constraint is based on the fact that these women are stereotyped as "unintelligent, angry, threatening, intimidating, and not in need of coaching, support and other career assistance" (Ibid.: 376).

2.3.2.2 Networks

Kanter (1977) spoke of the 'shadow structure' in work organisations, within which informal relationships and alliances and reputations are managed. Networking is the interaction of colleagues on a professional personal level and it is an important

strategy used for career advancement (White, 1990). Informal networks aid individuals in work organisations to fulfil their goals through unofficial channels (Ibarra, 1993). McGuire (2002) argued that these encompass not only work-related, but also personal and social goals. Informal networks in organisations are seen by some writers as social resources due to the fact that they aid the flow of information and power, partly by bypassing formal procedures and regulations (for example, Lin *et al.*, 1981; Campbell *et al.*, 1986). Women, however, are less likely than men to have powerful and influential network connections (Ibarra, 1992, 1993; McGuire, 2000, 2002). McGuire (2002) in discussing gender and ‘race’ factors in penetrating influential networks has argued that the experiences of white women and “women of colour” may differ, but white men are involved in and control powerful networks, in much greater extent than white or ethnic minority women. She argued that cultural beliefs which rank women lower than men, hinder investment and sponsoring of women by network members.

Although the inability to penetrate the old white boys’ networks may be an issue for white and ethnic minority women alike (Smith, 2000), Blake-Beard (1999) has argued that white women report greater levels of networking than their ethnic minority counterparts. She contended that, despite the barriers they face themselves with regard to their gender, white women can still access networks to a greater extent than black women and she based this on the attraction and similarity literature (Drecher and Cox, 1996), arguing that the fact that white men and women are ‘ethnically’ similar aids white women’s acceptance in these networks.

Cianni and Romberger (1997: 117) also argued that women and minorities are excluded from important social networks and this may result in less access to organisational information and in barriers to establishing strategic alliances. Consequently these factors will have an effect on women’s and minorities’s advancement. Previous research confirmed that ethnic minorities tend to be excluded from informal work groups (Fernandez, 1981). This situation has negative implications for their networking and career development opportunities; not being

in a network has been cited as one of the most significant problems faced by black people (Irons and Moore, 1985). With a few exceptions (for example, Bell, 1990) however, such research does not acknowledge gender issues, and therefore fails to combine the negative implications inherent in the experiences of ethnic minority women. The organisational structure and culture typically excludes ethnic minority women from influential networks on the bases of their gender *and* their 'race'/ethnicity.

Although acknowledging organisational factors and structural constraints, Ibarra (1993) in her research on personal networks, argued that women and ethnic minorities are not passively accepting their role and position within organisations. They are seen as active agents who can make strategic choices among limited alternatives with regard to their career. Networking can be one of the strategies employed by ethnic minority women in an attempt to improve their promotion opportunities (White, 1990). These women can actively pursue specific powerful networks and strategically try to penetrate them. This argument poses the same concerns as the discussion on ethnic minority women seeking influential mentors; ethnic minority women will not be accepted in powerful networks merely because of their decision to penetrate them. As was mentioned in Section 2.3.1 and as will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.3.4, ethnic minority women often have to downplay their own cultural identity and abandon some of their cultural or religious values in order to 'fit in' (Bell *et al.*, 1993). Trying to penetrate and be accepted in white male networks would be one instance where the women would, most probably, have to downplay both their ethnicity and their gender.

The discussion will now move from a focus on utilising the agency, structure and culture framework with regard to career experiences and opportunities, to ethnic minority women's own culture and family and community expectations.

2.3.3 Family and community responsibilities

It was discussed above, that career experiences cannot be seen in isolation, without acknowledging ethnic minority women's personal experiences, in relation to their family, culture and religion. Issues around stereotypes with regard to culture and religion were also presented above and, as stated, this discussion is central when exploring ethnic minority women's social group culture and responsibilities.

In relation to domestic labour, household structure and gender relations, there are different experiences across racial and ethnic groups and this extends to a diversity within black women's experience (Gardiner, 1997: 119). Carby (1982: 215) argued that the experiences of African-American and African-Caribbean women is shaped by the history of slavery and colonialism in which black men were systematically denied positions in the white male hierarchy. Due to the fact that black men were often denied access to a family wage, it was a necessity for black women to work outside the home and also have the responsibility for childcare:

“Full-time motherhood and housewifery never predominated in these communities and the opportunities available to white women to dedicate themselves to caring for their families were interpreted as a privilege to which many black women aspired” (Gardiner, 1997: 119).

As argued by Bhopal (1997: 4), who adopted a structural approach, South Asian women's experiences of 'race' and patriarchy may be different from other female ethnic groups: “The specific cultural norms and standards of South Asian families may be reinforced through different forms of patriarchy experienced by women”.

hooks (1984) argued that the household may be a source of support for the powerless and most oppressed groups. Contrary to the views of white women, black women have often seen unpaid domestic labour as resistance to oppression. Carby (1982: 214) stated that the family can be a source of oppression for black women but it has also “functioned as a prime source of resistance to oppression. We need to recognise that during slavery, periods of colonialism and under the present authoritarian state, the black family has been a site of political and cultural

resistance to racism”. Bhopal (1997: 4) contends that the argument that the family is less a source of oppression for women of colour focused on Afro-Caribbean and African-American families. She also argued that some South Asian women may experience oppression within their families, “by the form of marriage they participate in, the giving of dowries, participating in domestic labour and the degree of control they have in domestic finance” (Ibid.: 4). Bhopal (1997) argued that although South Asian communities are diverse in terms of religion and caste for example, there are also similarities which place them in a different setting from white communities. She argued that within South Asian communities “there is the primacy of family over the individual [...] with emphasis on child rearing and family interaction patterns for both males and females” (Ibid.: 7). Furthermore, as Wilson (1978) has argued, it is Asian women who have to carry the responsibility of maintaining the family honour, through behaving in an appropriate and responsible manner.

It is important to acknowledge that all families, including Afro-Caribbean, African-American, South Asian and white can be either a source of oppression or resistance for women. There is a danger of stereotyping in arguing that specific ethnic groups either experience oppression within the household or use it as a form of strength and resistance. Amos and Parmar (1984) have argued that some of these stereotypes are linked to colonial and historical interpretations of the roles of ethnic minority women. Research discussed above (Liff and Dale, 1994; Davidson, 1997) confirms Amos and Parmar’s (1984) arguments when the latter stated that Asian women are typically stereotyped as passive and subjected to oppression within the family and Afro-Caribbean women are seen as the strong and dominant head of the household, who are nevertheless exploited sexually by black men. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992: 5) argued that “the black family, like the white family, does not take a particular form”.

It is also pointed out that the social roles of ethnic minority women in their families have been problematised and that cultural reasons, including religion, are often

cited as the explanation for the position of black women in the labour market (Bhavnani, 1994; Brah, 1994). However, these explanations are over-simplistic and do not acknowledge gender and racial discrimination in the workplace.

Saradomoni (1992) argued however, that there are differences in family forms between ethnic groups and the household may have a different place in the experience of women in a racially divided society. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) argued that gender relations may differ according to ethnicity and there are culturally specific practices relating to mothering and sex roles. The authors nevertheless acknowledged that there are also commonalities between gender and racial divisions, in that “both divisions involve practices of exclusion and the structuring of disadvantage in favour of the dominant ethnic and gender group” (Ibid.: 111)

There is a need therefore to acknowledge and attempt to debate and rationalise the extent to which there are differences between women but, as discussed above, also recognise similarities in experiences across ethnic groups.

2.3.4 Living in two worlds

The previous sections have dealt with the stereotypes ethnic minority women experience, their work and career aspirations and demands and their family and community life. This section, explores the tensions and concerns these women face when balancing their work and personal life.

Research supports the contention that a major factor of stress for ethnic minority women is their perception of living two separate lives (Bell, 1986, 1990; Denton, 1990; Davidson, 1997). Thomas and Aldefer (1989: 135) define this as ‘bicultural stress’: “the set of emotional and physical upheavals produced by a bicultural existence”. Ethnic minority women have to manage two distinct lives in order to survive in the dominant white corporate world while remaining loyal to their own community. Bell *et al.* (1993: 118-119) argued however, that “circumstances often

dictate that, for women of colour to be successful managers, they must adopt a new identity and abandon commitment to their old culture [of racial or ethnic community]”. The bicultural stress can be intensified by the fact that the ethnic minority women’s own communities may perceive them as ‘traitors’ when they try to fit in the white dominant culture of their organisations (Bell *et al.*, 1993). To some extent one can see here the problems caused by the dual role faced by most working women, particularly when they have their own family. In the context of ethnic minority women, however, the problems generated within that dimension are exacerbated by the inclusion of the inter-related issues of ‘race’ and ethnicity and the often more fundamental aspects of religion and social culture being brought to bear on the career-orientated ethnic minority woman. Ethnic minority women who have to work in white male dominated organisations, adhere to own-community expectations and deal with additional pressures as women and mothers, experience two separate lives, which can be a great cause of stress.

2.4 Summary

Chapter 1 provided an overview of ethnic minority women’s position in feminist literature, criticising the ethnocentric nature of imperialist western feminism. It then moved on to present an overview of labour market and career experiences of ethnic minority women, highlighting the interaction of gender and ethnicity for these women, but also acknowledging other divisions, such as class, culture and religion. The chapter has argued that ethnic minority women’s career experiences is an under-researched area, especially in the UK, and this chapter has focused on examining these experiences through a theoretical framework; the structure, culture and agency framework, analysed in Section 2.2. This framework was discussed and links were provided with ethnic minority women’s distinct experiences. Evetts’s (2000) framework was partly adopted, with the new conceptualisation of culture as divided between organisational and social group culture.

From the discussion presented here, it can be argued that structure, culture and agency are inter-linked dimensions which, even though they can be defined and

analysed individually, are difficult to disentangle in practice. Hence, the careers of ethnic minority women should be examined within an interactionist framework which acknowledges the structure of organisations, including families; the organisational culture and ethnic minority women's cultural background, and also the agency and determination of ethnic minority women to achieve career advancement.

Within Section 2.3, the discussion diverted back to ethnic minority women's experiences, with this area now presented in a more analytical manner, utilising and making links with, the structure, culture and agency framework. Ethnic minority women face stereotypes based on their 'race' and gender, but also on their culture and religion, and these stereotypes can affect their career opportunities. Mentoring and networking in organisations was discussed in Section 2.3.2, utilising the theoretical framework and arguing that ethnic minority women face barriers when attempting to identify mentors and penetrate influential networks, due to the biased organisational cultures and structures. However, their agency and strategy in relation to these two factors was also discussed.

It is argued that although the main focus of this study is based on career experiences and opportunities, ethnic minority women's broader experiences and responsibilities, for example, family structures, responsibilities and demands, are inter-related and are therefore also being addressed, in Section 2.3.3. The last section, Section 2.3.4, stated that ethnic minority women's two distinct lives, at work and home, can create stress and tension, which can affect their careers and their personal lives.

Chapter 2 has in some ways 'set the scene' for an exploration of ethnic minority women's careers and the discussion will now extend to Chapter 3 where the Human Resource Management (HRM) and equality literature with regard to ethnic minority women, is explored.

CHAPTER 3

HRM, Organisational Culture and Equality Strategies

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, a discussion and analysis around ethnic minority women's career experiences and opportunities was presented, utilising the agency, structure and culture framework. The purpose of this chapter is to place that discussion within the Human Resource Management (HRM) literature, specifically within the equality literature, focusing more explicitly on organisational cultures and organisational equality strategies. Most work on equality management has focused on gender issues, with an exclusion of ethnic minorities' experiences and opportunities. As discussed in Chapter 1, research on women's careers tends to focus on white middle-class women, but is presented as encompassing all women regardless of ethnicity or class.

This chapter focuses on the cultural and structural organisational dimensions of the conceptual framework, presented in Chapter 2 and this in turn, sheds more light on ethnic minority women's career opportunities and experiences. It is argued here that the agency dimension of the agency, structure and culture framework, is typically absent from HRM literature, with very few exceptions (for example, Collinson *et al.*, 1990; Evetts, 1992; 2000). Social group culture of ethnic minorities is also commonly ignored within the HRM and career/management literature, with few authors examining the characteristics and effects of ethnic minority women's cultural background and responsibilities (Kyriacou, 2000; Rana *et al.*, 1998; Davidson, 1997). Connecting the literature and theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 with the HRM and equality literature in this chapter, there is an attempt to tie the three dimensions of the framework together when examining ethnic minority women's career experiences and opportunities.

The next section of this chapter addresses the issues around equality within the HRM literature and presents literature and debates on biased organisational cultures. It is contended here that it is useful to present some literature on the

debates on organisational culture, specifically on culture management, before connecting this 'pure' culture literature to arguments of discrimination and biased cultures. This literature has focused almost explicitly on 'gendering cultures', ignoring ethnic minority issues and therefore, the effect of organisational cultures on ethnic minority women's careers. The chapter then moves on to Section 3.3, with the emphasis moving towards structural issues, namely organisational equality strategies. Within that section, the debate around Equal Opportunities (EO) versus Managing Diversity (MD) is analysed, with an attempt to examine whether Managing Diversity is offering anything new to equality strategies or if it is merely 're-packaging' Equal Opportunity arguments. Although the emphasis in Section 3.3 rests with the structural dimension, i.e. organisational policies and initiatives, organisational culture is also inter-linked in the discussions, drawing from the discussion on biased cultures in Section 3.2.1.

3.2 Human Resource Management, equality and organisational cultures

It is now a commonplace statement that people are the most valuable organisational asset and that they can offer a competitive advantage to their organisation (Dickens, 1994a):

“The adoption of an HRM approach which emphasises valuing and developing people in pursuit of organisational goals and which stresses the role of the individual and the importance of involvement, opens the way for arguments about valuing all people - and valuing diversity - and enables the promotion of equality to be linked to achievement of business goals” (Dickens, 1998: 23).

However, as Dickens (1994a; 1998) has argued consistently, HRM may in reality be at odds with the promotion of equal opportunities. Discrimination in the workplace on grounds of sex, 'race', disability and other factors and a lack of equality of opportunity in employment prevails regardless of legislation (Equal Pay Act, 1975; Sex Discrimination Act, 1975; Race Relations Act, 1976; Disability Act, 1995) and arguments around the moral issues or the 'business case' of promoting equal opportunities. The 'rhetoric' of HRM, which is illustrated by the normative model (Guest, 1987; 1989), claims that a number of coherent policies deliver the

goals of strategic integration, flexibility, quality and commitment, which are consequently said to improve overall organisational performance. The normative model portrays HRM as unitarist and as moving responsibility for HR issues down to line managers and away from personnel/HR experts. In relation to equal opportunities more explicitly, Sisson's (1994) model of the 'HRM organisation' cites equal opportunities as a key personnel policy, but as Dickens (1998: 23) has argued, in relation to gender equality, "the gender equality assumption in the HRM model is part of the rhetoric rather than the reality".

There have been arguments that the UK leans towards a 'hard' HRM model (Dickens, 1998) - which places the emphasis on the 'resource' aspect and focuses on the close integration of human resource policies, systems and activities with business strategy (Legge, 1995) - rather than on the 'soft' HRM, "the more people-centred, stressing the 'human' aspect of managing human resources, the objective being to develop committed, resourceful people" (Dickens, 1998: 23). In the same vein, Sisson (1994: 15) stated that the "[r]hetoric may be the people-centred approach of the 'soft' version: the reality is the cost reduction approach of the 'hard' version". Dickens (1998) has argued that the 'soft' model of HRM is also problematic for gender equality and she demonstrated this by discussing some key aspects of the model, namely commitment, flexibility, key HRM policy levers, equality legislation and the devolution of responsibility for HRM to line managers. Taking commitment as an example, the author has argued that notions of commitment are gendered where women are assumed to be less committed than men, merely by being women. Commitment is assessed on male standards, such as hours of work, ignoring the unequal distribution of domestic and childcare responsibilities, and focusing on inputs rather than outputs, such as the quality of the end result. Different aspects of the HRM model are discussed through the chapter.

Ogbonna (1996) has attempted to locate the concept of culture in the HRM literature, arguing that these two concepts have not been clearly linked in the

literature. He demonstrated a connection arguing that one of the main convictions of HRM is the management of organisational culture and the creation of a 'fit' between the internal and external organisational environment. It was argued that an organisation's external competitive strategy needs to be complemented and reinforced by an appropriate organisational culture which is itself shaped by, and consistent with, a coherent mix of human resource management policies (Guest, 1990).

Definitions of culture range from all-inclusive to very specific. On the one hand, there are vague conceptualisations of culture, such as that provided by Deal and Kennedy (1982) who stated that culture is seen as the way things are done in an organisation, while on the other hand, culture is defined as "a system of meanings" (Gregory, 1983: 364). Beaumont (1993) argued that three leading characteristics of the concepts of organisational culture are, that it is shared, learned and transmitted.

Culture may operate at different levels with different outcomes and Schein's work (1985) has been very influential in framing these arguments. Schein (1985) identified three levels of culture and their interaction. On the surface are the artefacts and creations, which are the overt behaviours and other physical manifestations. Below this level, are the values, which identify the 'whys' of how a group behaves (Legge, 1995). At the deepest level are the basic, taken-for-granted assumptions. Schein (1985) argued that to understand culture it is necessary to penetrate the third level. The basic assumptions which refer to the organisation's relationship to its environment, the nature of truth and reality are, in Schein's view, the essence of organisational culture; the artefacts and values being just manifestations of that culture.

The epistemological position one takes with regard to culture, will determine whether one considers that culture can be managed or whether this is believed to be impossible (Legge, 1994). As Smircich (1983) stated, culture can be seen as something an organisation *has*, or something an organisation *is*. Put differently,

culture can be seen as a variable or as a metaphor. If one sees culture as a variable, it would be assumed to be changeable and manageable. If it is seen, as through anthropologists' eyes, as something an organisation is, it is debatable whether management is able to manipulate it to any extent. Smircich (1983) herself, saw culture as a 'root metaphor', as something which is part of the organisation and therefore not easily controlled. One can be sceptical of the argument that culture is easily manipulated, since, as Morgan has pointed out (1986: 126-7), "culture is not something that is imposed on a social setting. Rather, it develops during the course of social interaction". Legge (1995: 187) has argued that to adopt this position is "not to imply that senior managements can have no influence at all on their organisation's culture". However, it does imply that theirs will not be the only voice in the organisation, nor necessarily listened to or internalised. In organisations there are often many different and competing value systems that "create a mosaic of organisational realities rather than a uniform corporate culture" (Morgan, 1986: 127). Therefore, an organisation cannot be viewed as a monolithic culture; subcultures and countercultures typically exist within an organisation, making it difficult to manipulate.

Ogbonna (1996) has argued that behind the rhetoric lies the suspicion that attempts to change culture, which will involve changing underlying values, are simply "disguised packages of behavioural change". Gagliardi (1986) questioned the work of Schein, arguing that deep-rooted values are by definition entwined with the deepest level of human cognition and people are often reluctant to change them since there is no guarantee that this will solve organisational problems: "deep-rooted values remain intact while surface behaviours may change in response to environmental pressures" (Ogbonna, 1996: 82).

It has been contended that there are problems with the adoption of an HRM philosophy based on the management of culture (Ogbonna, 1996). On a theoretical level, HRM seeks to manage culture through deep-rooted values, yet it is suggested that what is actually achieved is more likely to be a change in the observable

behaviour of employees. The literature on managing culture is confusing, arguing that culture change is perceived to occur at either the behaviour level or at the values and taken-for-granted assumptions level (Ibid.). As a result, there is no conceptual model which convincingly demonstrates how deep-rooted values can be changed, despite the fact that much of the literature on organisational culture assumes that change occurs at the values and assumptions level: “[i]nstead, what we are presented with are haphazard treatments of cultural change which either equate it to behavioural change, or simply assume that behavioural change will in the long term lead to cultural change” (Ibid.: 83). A related issue to consider is whether changing deep-rooted values of employees is important to managers. Management may concentrate on compliance and conformity and if they can achieve shaping their employees’ behaviours to suit the organisation’s interests, it is debatable whether emphasis would be placed on changing values and attitudes.

Managers can have some influence on the evolution of culture by being aware of the symbolic consequences of their actions and by attempting to foster desired values, but they can never control culture in the sense that many management writers advocate: “an understanding of organisations as cultures opens our eyes to many crucial insights that elude other metaphors, but it is unlikely that these insights will provide the easy recipe for solving managerial problems that many writers hope for” (Morgan, 1986: 139).

3.2.1 Biased organisational cultures

A number of writers (for example, Acker, 1992; Cockburn, 1991; Mills, 1989) have criticised the gender-neutral approach organisational analysis adopted, which also views organisational culture as gender and ‘race’ free. There has been numerous work on biased organisational cultures, which focuses however almost entirely on gender issues (Liff and Cameron, 1997; Lewis, 1997; Gherardi, 1996; Mills, 2002). The literature presented above on organisational culture therefore, although useful at points when analysing gender and ethnicity issues within organisations, should

not stand independently, as though neutral of social groups' privileges, differences and inequalities.

Linking this section back to the organisational culture discussion, Legge (1994) has warned that strong cultures are not necessarily desirable. She argued that the negative side of a strong organisational culture is a rigid, inward looking organisation in which 'group-think' is developed. This can be examined through the 'equality lenses' arguing that research has shown that organisations tend to have a dominant, typically white male, culture, with the implicit expectation that employees of different social groups, would have to 'fit in' (for example, Cockburn, 1991; Liff and Cameron, 1997). As Kirton and Greene (2000: 73) have argued, "organizational power-holders occupy a structural position from which to manipulate the cultural signals and messages". Cockburn (1991: 185) focusing at this point on ethnicity, argued that there is an organisational hegemonic culture, created by a "white ruling group". Therefore, ethnic minority employees would have to integrate and 'fit in' this hegemony. As will be discussed in the next section in more detail, organisations who claim to be 'equal opportunity employers' still expect women or ethnic minorities, to 'fit in' the organisational culture, to 'manage' their behaviour and values and to assimilate and accept the 'taken-for-granted' assumptions. If they do not, they may be perceived as 'the problem' rather than presenting an opportunity to question the organisations as problematic (see Liff and Cameron, 1997; Dickens, 1998, for a discussion on gender).

As Woodall (1996: 350) has argued, while we cannot argue that HRM alone has prevented equality in employment, "its conscious pursuit will not guarantee the eradication of labour market segmentation, working practices centred around a male model of working time, and the persistence of stereotypes and biased assessments". As argued above, notions of commitment are gendered with the inherent assumption that women are not as committed to the organisation as men, one reason being their domestic responsibilities (Lewis, 1997; Dickens, 1998). Research has shown that managers may believe that women lack career ambition

and they “will cop out [...] the girls are coming for a job, very few are coming for a career” (Collinson, 1991: 70). There is lack of research however, supporting the view that women are less committed to their organisations. This nevertheless, does not prevent biased assumptions prevailing: “this is one of a number of pragmatic or ‘common sense’ gender assumptions which can inform HR decision-making” (Dickens, 1998: 25).

Lewis (1997: 21), examining organisational Family Friendly policies, contended that at present, these policies “play around at the margins of work, enabling some employees with family commitments to adapt to, but not challenge traditional work structures”. She argued that two main barriers to effective Family Friendly policies are a low sense of entitlement to these policies by employees who do not feel they can utilise them and, organizational discourses of time, which “obscure the advantages of alternative ways of working, for the organization as well as for individual employees and their families, and perpetuate organizational structures which interfere with family life, and help to maintain gender inequalities” (Ibid.: 21). The second point therefore, addresses the issue of commitment which is typically measured in or equated to long hours.

The discussion up to now has focused on HRM and whether its philosophy is at odds with equality. A part of this section has discussed biased organisational cultures with the focus being on gendering cultures. The main reason for this, is the dearth of literature which links organisational culture with ethnicity issues (two notable exceptions, being Cockburn, 1991 and Jenkins, 1986). Jenkins (1986) in his seminal work on racism and recruitment in organisations, has argued that the organisational culture is biased towards an ethnocentric, white standard of behaviour and appearance, where ‘fitting in’ and being accepted is seen as more important than being suitable for the job. In Jenkins’s (1986) study, ethnic minorities were often discriminated against based on a ‘gut feeling’ of managers, that white employees would not accept them. The distinction between suitability and acceptability is discussed in more detail in the following section.

It has been argued here, and in Chapters 1 and 2, that organisations and careers generally follow white male working patterns. The discussion on whether culture can be managed, has shed light on managerial demands of conformity; this indicates problems and concerns for women and ethnic minorities, who have to integrate in the white male organisational culture.

The discussion will now progress to equality strategies and the debate on EO and MD. Equality approaches are embedded in biased cultures and there are therefore, links between the structural and cultural dimensions of the theoretical framework within Section 3.3, although the emphasis rests more explicitly on organisational structures.

3.3 Equality strategies

This section of the chapter engages with organisational attempts to promote equality in the workplace. The discussion will start with a critical examination of EO policies, focusing on their ineffectiveness and lack of implementation. It discusses the business case for equality and argues that EO is not always in line with business goals. This relates back to the previous section where the argument that HRM may not be in line with equality was analysed. The section then moves on to discuss the managing diversity (MD) debate, arguing whether it offers something new to equality initiatives/strategies, or whether it is merely re-packaged EO (Liff, 1997).

There has been renewed interest in equality management in the 1990s within the business and political communities. Miller (1997) stated that equality initiatives have been accepted by employers as part of Human Resource Management, although not always based on goodwill and more typically related to fear of legislative sanctions or interest in the 'business case' for EO. As with the HRM and organisational culture work, literature on equality strategies and EO and MD policies have mainly focused on women, with limited work on ethnicity. Two

notable exceptions are the work by Jewson *et al.* (1995) on formal equal opportunities policies and the effects on ethnic minority groups and, Jenkins (1986) study on racial discrimination in employment. These studies however, take a structural approach, ignoring agency and strategies¹.

3.3.1 Equal Opportunity policies and implementation

As mentioned above, legislation, mainly in the 1970s, and organisational developments with regard to equality policies in the 1980s, changed the ways in which female and ethnic minority employees were treated in the workplace. Liff (1999) contended that this legislation provided a legal remedy against distinct pay scales for men and women and the occupational segregation on the basis of gender and ethnicity. The principles behind equal treatment have been translated into formal EO policies in organisations, put in place to address discrimination and unequal distribution of power. However, there have been numerous studies pointing to the ineffectiveness of formal EO policies and indicating their inadequate implementation (for example, Cockburn 1989, 1991; Jewson and Mason, 1986; Liff, 1989, 1995; Webb and Liff, 1988; Collinson *et al.*, 1990, Collinson, 1991; Dickens, 1994a, 1998). The coexistence of anti-discrimination legislation, equal opportunities policies, and continuing evidence of differential employment experiences of different social groups suggests that there are some problems with the approaches commonly used to counter inequality (Liff, 1995). The dichotomy between 'liberal' and 'radical' approaches to equality (Jewson and Mason, 1986) has been criticised for being problematic (Webb and Liff, 1988; Cockburn, 1989; Liff, 1995). The 'liberal' approach focuses on equal treatment where all individuals should be treated the same regardless of gender, 'race' and ethnicity. Jewson and Mason (1986) argued that the UK Equal Opportunities Codes of Practice fall into the 'liberal' category, where equality of opportunity can be attained by improving personnel practices. Cockburn (1989, 1991) discussed initiatives and approaches in terms of the 'length' of the EO agenda and has argued

¹ Although, these two studies are not explicitly included in HRM literature, they do address HRM related issues, such as equality policies and practices.

that the above approach of equal opportunity or 'equal access' and positive action² are the 'short agenda' of EO. Webb and Liff (1988) also argued that there are shortcomings with the underlying assumptions of a liberal approach, drawing on Jenkins's (1986) distinction in the context of the selection process, between 'suitability' versus 'acceptability'. 'Suitability' refers to the candidates being suitable for the job in terms of qualifications, experience and skills whereas 'acceptability' is more subjective and it is based on assessments about whether a candidate can 'fit in' and be accepted in the organisation. Jenkins (1986) focused his work on racial discrimination in recruitment in organisations and argued that acceptability criteria operate in a negative manner for ethnic minorities, recommending that selection should be merely based on suitability criteria. There is research however, based on ethnic minorities and women, which points to the fact that even notions of suitability are socially constructed and cannot be separated from acceptability of candidates (Jewson *et al.*, 1990; Webb and Liff, 1988; Collinson *et al.*, 1990). Regarding gendered constructions of suitability, Webb and Liff (1988: 549) argued that:

“given the differentiation between male and female genders there are material differences between the abilities and experiences women and men offer as job applicants, and the terms on which they are willing or able to accept jobs. A policy based on ensuring that candidates are judged on their individual skills and experience, not on their membership of a social group, will still give those making appointments plenty of opportunity 'justifiably' to favour men over women”

The authors' discussion provides ties with the previous section on organisational culture and the difficulties in changing inherent values and attitudes, when they are arguing that this approach downplays the strength of beliefs “of biologically-rooted differences between men and women” and ignores the fact that these beliefs are typically ingrained in deep-seated values and attitudes which are difficult to alter

² Positive Action: Positive measures, although not legally required, are allowed under the 1976 UK Race Relations Act to encourage employees and potential employees and to provide training for employees who are members of particular racial groups which have been underrepresented in particular work (Race Relations Code of Practice, Commission for Racial Equality, 1996).

(Ibid.: 549). This in turn indicates the problems with attempting to eliminate gender and, arguably, 'race' bias and stereotypes when constructing job specifications.

Moving on to the 'radical' approach, equality in this case is conceived as 'equal outcomes'. This approach focuses on positive discrimination where quotas can be in place to improve the employment situation of social groups who have suffered discrimination and redress historical disadvantage. Positive discrimination is illegal under British legislation, but there are debates on whether such an approach could be beneficial to under-represented groups. It has been argued that such a dichotomy between the liberal and radical approach is problematic and the following quote clearly illustrates her concern:

“Are ‘liberals’ indifferent to outcomes that flow from their fair procedures? Is it not more likely that they support equal treatments because they believe it is the best way of securing fair outcomes? Do radicals just want equal outcomes regardless of merit or is it not more likely that they are unconvinced of the ability of ‘fair procedures’ to demonstrate the abilities of under-represented groups?”
(Liff, 1995: 469)

A 'compromise' between the liberal and radical approaches would be to allow people to compete on equal terms (Webb and Liff, 1988). Cockburn (1989) refers to this as the 'long agenda' where the focus is on transforming organisations to achieve parity by recognising and valuing difference and diversity. This approach acknowledges that although people may be treated equally, this may not result in 'fair' outcomes. As Liff (1995) illustrated, if jobs are only offered on full-time contracts or if there is lack of adequate access for disabled people into an organisation, one social group would probably have an advantage over others, in this case women and disabled candidates would respectively be disadvantaged; this equates to indirect discrimination. It is crucial therefore for employers to focus on the actual job specifications and not discriminate against competent candidates, who may not readily fit the pre-conceived notion managers may have of an ideal employee. There should be a "sustained challenge to the structure of jobs and opportunities and to masculine hegemonic values in a political and economic

environment favouring individualism, self-promotion and personal achievement” (Webb and Liff, 1988: 550).

Liff’s (1995) discussion on the inadequate implementation of EO policies is comprehensive and the sequence of some of her arguments are followed here. She argued that the relationship between line managers and personnel, the conflicts between EO and other priorities facing managers, and resistance from employees, are three main areas where implementation of formal EO policies could prove difficult (Ibid.: 480).

With regard to the first area of concern, Liff (1995) argued that it is typically the personnel department’s responsibility to implement Equal Opportunity policies. Many writers have demonstrated however, that personnel/ HR managers are marginalised and are relatively powerless (Collinson *et al.*, 1990; Legge, 1978; 1987). Based on empirical research, Collinson (1991: 59) presented a contradictory argument in some respects, in that he believed that personnel managers have power over EO and they can be seen as barriers to the implementation of policies, for their own self-interest, by gaining power and status for themselves if not for their profession. In addition, as mentioned earlier, HRM is based on the premise that responsibility of HR issues should be devolved to line managers. Line management however, does not often have the expertise or even commitment to implement EO. One reason might be that line managers may have other priorities, such as production deadlines, increasing profits or maintaining service quality, which they see as more important than EO. A number of writers (Cockburn, 1991; Woodall *et al.*, 1997; Rees and Pollert, 1992) have acknowledged the fact that line managers can also be resistant to equality initiatives and can provide barriers to women’s development and opportunities. This also relates to Dicken’s (1994b) argument that the ‘business case’ may actually point away from EO, especially in the short-run where EO action may appear to be a liability. With regards to the lack of commitment of line managers, Dickens (1994b: 13) focusing on gender inequality, has argued that sometimes it is in their benefit not to implement EO:

“Organizations (or those within them) may continue to use discriminatory practices, for instance, because they are cheap, but also - or alternatively - because they aid managerial control and/ or support the particular structure of the labour process. The continued use of potentially discriminatory practices, such as recruiting through the internal and extended internal labour markets, including word of mouth, and selecting employees on grounds of acceptability and ability to “fit in” rather than job-related ability, for example, can deliver perceived organizational benefits”.

This argument can also be applied to ethnic minority employees, since organisations may also benefit from maintaining discriminatory practices in relation to both recruitment and advancement, and they may wish to employ and promote people who are ‘acceptable’ to the organisational culture rather than ‘rocking the boat’ by increasing the numbers of women who are not perceived to be as committed to the organisation as men (Lewis, 1997; Dickens, 1994a), or of ethnic minorities who are often seen as being ‘outsiders’ and stereotyped with regard to their ethnicity and culture (Jenkins, 1986; Davidson, 1997).

Liff (1989:31) also discussed the resentment of managers towards EO policies:

“Many managers feel that they currently treat everyone equally and may thus resent having a policy imposed on them which suggests that they discriminate. Some also appear to doubt the motives which underlie policies and feel that they will in practice favour women or ethnic minorities. More pragmatically, they may just feel that other issues, such as the speed of recruitment, take priority over ensuring that equal opportunities are strictly observed in every case”

Relating this discussion back to the structure, culture and agency framework, it can be argued that the monolithic white male culture of organisations may affect women’s and ethnic minorities’ opportunities of development and advancement. With regard to agency, it is pertinent to ask ‘whose agency are we talking about?’. More research is needed to examine whether the agency of line managers or senior management in organisations may constrain the agency of disadvantaged groups who are striving for career opportunities in their organisations.

Research has indicated that resentment may be an obstacle when attempting to implement EO policies effectively (Liff, 1995). The powerful groups in

organisations may feel threatened by EO policies and initiatives. People who made it to the top of the organisation do not want to assume that they have achieved their positions for reasons other than their own merits. Arguing therefore, that white males are advantaged simply because of their gender and 'race' could make this group defensive, especially towards positive action programmes which could be in place to help disadvantaged groups. Resistance for positive action programmes may also be met from women and ethnic minorities, who may be concerned that if they advance as part of these initiatives, they could be seen as incapable or as having special needs, requiring preferential treatment in order to develop and progress in their career.

Kanter (1977) argued that when women are treated as tokens - representatives of their stereotyped category rather than as independent individuals - social segregation and stereotyping are encouraged. The person being placed in that tokenistic position, Kanter (1977) argued, may try to overcompensate through either over-achievement or hiding success, or by turning against people of their own kind. Davidson (1997) has extended this discussion on tokenism for women, arguing that token ethnic minority women managers experience negative effects which are intensified by the interaction of their gender and 'race'. The problems faced by the token black women, as Davidson (1997: 38-9) states are: performance pressure; racial stereotyping; isolation and lack of same colour role models; visibility; tokenism and ghettoisation; being a test case for future black and ethnic minority women managers.

Another criticism of EO approaches, which extends the previous discussion in Section 3.2 on organisational culture, is that these approaches often concentrate on controlling demonstrated behaviours, without challenging prejudiced attitudes and beliefs, at the deeper level of values (Liff, 1995). Equality initiatives are portrayed as providing the same benefits to everyone but they do not address or attempt to change the uneven 'base' of distribution of domestic labour and male working patterns (Liff and Cameron, 1997), and therefore focus on

achieving behavioural compliance rather than changed understandings, values and attitudes. There is a need to acknowledge that organisational practices are socially constructed around a male work model, and a gendered culture is in place within which women are disadvantaged and seen as 'the problem' (Liff and Cameron, 1997; Dickens, 1994). As an extension to this argument, more research is needed to examine whether organisations may therefore view ethnic minority women as a 'double problem' based on their gender and their ethnicity. Organisations may use ethnic minority women's culture and religious beliefs as an excuse for their under-representation in higher hierarchical levels instead of challenging existing discriminatory assumptions where the white male work pattern is considered the norm.

As it was demonstrated through this section, ethnic minority women's experiences in relation to equality policies, are typically invisible. Ethnic minority women's situation in organisations tends to be ignored even within EO policies. Anti-discrimination policies and units often concentrate on either gender or ethnicity, 'race' and nationality; there is little acknowledgement of the possible interconnections of racism and sexism for ethnic minority women (Liff and Dale, 1994). Moreover, ethnic minority women's experiences are often overlooked in gender-equality projects run by white women and in race-equality projects run by ethnic minority men (Cockburn, 1991).

The discussion will now move on to debates around managing diversity (MD) initiatives, where links are again made, when possible, with ethnic minority women's experiences.

3.3.2 Managing Diversity: a move away from EO?

The ineffectiveness of Equal Opportunities, in terms of their conceptualisation and implementation, has led partly to a change in language and focus within equality initiatives. 'Managing Diversity' (MD) can critically be seen as the new 'buzzword' in organisational policies and practices but in this section I engage in

the debate on whether MD offers any advances in striving for equality or if it is merely 're-packaged' EO (Liff, 1997). Different approaches and conceptualisations to MD are explored, the central debate being on whether MD should focus solely on individual differences or whether there is a need for an acknowledgement of social group membership.

As Lorbiecki (2001) argued, diversity management has only recently become a concern in British organisations. Cox (1994) stated that initially it was seen to be a 'North American Affair' and the emphasis was on Britain receiving lessons from the US experience. Lorbiecki (2001: 2) argued that British identity or Britishness is a key factor in diversity management in Britain "because most of the disadvantaged women and men in our society have ancestral roots in the colonies of Britain's erstwhile empire, and it is they who bear the brunt of racism and discrimination". It is not the purpose of this chapter to engage with the historical developments of Britain's economy and politics. It is however, important to acknowledge that, as Lorbiecki contended, discrimination and social exclusion at present cannot be understood without some reference to history. Chapter 1 has provided some background to race relations in Britain and the history of migration which might be helpful in placing this chapter in context.

A main difference between EO and MD is that conventional EO approaches focus on minimising or downplaying differences between members of different social groups, whereas MD is suggesting that diversity is something to be valued, emphasising the positive aspects of difference and the possible advantages of a diverse workforce. Dickens (1994b: 9) stated that there is a business case for managing diversity which is that "organizations can gain by developing a culture which positively promotes the recognition and valuing of difference as a competitive advantage (rather than requiring conformity and judging all contributions by the yardstick of the white male)". As Thomas (1990: 112) suggested, "[m]anaging diversity does not mean controlling or containing diversity, it means enabling every member of your workforce to perform to his or her

potential”. The work by Kandola and Fullerton (1994) has been one of the very few empirical studies of diversity management in the UK. They take the approach that MD should focus on individuals rather than groups: “[d]iversity includes virtually all ways in which people differ, not just the more obvious ones of gender, ethnicity and disability” (Ibid.: 8). Managing Diversity is seen as inclusive; white males are included in discussions of diversity. Hammond and Kleiner (1992: 7) contended that the main objective of MD is to create “an environment that taps the potential of all employees without any group being advantaged by irrelevant classification or accident of birth”. The inclusive element of managing diversity, is one of the main characteristics that separates it from EO. Generally, white, heterosexual, able-bodied men do not see themselves as part of a social group; they do not see themselves for example, as having ‘gender’ or ‘ethnicity’, they merely assume themselves to be the norm. By being inclusive, there is less tension and resentment by typically white men, who may feel excluded from organisational equality initiatives, because in MD, they can acknowledge their own diversity. As Kandola and Fullerton (1994) argued, diversity includes non-visible differences such as background, personality and workstyle. These authors explicitly stated that they see MD as a move away from EO and this is illustrated by their following argument:

“If managing diversity is to be seen as a new concept, however, the set of ideas that represented the body of conventional wisdom within the equal opportunities field must, by definition change. If it does not, then managing diversity will merely be used as a convenient and perhaps more accessible label for the ideas currently under the heading of equal opportunities” (Ibid.: 8-9)

In contrast to this notion, the Institute of Personnel and Development’s (IPD) - now the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) - position paper on managing diversity (1996), contended that managing diversity takes forward the arguments and achievements of equal opportunities, rather than single-handedly rejecting EO.

The range of definitions of MD presented above, provide evidence that there are different approaches and conceptualisations of managing diversity and this then

provides a fertile ground for debate. Whether one sees differences as allocated among individuals without any connection to their social groups or as the characteristics held on the basis of their social group, would lead to two distinct objectives for equality initiatives: “[t]he first approach would not see gender or ethnic equality as a specific goal since inequality is not a feature of members of particular groups [...] the objective here is equality as the opportunity to be acknowledged for the person one is and to be helped to make the most of one’s talents and reach one’s own goals” (Liff, 1997: 13). Liff (1997: 13) defined this MD approach as “Dissolving Differences”, where social group differentiation for policy-making is not considered important and where there is low commitment to social group equality as an organisational objective. Within this approach, everyone should be treated and judged as individuals and as Caudron (1994: 56) has argued, diversity issues are said to “go way beyond obvious physical differences to include differences in communication styles, problem solving, professional experience, functional expertise, management level, training and education, and work ethnics”.

Kandola and Fullerton’s (1994) suggestion that the focus is on individual rather than social group differences (i.e. the “Dissolving Differences” approach) has been criticised. Sir Herman Ouseley, the former chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), voiced his concerns about an approach that ignores discrimination and stereotypes based on social group membership (Overell, 1996). Building on the earlier discussion on culture, it could be argued that Kandola and Fullerton’s (1994) assumption may prove difficult to achieve, in that it is probably a very high call to assume that organisational prejudices and stereotypes on grounds of gender, ‘race’ and other social group characteristics, would miraculously vanish due solely to a new equality/diversity approach. Liff (1997) saw the second approach of MD as linked to existing EO approaches in as much as it sees inequality as experienced by members of social groups. She defined this approach as “Valuing Differences”, where these differences are based on social group membership (Ibid.: 14). Within this approach social group differentiation is important for organisational policy making and there is also high commitment to social group equality as an

organisational objective. Within this approach, organisational initiatives such as ‘special’ training for under-represented groups and incorporation of policies to accommodate demands for different holidays and diets for ethnic groups, are present (Copeland, 1988a, 1988b; Greenslade, 1991). Liff (1997) referred to training for women, which focuses on the improvement of skills with a remedial effect in addressing historical disadvantage. The author also argued that other initiatives within the “Valuing Differences” approach are based on opening all jobs to the possibility of being worked part-time or job share basis, and these “are about acknowledging that the organization itself has to change” (Liff, 1997: 14).

Although, there are connections between EO approaches and the “Valuing Differences” MD approach, what is distinctive between them, is that social group differences are acknowledged and valued within the MD approach, rather than downplayed or ignored, as is the case within existing EO policies, with the exception of positive action initiatives.

The two MD approaches discussed above in relation to whether the focus is based on group membership or individuality when policy making is taking place, are the two dominant fields discussed in MD debates. However, there are two further approaches, discussed by Liff (1997); the “Accommodating Differences” and “Utilising Differences” strands. It is not the purpose of this chapter to explore in details these two approaches, but Figure 3.1 below (reproduced from Liff, 1997: 15) helps conceptualise these approaches in relation to commitment to social group equality and whether social group membership is of high importance to organisational policy. This Figure also encompasses the two main MD approaches discussed above.

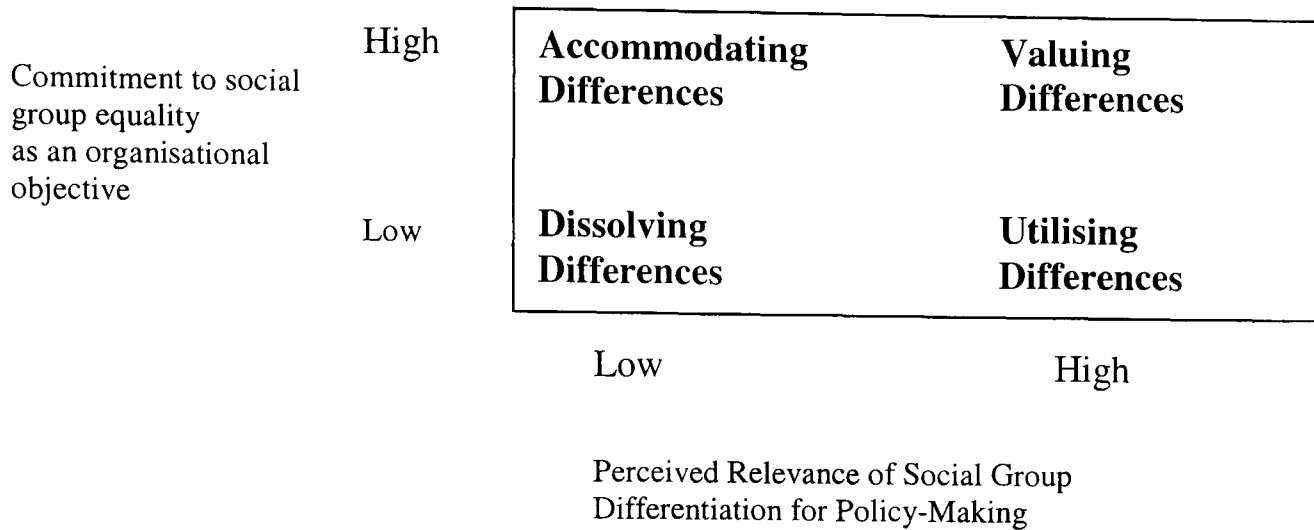


Figure 3.1 Managing Diversity approaches (Reproduced from Liff, 1997)

The debates around defining and conceptualising MD are important in that they provide the context within which we can understand the significance of different equality initiatives, “but they risk missing the wider significance of the term managing diversity” (Liff, 1999: 67). As Liff (1999) argued, managing diverse employees has been predominantly detrimental to the employees who need the valuing of their diversity more, i.e. the employees who are not able-bodied white males. Organisational and work literature suggests that exclusion is understood “not only through the behaviour of individual managers but also through an exploration of the ways in which the structure, culture and practices of organisations advantage those from the dominant group by adapting to their skills and lifestyles. This is what sometimes is referred to as institutional discrimination” (Ibid.: 67). Lorbiecki (2001: 8) also addressed institutional discrimination focusing on ‘race’ and argued that “organisations are not, as Mills (1998) points out, neutral sites when it comes to questions of difference and identity formation. They contain deeply embedded processes and practices which play an integral part in structuring discrimination experiences such as those manifest in the charges of ‘institutional racism’”. Institutional racism was defined in the Macpherson Report (1999) as:

“The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to

discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.”

A number of writers have argued that a main concern with existing inequalities is that organisations are portrayed as neutral, assuming that it is the women or the ethnic minorities that have problems in adapting to the organisational culture (Liff, 1999; Liff and Cameron, 1997; Dickens, 1994a). Wajcman (1996) contended that organisational cultures are gendered, and it can be argued that they may also be racialised, in relation to career opportunities. As discussed above, career patterns are based on white male standards which make it difficult for women and ethnic minorities to follow. Wajcman (1996: 259) stated that “[t]he barriers to women’s advancement that have been identified include the lack of family-friendly policies, poor access to training and the pattern of career development”. She went on to argue that there are substantial differences in the kinds of barriers men and women experience: “significantly more women than men perceive the prejudice of colleagues and the ‘cliquiness’ of senior management as an obstacle to their progress” (Ibid.: 271). Expanding on network literature presented in Chapter 2, Coe (1992) reported that the greatest barrier faced by senior women managers in their career is the ‘men’s club/old boy network’. Wajcman (1996: 263) reinforces this argument by stating that male managers share a common language and understanding with one another and they appear to feel more comfortable communicating with each other, promoting ‘clones’ of themselves. Managers’ agency is implicitly assumed sometimes within the literature but there has been much less attention placed on the agency of ethnic minorities or women in addressing these barriers and developing strategies for their careers. The social group structures and cultures, in terms of both support and constraints are also often ignored in these discussions.

Liff and Cameron (1997) argued that conventional equality measures have made a limited impact on women’s position in the workforce, primarily due to the fact that policy approaches assume the women to have the problem, in terms of adapting and in terms of commitment. The focus is therefore placed on women changing and

adapting rather than on organisational changes. These authors argued that a real shift demands a cultural change, which moves beyond merely controlling behaviour, and which cannot be achieved through the standard personnel-based equality initiatives. A more pro-active approach is necessary which focuses on the organisations as problematic, and not on the need for women, and ethnic minorities to adapt (Liff and Cameron, 1997; Dickens, 1994a). Liff and Cameron (1997: 42) also argued that equality approaches are embedded in organisational cultures and it is important to recognise that discrimination is perpetuated

“through processes such as job terms and conditions which are structured in favour of male ways of working and assessment procedures which fail to distinguish necessary job requirements from the characteristics of those (men or women) who have carried the job in the past. These factors make a naïve ‘gender blind’ approach an inadequate equality policy”.

Dickens (1994a: 289) made a similar claim by arguing that there has to be an acknowledgement that:

“current organisational cultures, norms, structures, rules and notions of merit etc. have been shaped around white, non-disabled men, and without a shift in focus away from, at best helping people fit into jobs and organizations as presently constructed, towards changing the construction of jobs and organizations to accommodate all, achievement will always fall short of equality in employment”.

Relating these discussions back to the debate on EO versus MD, Liff (1997, 1999) provides comprehensive arguments on whether we should claim a complete move from EO to MD, or that MD has genuinely offered something new. Arguing that a complete dichotomy between EO and MD is not useful, Liff (1997; 1999) stated that what is useful is that the debates around MD offer an opportunity to re-evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of EO approaches, in a way, it can be argued, to start afresh. Liff (1997) argued that the versions of MD which are particularly useful, in that they address many of the limitations of current policies, are the ones that stress the need for organisations, rather than individuals to adapt. The emphasis should be more around ways to aid with this restructuring and rethinking of gendered and racialised organisational cultures rather than with

whether MD is a complete shift from EO. In addition, as Liff (1997: 24) went on to argue, managing diversity has some new answers in relation to effective equality initiatives and to changing the structures and cultures which favour white men, but at the same time, it “also has areas where its rhetorical flourishes have not been translated into any systematic approach”. In her 1999 article, Liff extended that argument and stated that one should not completely dismiss EO approaches in light of MD:

“[I]t is probably a safer option than one that argues for the abandonment of all that has gone before in favour of a new, untried paradigm. It is important, however, that the tensions between these approaches are not suppressed, because it is precisely the ability of new approaches to question the ingrained assumptions of managers and employees about the way their organisations work which is most likely to move equality initiatives beyond their current levels of achievement” (Liff, 1999: 74).

Liff (1995: 486) discussed diversity issues earlier on and argued:

“Where ‘diversity’ could prove a positive way forward would be if it led to an increased questioning of the skilled white man, as the archetypal worker against whom all workers are judged. Equal opportunities could then be less about adjusting the rest of us to rules based on his abilities and behaviour and more about restructuring the rules to reflect the reality of the current British workforce.”

As it was discussed above, ‘race’ and ethnicity discussions have received less attention than gender, within the diversity literature and the debates on EO versus MD. Liff (1997; 1999) has provided some connections between ethnic minority experiences and organisational equality policies and implementation. Ethnic minority women’s position within these debates have been typically rendered invisible, with the exception of Liff and Dale’s (1994) work, which although it addressed issues of inadequate policy implementation, it did not focus on these women’s position within the EO/ MD debates. Wherever possible, discussions on gender and women’s position within these debates, have been extended to ethnic minorities, and ethnic minority women, throughout the section.

3.4 Summary

This chapter, has focused on the organisational cultural and structural dimensions of the theoretical framework, presented in Chapter 2. After a brief introduction, Section 3.2 engaged with the HRM and equality literature, pointing to the absence of agency from these discussions. Debates on culture were discussed, with the emphasis placed on biased organisational cultures. It was argued that this literature has focused almost explicitly on ‘gendering’ cultures, often ignoring ethnic minority issues and, in effect ethnic minority women’s experiences. Section 3.3 explored the debates in equality management and strategies, discussing different approaches of managing diversity (MD) in organisations and addressing the questions around the differences between EO and MD. Different approaches to MD were presented, the two main ones discussed being the “Dissolving Differences” and “Valuing Differences” (Liff, 1997) strands. Yet again, ethnic minority issues and therefore ethnic minority women’s position within these debates are almost completely absent.

In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework utilised to examine ethnic minority women’s experiences was explored. Arguments and debates in this chapter with relation to organisational policies and cultures, shed light - albeit indirectly - to ethnic minority women’s career experiences. As argued above, however, agency and the social group culture dimensions of this framework have been absent from the HRM and equality literature.

Having therefore identified some gaps in the literature, this study aims to investigate ethnic minority women’s careers within the aforementioned theoretical framework and within the HRM literature. Although implicitly assumed and discussed within Chapters 1 to 3, it is important to clearly state the main research questions this study is addressing, before moving on to the methodology and data analysis chapters. These research questions relate directly to the structure, culture and agency framework, and are also informed by the HRM and equality literature presented above. There are two main questions this thesis aims to provide answers

to: firstly, what are the effects of structure, culture and agency on ethnic minority women's career experiences and opportunities; and secondly, how do these three dimensions interact with each other when examining these women's careers? These are the broader research questions and within those, there are a number of inter-related areas and issues to consider; for example, how do organisational cultures and structures affect ethnic minority women's opportunities for career development and advancement? Does their social group culture provide support to their work and careers? How does their agency influence their position in organisations and their career experiences? How do these factors interact to inform ethnic minority women's experiences and opportunities in organisations?

This study therefore, intends to contribute to the HRM field, by connecting all dimensions in the empirical part of this research, and providing the links between the theoretical framework of Chapter 2 and, organisational equality policies and initiatives, within the HRM literature, presented within this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Research Methodology and Methods: Philosophical considerations and implementation

4.1 Introduction

In Chapters 2 and 3, the theoretical framework utilised to investigate ethnic minority women's careers and the position of this in the HRM literature were explored. This chapter engages with various aspects of methodology relevant to this research. It introduces different methodological philosophies and justifies the use of qualitative or inductive methodology for this study. An examination of feminist research methodology is presented, making connections to research on 'race' and ethnicity and, exploring theoretical issues around reflexivity, the position of the researcher in the research, and the relationship between the researcher and the participants. The chapter proceeds to identify, and provide a rationale for, the research methods applied and then moves on to discuss the implementation of the project, such as access to organisations, identification of individual ethnic minority women and ethnic minority men to interview, data collection and analysis and, the 'practical' side of reflexivity for this specific project. A thread running through the chapter is my position within this research, as a white female academic interviewing male and female participants of varied ethnic and class backgrounds.

It is appropriate to 'link' the theoretical framework with the methodology adopted; I see this chapter as a continuation, a practical application of the agency, structure and culture framework discussed in the literature review chapters. The methodology adopted, based on Berger and Luckman's (1967) and Bhaskar's (1979; 1989) realist framework, which was discussed in Chapter 2, acknowledges the interaction between individuals and society. Hence, an inductive approach, where social reality is internal to human actors, is the appropriate methodology for this project. The theoretical framework also places the notion of culture in the discussion, both organisational culture social group culture. Therefore, the realist framework is adopted, but at the same time the additional dimension of culture is added.

4.2 Ontological and epistemological assumptions and choice of methodology

“Methodology is not just a fancy name for ‘methods of investigation’ but a study of the relationship between theoretical concepts and warranted conclusions about the real world” (Blaug, 1992: xii). The research methodology is the instrument through which the research objectives are achieved (Wass and Wells, 1994); it bridges the gap between higher philosophical ideas and actual research findings.

In attempting to find an appropriate methodology for this study, I had initially considered different options, for example, using triangulation and using methods associated with both qualitative and quantitative methodology. I realised however that my line of thinking tended more towards inductive methodological arguments and that I would be dissatisfied with using any deductive or ‘objective’ statistical analysis for a topic which I have always believed would require in-depth empathy-driven research¹. I do believe however, that in providing a justification for why I am adopting an inductive approach, it is useful to explore and assess the two competing methodologies of deductive and inductive research. In this section therefore, I will discuss the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of deductive (i.e., quantitative or positivist) and inductive (i.e., qualitative or ideographic) approaches.

Wass and Wells (1994) stated that the common objective of social science research is to explain social behaviour and that it is the way one interprets explanations and the way explanations can be gained through the study of the empirical world, that divides research. Opposing positions in this debate are characterised by alternative ontological assumptions about the nature of human action; what reality is, and epistemological assumptions about how this nature can be revealed through research; how one obtains knowledge of that reality. Ontological assumptions differ according to whether one considers the world to be objective and external to the researcher, or socially constructed and only understood by examining perceptions,

¹ I used quantitative methodology in my first degree, where the option of qualitative analysis was never addressed. I found that quite unsatisfactory, especially since the issues I was always interested in, were sensitive social issues, which I felt needed more in-depth attention than can be offered by a statistical package.

attitudes and experiences of human actors. Epistemological assumptions differ in relation to what one accepts as valid knowledge about human activity (Hussey and Hussey, 1997; Wass and Wells, 1994).

Historically, the positivist paradigm in social science is based on the approach used in the natural sciences. Popper (1967; 1972), whose work became synonymous with the 'hypothetico-deductive method' advocated the position of 'naturalism'. He argued that there is, or can be, an essential unity of method between natural and social science. Under positivism, social scientists adopt the role of detached observers of an independent and pre-existing reality; they are distant when conducting their research and do not allow values, attitudes and biases to distort their objective views (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). Objective facts or causes of social phenomena are sought, ignoring the subjective state of the actors. Thus, logical reasoning is applied to the research so that precision, objectivity and rigour replace experience, intuition and subjectivity (Hussey and Hussey, 1997).

In deduction, the focus is placed on the consequences of a theory. There is an established school of thought which believes that the entire research process is initiated by theories: "Deduction involves the gathering of facts to confirm or disprove hypothesized relationships among variables that have been deduced from propositions or earlier theories" (Ghauri *et al.*, 1995: 9). Popper (1957) believed that we never make inductive generalisations and he rejected what he called the "absurd" inductivist belief that we start with observations and derive the theories from them. He also argued that it does not matter how theories are obtained, but what is crucial is how they are tested. The 'cycle of enquiry' under deductive methods begins with abstract conceptualisations, which then become operationalised hypotheses tested through the application of theory so as to create new experiences or observations. Generalisations and regularities are first proposed as conjectures and are then subjected to rigorous testing against observation; when a theory is refuted, it is replaced by another conjecture.

The ontological assumption underpinning the nomothetic approach is that social reality is independent of individuals and exists regardless of whether we are aware of it; regardless of subjective consciousness. Therefore, the external world and subjective consciousness are completely separate. The epistemological assumption is that “only that which is objectively observable is valid knowledge” (Wass and Wells, 1994: 9). Gill and Johnson (1991) argue that, within the nomothetic approach, once tested and corroborated the theory is assumed to be established as a valid explanation. Those explanations are often termed ‘covering laws’ which not only claim to explain past observations but also predict what future observations ought to be. As the social world is taken to be external and real, the researcher can attempt to measure and analyse it using research methods which are highly structured and controlled, such as laboratory experiments and surveys.

It should be clear that there is tension between the deductive methodological framework and the theoretical framework adopted for this study, which assumes an interaction between structure, culture and agency and views reality as internal to social actors. As it was discussed in Chapter 2, in theorising gender, ‘race’, and ethnicity, it is important to recognise that these are socially constructed terms. Ethnic minority women are social actors within social structures and institutions and may have different ‘realities’ from a white woman, a white man, an ethnic minority man, or other ethnic minority women of a different ethnic group or class. Their gender, their ethnic and cultural background and expectations can impact their organisational lives in different ways. In turn, their ‘work realities’ are going to be affected by the organisational culture and the way in which they perceive, and are perceived by, the organisation. It is impossible, therefore, to treat people as separate or outside their social contexts; social situations cannot be understood without examining the actors’ perceptions of their own experiences and activities. In the same vein, researchers are not objective either, having their own perceptions, prejudices and ways of analysing situations and events, which may also be related to their background, class, ethnicity and gender. This will be discussed later when examining the relationship between the researcher and the ‘researched’.

The inductive approach which acknowledges that reality is internal to social actors and not a sanitised, objective attribute, is the methodology adopted in this study, as it is in line with the theoretical framework which acknowledges people as active agents living within structures and having different experiences, attitudes and perceptions. Under the inductive paradigm, social reality is within us and therefore, “the act of investigating reality has an effect on that reality” (Hussey and Hussey, 1997: 53). I view this as seeing the researcher and the ‘researched’ as variables that can impact on the research question and analysis.

This qualitative approach stresses the subjective aspects of human activity by focusing on the meaning, rather than measurement of social phenomena. The ‘cycle of enquiry’ in the ideographic approach is in a way the reverse of the nomothetic approach. It involves moving from observations of the empirical world to the construction of theories. The ontological assumption underpinning the ideographic approach is that the real world does not exist independently of subjective interpretation, outside the consciousness of the individual. As a result, there are different conceptions of reality and enquiry cannot converge on a single reality as positivism assumes. The epistemological assumption is that valid knowledge “comprises individual comprehension of the external world” and explanation comprises of causal laws inferred from actors subjective perceptions of their world (Wass and Wells, 1994: 9). That is, what is knowledge is determined by the individual. The ways in which we seek to observe and understand the social world are themselves a product of prior judgements regarding the nature of that world. Making a link with this study, one’s class and ethnic background would have affected and would continue to affect life experiences. Weber (1947) introduced the term ‘verstehen’ - interpretative or sympathetic understanding - when explaining this inductive process of understanding the social world.

Induction is the process of observing facts to generate theory and as Ghauri *et al.* (1995) argued, while doing research one formulates propositions after observing the relationship between different variables of a study. Glaser and Strauss (1967)

defined this process as ‘grounded theorising’, whereby theory is ‘grounded’ in the empirical world on the basis of the fieldwork which takes place. Therefore, in this case, theory comes last (Mason,1996). Mason (1996) has argued however, that Glaser and Strauss’s ‘grounded theory’ is also associated with a different philosophical position where theory, data analysis and data generation are produced concurrently: “if you are developing a theory in this way, you will devise a method for moving back and forth between data analysis and the process of explanation or theory construction” (Mason, 1996: 141).

Social scientists who associate themselves with the inductive philosophy, argued that social sciences deal with action and behaviour which are generated from within the human mind (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). They contended that “the interrelationship of the investigator and what was being investigated was impossible to separate, and what existed in the social and human world was what we (investigators and laymen) thought existed” (Smith, 1983: 7). It is my contention that a researcher should acknowledge their own place in their research and position themselves actively within their study. Cockburn (1991) touched on this issue and argued that her study was specific to her own subject position and her own experiences as a white middle class heterosexual woman with two adult children. She also argued that a different study would have been produced if the researcher were a young Asian woman, a senior white male manager, or a black male trade unionist. This issue will be explored in more detail in the following section where I examine feminist literature and literature on ‘race’ and ethnicity in research methodology and their value to this study. Issues of reflexivity, the researcher’s identity and the relationship between researcher and ‘researched’ are explored within feminist research methodology, as this methodology acknowledges itself as sensitive to these concerns.

4.2.1 Feminist methodology and research on ‘race’ and ethnicity

Researching women’s career experiences led me to consider whether I should adopt a feminist research methodology which espouses qualitative methods (Stanley and

Wise, 1990) and it is especially relevant to the study of sensitive topics (Renzetti and Lee, 1993). As discussed in Chapter 2, most research on careers has tended to concentrate on white men, and the research developed to counter the gender bias by focusing on women, has also been criticised for assuming that all women, are white and middle class. By focusing on ethnic minority women's career experiences, I will be filling a gap in career literature and research. When considering adopting a feminist research methodology, I was also sensitive to the fact that feminist literature has, in general, ignored ethnic minority women's experience. I continued however with an examination of some of the feminist literature in the hope of locating feminist research methodology which was sensitive to ethnicity and class.

Edwards (1990; 1993) has been useful in that respect in that she provided a detailed discussion on feminist research methodologies needing to be sensitive to racial and class divisions and she discussed her own position as a white woman interviewing Afro-Caribbean women. Andersen (1993), also a white female researcher, has also provided a useful discussion on white researchers interviewing ethnic minority groups, exploring reflexivity and arguing for an acknowledgement of white researchers' privileged position. The work of both writers, as well as others, is discussed below.

Edwards (1993: 182) argued that most feminist research writers agree that there is no one method that can be termed *the* feminist methodology (original emphasis). It seems that there is not one specific feminist philosophy or methodology, "but rather a series of overlapping conceptual fields, feminist research methodologies" (Wilson, 1998: 119). This consequently, applies to feminist methods and again, as Duelli Klein (1983: 90) argued, there are no feminist "how-to-recipes". Edwards (1990: 479) has argued nevertheless, that even though there is not one feminist methodology, there are certain elements that characterise it: "A feminist methodology has as its base a critique of objectivity, of the supposedly rational, detached, value-free research as traditionally espoused". The author went on to present three key principles that guide feminist research:

- (1) Women's lives need to be addressed in their own terms: "[W]omen's round lives have been pushed into the square holes of male-defined theories, and where their experiences do not fit those experiences have been invalidated, devalued, or presented as deviant" (Edwards, 1990: 479).

- (2) Feminist research should not just be *on* women but *for* women (original emphasis). Edwards (1990) argued that the final aim of researching should be to improve women's situations and this raises concerns on the relationship between the researcher and the researched. The researched should not be treated as 'objects' of research, and their voices and concerns should be heard.

- (3) The researcher should locate herself in the research and the process of production, by making explicit the reasoning procedures she utilised in carrying out research and on a reflexive level, by focusing on the "researcher's effect upon the actual process of the research, her class, race, assumptions, and beliefs" and the effect these have upon the research and analysis (Edwards, 1990: 479).

Based on this framework, I have researched women's experiences, where these may be divided by class and 'race'/ ethnicity. I have focused on ethnic minority women's careers, in ways that can advance knowledge in an under-researched area (hence, the research is partly *for* ethnic minority women). I have also explored relevant literature on reflexivity and on the relationship between the researcher and the 'researched'. Within the next section, I reflect upon my own position within this research, as a white female researcher interviewing ethnic minority participants.

Black feminists have criticised white feminists for wanting to conduct research on black people, arguing that it is an area where white researchers do not have first hand experience and insight or understanding. Carby (1982) has raised concerns for

studies by white researchers involving black people, as operating with white western supremacist assumptions. Studying across racial and ethnic lines raises certain issues for the researcher, such as practical, strategic, ethical, and epistemological concerns alike (Stanfield and Dennis, 1993). Andersen (1993) has also stated that studies related to 'race' have often been distorted since they have been centred in the perspectives and experiences of dominant group members. Stanfield (1993: 4) endorsed this in arguing that the production of knowledge has been "ideologically determined and culturally biased". Research is embedded in power relationships between the researcher and the participants and in society at large: "[s]cientific research does not exist in a vacuum. Its theory and practice reflect the structure and values of society [...] The control, exploitation, and privilege that are generic components of social oppression exist in the relation of researchers to researched, even though their manifestations may be subtle and masked by professional ideologies" (Blauner and Wellman, 1973: 314-5).

A central argument lies in whether white researchers can contribute to the understanding of racial groups' experiences and whether dominant groups can comprehend the experiences of outsiders (Andersen, 1993). Andersen (1993) highlighted the problems faced by white researchers interested in investigating experiences of ethnic minorities: "[h]ow can white scholars study those who have been historically subordinated without further producing sociological accounts distorted by the political economy of race, class and gender?" (Ibid.: 41). She suggested that there are certain problems in conducting research involving ethnic minority groups because of the social distance imposed by class and race relations when the interviewers are white and middle-class and those being interviewed are not. I would argue, however, that there is a danger of essentialising social groups, if one sees them as having stable characteristics. One should not assume that white groups would be typically middle-class, nor that ethnic minority groups never are. Identities are complex and ethnic minority and white people, men and women, can have a number of similarities or differences based on class, age, background, but also more individualistic differences, such as preferences and personalities.

Edwards (1990: 477), reviewing the feminist literature on women interviewing women, has acknowledged, as a white researcher herself, the concerns of black feminists who have criticised the way in which “traditional and feminist theorising and research has either rendered Black people invisible, or visible only as stereotypes and deviants”. She criticised the literature women have produced on women interviewing women and she wanted to examine what this means for white women interviewing black women. This can be related to arguments on feminist postmodern epistemology which has been sceptical about essentialist universalising claims and does not therefore accept that all women share the same experiences (Harding, 1987). Standpoint feminists, for example, have advocated that members of subordinated groups have unique viewpoints on their own experiences and on the society as a whole, and they argued that one’s ‘race’, class and gender are both origins and objects of sociological knowledge (Andersen, 1993). Without disputing this, I would argue nevertheless that one can achieve ‘knowledge’, without having first hand experience and be able to produce research and ‘represent the other’ (Kitzinger *et al.*, 1996), provided one adopts reflexivity in that s/he is sensitive to their own position and the ways in which that position can affect their perceptions of situations: “[w]hite scholars doing research on race and ethnicity should examine self-consciously the influence of institutional racism and the way it shapes the formulation and development of their research, rather than assume a color-blind stance” (Andersen, 1993: 43).

Andersen, as a white scholar herself, has conducted research focused on ethnic minority groups and acknowledged that her understanding of their lives was partial, incomplete and distorted. She contended however, that her findings could be valid if there is acknowledgement of limitations and that research practices should be developed in ways that recognise and take as central the class, ‘race’, and gender relations in which researchers and research participants are situated. The author went on to argue that “we should question assumptions that the knower is the ultimate authority on the lives of those who she or he studies. We should not

assume that white scholars are unable to generate research with people of color as research participants, but we must be aware that to do so, white scholars must work in ways that acknowledge and challenge white privilege and question how such privilege may shape research experiences” (Ibid.: 51). Linking this to my earlier argument on complex identities, I would also contend that findings may be partial even if an ethnic minority researcher conducts studies on ethnic minority groups.

Stanfield (1993: 33) supported this view, arguing that the study of methodology should include the life histories of researchers and the established norms, values and beliefs of the structures which surround them: “[f]or decades, much potential sobering knowledge about racial and ethnic issues has been either lost or distorted because researchers have failed to reflect on the implications of their life histories and cultural backgrounds as ideological inclusions in this emotion-laden field of study”. Although, I do not intend to document in detail my life history, as Stanfield has suggested and other researchers have done (for example, Kyriacou, 2000), I have attempted to place myself in the research and reflect on my own influence on the data collection and analysis.

Lewis and Meredith (1988: 16) termed the process where the researchers’ and the research participants’ perceptions and views can affect the research itself, their behaviours and responses, as “double subjectivity”. Kyriacou (2000), focusing on the relationship between the researcher and the ‘researched’, has argued that the age, ethnicity and psychological make up of both is central for their relationship and rapport. Song and Parker (1993) extended this and contended that the social factors of age, social background, cultural background, class, education, ethnicity and seniority are central factors of similarity and difference between the researcher and the ‘researched’ which will affect their interaction with each other.

In terms of women interviewing women, Minister (1991) argued that women are not comfortable with hierarchical same sex systems and, Kyriacou (2000) concludes from this, that any researcher should attempt to minimise the hierarchy

relationship. I believe however, that in an interview situation, the researcher should try and minimise any inequalities in terms of status, with any subject groups, including male participants. This was an issue of concern in my study, which I will discuss in a later section. Another related issue is, as Edwards (1993: 184) has argued, that if:

“we accept that there are structurally based divisions between women on the basis of race and/or class that may lead them to have different interests and priorities, then what has been said about woman-to-woman interviewing may not apply in all situations”.

In relation to this, it is important to then examine arguments which suggest that there can be advantages of researching across ‘race’ or class. Davidson (1997) and Rana (1998), a white and Asian woman respectively, have found through their empirical research, that there are benefits from being interviewed by a woman of different ethnicity. Davidson (1997) presented arguments of a black woman being interviewed in her research who argued that by being interviewed by a white woman, she felt she had to be more graphic of her experiences. The black woman participant felt that if she had been interviewed by a black woman she would have assumed that her experiences and problems would be too obvious to another woman of same ethnicity and she would probably not have been as explicit, since, she stated, another black woman would know of her experience. This was also experienced by Rana (1998) when she was interviewing Asian women, where they felt that the researcher had first hand experience of specific situations as an Asian woman, and there was no reason for them to be explicit or try to rationalise events.

After exploring issues around ontological and epistemological assumptions on methodology and providing a rationale for adopting a qualitative approach, with elements of feminist methodology, I will now move on to discuss the methods utilised in this study and the implementation of the project.

4.3 Research design and implementation

With inductive methods, there is a concern to minimise the impact of data collection on the behaviour of the subject. Hence, Wass and Wells (1994:14) argued that unstructured techniques which are sensitive towards and flexible to the response of the subject are used in preference to the experiment characteristic of positivist research: “the entire logic of the scientific experiment is rejected as a model with which to conduct social research”. Ethnographic methods and case study research are most usually associated with the inductive approach. The researcher uses socially acquired and shared knowledge to understand the observed patterns of human activity. Ethnographers recognise that the way people behave depends on the social context in which they find themselves and they therefore urge that social life should be studied as it occurs in natural settings (Robson, 1993; Hussey and Hussey, 1997).

Qualitative methods and in-depth interviews as a method of gathering data have tended to be associated with feminist research (Edwards, 1993). As discussed above with respect to the relationship between the researcher and the ‘researched’, I believed it was important to let the participants have the space to talk freely, in order to minimise my position and influence on the research as much as possible. In their work on emancipation in management and organisation studies, Alvesson and Willmott (1992) argued that it is important when conducting research, to allow people to speak for themselves through ethnographic studies. This, they argued, “is a vital means of moderating ‘totalizing’ accounts of management and organization” (Ibid.: 442). The purpose of ethnographic research without a rigid interview structure is to allow a detailed analysis of the perceptions of cultural life through the eyes of participants (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). With regard to interviewing ethnic minority women, Edwards (1993: 184) has argued that some feminists have attributed to the open-ended interview “an ability to help counter any implicit racism on the part of white researchers”. Open-ended interviews allow women to speak for themselves, and this can therefore avoid producing data that

“pathologize” women (Ibid.: 184) and therefore treating them as passive agents. This is particularly important for this study where a semi-structured, in-depth interview approach was followed, since as presented in Chapter 2 and discussed here, ethnic minority women’s voices have been typically invisible in research. As stated above, the interviews should provide the opportunity and space for the participants to express their views and perceptions. This is not to argue, however, that providing the narratives is sufficient; sensitive analysis by the researcher, acknowledging reflexivity should follow the interview process.

As a white woman wanting to conduct research involving ethnic minority groups, I believed that it was crucial for me to be able to provide a sensitive account of ethnic minority experiences in Britain. I spent most of my first year of this study, familiarising myself with literature on race relations in Britain, sociology of race and ethnicity literature and particularly research on ethnic minority women. Although a lot of this information would not be presented in this thesis (see Chapter 1 for brief background), I felt it was necessary to understand the historical background and issues ethnic minorities face in British society and employing organisations. I have always had empathy to issues of racism and sexism, and I was aware that I needed to ‘ground’ this in background history. Fearfull (1993: 145) utilised Braverman’s suggestion of the need for the researcher to have empathy with, rather than solely an academic interest in, the subject of her/his research. Braverman’s (1974) position, although focusing on class differences, can be applied to ethnic differences and articulates my argument clearly:

“The interpretation of the feelings, sentiments and changing moods of the working class is best accomplished by experienced and well-attuned observers and participants, who know the history of a particular group, are acquainted with its circumstances, background and relation to other parts of the working class, and form their assessments from the intimate contact and detailed information”
(Braverman, 1974: 30, cited by Fearfull, 1993: 145)

There have been a few studies that adopt interpretative methodologies and methods in examining ethnic minority women’s career experiences, but they either focused exclusively on ethnic minority women managers (Davidson, 1997) or only

interviewed ethnic minority women (Kyriacou, 2000; Liff and Dale, 1994). As mentioned in Chapter 1, ethnic minority women typically occupy lower, non-managerial levels in organisations. Therefore, in order to conduct an in-depth investigation of their experiences in organisations, I believed that it was pertinent to interview ethnic minority women participants at all levels they occupied, from shopfloor to management. I also conducted interviews with ethnic minority men, white men and white women. I believed it was important to examine the organisational and career experiences and opportunities of all groups, not so much to compare - not in a statistical way, at least - but to analyse why and how different social groups, based on gender, ethnicity and class, may have distinct experiences at work. As discussed, in Chapter 2, ethnic minority women's career experiences is an under-researched area, and ethnic minority men have received even less attention. There has been more work on white women's work experiences - although this work is presented as research on women, it is generally based on white, middle-class women at managerial levels - and white men's experiences are taken as the 'norm'; the majority of writings on careers and work are often based, implicitly on white men's career patterns and advancement opportunities. This thesis is primarily concerned with ethnic minority women's experiences and therefore, they were the largest sample. Ethnic minority men were also central, especially in examining them against ethnic minority women (for gender differences) and white males (for ethnicity differences). Interviews with managers, regardless of gender or 'race'/ethnicity, in the two organisations² I had access to, were also conducted.

Three semi-structured interviews were also conducted prior to the main study, as a pilot. I interviewed two Asian (one Indian and one Bangladeshi) women and one African man. At the time, the Indian woman was conducting doctoral research on ethnic minority girls and the Bangladeshi woman was working in the private sector. This interview had to be conducted over the phone, due to distance and time constraints. The African man was also working in the private sector. The aim of

² I gained access in a large retail private organisation and a community health trust and will discuss

these interviews was to 'test' the questions and ask the participants for their views and advice on the structure of the interviews and, some changes were subsequently made.

4.3.1 Access and data collection

I started making contacts with relevant people and institutions prior to formally contacting organisations requesting access to conduct my research. The purpose of these contacts was to gain more information in the field of equality in organisations, in terms of initiatives and schemes to address, for example, under-representation of ethnic minorities.

I arranged meetings with managers in the Health Service, where I was given considerable information in terms of relevant reports, books, and further contacts. An Afro-Caribbean woman, a senior manager in the Health Service, who I had initially contacted for information, agreed from that point to participate in my study. I contemplated for a long time whether I should contact a large number of organisations or initially 'test the water' with a few. At the early stages of the study, I considered concentrating on the National Health Service (NHS), but decided that it would be much more interesting if I could compare organisations, especially private and public, in terms of their equal opportunity policies and practices.

4.3.1.1 'Independent group' of participants

Through my attendance at conferences on ethnic minorities in employment and equality issues, I met a number of people who expressed interest in my research ideas. I started asking some of them whether they would be willing to participate and the majority of them agreed. I also contacted, through the NHS, a support group aimed at ethnic minority women and ethnic minority men in the health sector who aspired to advance their careers (for more details of this NHS initiative, see Chapter 5). I had written communication with the group's leader, who agreed to ask her participants if they would be interested in my research. She invited me to one of

access issues in Section 4.3.1 below.

her training sessions where I introduced myself and briefly outlined my research to the participants. Following that, I sent written information about my study, together with my contact details to her and she agreed to forward this to the participants. Two Afro-Caribbean women and an Asian man wrote back, agreeing to participate. One of the Afro-Caribbean women subsequently withdrew from the interview, but I was not given an explanation for why she had changed her mind.

I was also given names of individuals who may have been interested in participating by people I talked to in organisations or by ethnic minority bodies, such as the Black Lawyers Society. This sampling method is called snowballing (Mason, 1996). I subsequently contacted them and some of them agreed to be interviewed. As a total, I interviewed seven ethnic minority women and two ethnic minority men³.

I named this group the 'independent group' of ethnic minority women and ethnic minority men, as they have been contacted through personal networking and snowballing and I had no formal access to their organisations. I did not interview any white men and women, through this method, because my aim was to interview them in organisations where I had formal access and 'compare' their experiences to ethnic minority women and ethnic minority men employees.

I believed it would be interesting to interview individuals 'independently' of their organisations as I was hoping to acquire more detailed, or at least broader information, of their experiences not only in their present organisation, but also with previous employers. Using a networking approach was useful in putting me in touch with individuals who would be interested in my research area. Although some of these contacts were based on serendipity, there was a definite strategy on my part on how to get involved in the 'right circles' by attending relevant seminars

³ Appendix 3 has details of the numbers and biographical information of all participants of the 'independent group', as well as participants in the two case study organisations.

or conferences, with the aim of presenting my research ideas to people and of inviting them to participate in this study.

4.3.1.2 Organisational access

With regard to gaining access in organisations, the main criterion for contacting institutions was their public commitment to gender and racial equality; that they were considered leaders in equality management in the private or public sector. The rationale for contacting mainly leaders in equality was my belief that it would be useful to have the right policy framework in organisations and examine the practical implementation within 'best practice' organisations. A secondary reason, was the fact that I hoped that if I made contact with organisations who are formally committed to equality, there was a higher probability of them accepting to participate. I contacted organisations which were members of Race for Opportunity and Opportunity Now (previously Opportunity 2000), two Business in the Community initiatives, focused on promoting racial and gender equality respectively. I also contacted companies which have signed up to the Leadership Challenge, a Commission for Racial Equality initiative launched in 1997 by the Labour government, where member organisations claimed formal commitment from the top of the organisation to racial equality. Another criterion was the location of the organisations. I attempted to concentrate my research in the North of England, preferably in Yorkshire. This was mainly due to time and financial constraints. I did however, contact some organisations in the South of England and Midlands, as I did not want to restrict myself too much and then have to face the possibility of not having enough participants.

In total I contacted thirty three organisations, ranging from local councils and health trusts to large retail companies and banks. In the majority of the cases, initial contact was made by phone to obtain the name of the Human Resource/Personnel Manager in the organisation. The next step was to send an initial letter addressed to them, explaining my research (see Appendix 1) and inviting them to participate. I stated in the letter that I would contact them shortly to discuss ways forward. A small number of them contacted me first and stated interest. One of these

organisations, was a large retail organisation in the North of England and an initial meeting was arranged with the HR/ Diversity manager. Access was granted after a couple of meetings. Further down the line, some of the other organisations, which expressed interest, decided not to participate and gave standard ‘brush off’ responses, for example, that they were in the middle of restructuring, or they could not commit to the one to one and a half hour interviews that I had requested. I also contacted all of the other organisations who did not respond themselves, but all of them either rejected on the phone or sent letters, again giving the same reasons as above. Gaining access is a persistent problem in research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) and I was becoming increasingly concerned that organisations were not willing to participate, one reason being, I sensed, the sensitivity of the research topic. This was particularly interesting, given their stated interest in and commitment to equality.

At a later stage, I contacted another organisation, a community health trust, again in the North of England. Advice to attempt to gain access was given to me through networking again, from a manager working in the Health Sector. I was given the name of the HR Director and was told to mention the person who gave me the details. I received a phone call within two weeks and after an initial meeting with the Diversity manager, who expressed interest in my work, access was granted.

I finally gained access in these two organisations, hereafter named CSA (retail organisation) and CSB (health trust) (see Chapter 5 for details of CSA and CSB). Both organisations, received more information about the study, as well as an ‘information pack’ detailing who I would like to interview, at what level, duration of interview, etc. (Appendix 2).

As a total, I interviewed sixty four individuals, consisting of twenty six ethnic minority women, fifteen ethnic minority men, eight white women, six white men and nine managers in CSA and CSB, seven of these being women and two being men (see Appendix 3 for detailed breakdown and biographical information of

interviewees). Pseudonyms were used to substitute the participants' real names, in order to comply with the guarantee of anonymity given to them.

I was aware that in terms of access to organisations, I did not have a high number of case studies, but taking into account the qualitative approach and in-depth research, I believe it was sufficient. As Cockburn (1991: 4) argued "qualitative research gains its authority from the depth of insight made available and not from numbers of organisations or people interviewed".

4.3.2 Research methods

In this study, there were therefore two 'strands' of research: the two case studies in CSA and CSB with interviews with management and staff, and the 'independent group' interviews. Within CSA and CSB, the case study approach was utilised, where semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with all participants. The interviews with management took a more structured form, where the aim was to gain the 'official line' (Fearfull, 1993) on organisational policies, but also examine the managers' own perceptions of the policies, their implementation and their views on equality initiatives. The interviews with staff in CSA and CSB, and also with the 'independent group' of ethnic minority women and men, were semi-structured using a schedule of question areas (see Appendices 9 to 12 for a selection of interview schedules⁴). This approach allowed for a two-way communication and in-depth discussion of specific issues and for diversions to important topics emerging, which I may not have initially contemplated. In some respects, the interviews, especially with the main sample of ethnic minority women, took an oral history approach (Martin, 1995; Yow, 1994) or at least a career history approach, where the participants had the space to reflect on their careers and relate it to other aspects of their lives, for example, the effects of their work and ambitions on their family life. I attempted, indirectly at least, to convey

⁴ Due to space limitations I have included a selection of the interview schedules with different groups of participants.

my wish for an intimate non-hierarchical interview, as Oakley (1981) has suggested. I did this by offering some information about the institution I was part of, what my research was about, and also offered complete anonymity⁵ and confidentiality. More generally, I tried to be friendly and approachable and answer any questions about myself the participants asked.

Whilst observation, was not a formal research method for this study, it was used indirectly, to examine the culture, the 'vibe' of the organisation. This was particularly interesting in CSA and CSB, where I could observe interaction and communication amongst staff and among staff and management, simply by spending time in the organisation and being open to and aware of interactions in the environment.

The discussion now moves on to the sampling strategy adopted for this study.

4.3.3 Sampling strategy

Sampling methods can be grouped as probability and non-probability. "In probability sampling, each element of the population has a known chance of being selected for the sample" (Kinnear and Taylor, 1991: 397). Probability random sampling includes simple random, systematic, stratified and cluster samples. With regard to non-probability sampling, "the selection of a population element to be part of the sample is based in some part on the judgement of the researcher or field interviewer" (Kinnear and Taylor, 1991: 397). Non-probability sampling procedures include convenience, judgement, and/or purposive, quota, self-selection and snowball samples (Kinnear and Taylor, 1991; McDaniel and Gates, 1991; Saunders *et al.*, 1997). The selection of the sampling method will depend on the objectives of the study, time and financial constraints and the area under investigation.

⁵ In some cases I was asked not to mention the participants' job title, because either there was only one position in their area or for example, they were the only woman/ethnic minority woman/Afro-Caribbean woman in their department/organisation.

In terms of the 'independent group', the sample was formed simply by those who responded and who were willing to be interviewed. There was not a detailed sampling strategy in that respect. With regard to the two case study organisations, the convenience sampling method was initially adopted. Convenience samples comprise of organisations and individuals who are interested and available in participating in the study (Saunders *et al.*, 1997).

Once access was gained, I adopted a purposive sampling strategy, where a specific sample number of ethnic minority women, ethnic minority men, white women and white men I would like to interview, was requested from the managers, who were my 'gatekeepers'. These numbers were not necessarily representative of the organisation as a whole. I was more interested in talking to individuals at different levels of the organisation who were interested and willing to participate. As Mason (1996: 93) argued, if a researcher is constructing a non-representative sample with the aim of making key comparisons and testing and developing theoretical propositions, the researcher is using theoretical or purposive sampling. I expressed my concern with specific individuals being approached and asked to participate by the managers, believing that they would then feel pressured to take part and they could be resentful or resistant. Moreover, managers deliberately screening in or screening out particular individuals, may have affected my interview sample.

In CSB, the Diversity manager, contacted a sample of white staff and all ethnic minority staff in the organisation, by letter, explaining my research. The letter was formatted by her, but she stated that the information included was an excerpt from the information pack, I had sent to her. She subsequently gave me a copy of the letter she had sent to the sample of white staff for me to review (Appendix 4). The letter was not formulated in the manner we had initially agreed, since the manager only slightly adapted this letter from the information sent to ethnic minority female staff, and she invited the white staff to only discuss ethnic minority women's career experiences, whereas a main component of the interviews with them was to focus on their own experiences. We initially agreed that the staff would then contact me

directly if they were interested in being interviewed. However, in the letter sent to them, the Diversity Manager, asked for permission to forward their details to me. The interested employees hence contacted the manager, who then contacted me and forwarded their details. I cannot be confident therefore, that the manager did not talk to individuals and that there was no pressure on them to accept.

In CSA, I interviewed people at managerial level in the Head Office and later on I gained access in one of the organisation's stores, where I interviewed shopfloor level and managerial staff. In the first case, the manager/gatekeeper contacted all ethnic minority employees in the Head Office, by e-mail, and two ethnic minority women and two ethnic minority men agreed to participate. She also contacted white staff, in which case, she told me that she had asked them personally to participate as they were working in the same division as her and she "see[s] them everyday". I did again express my concern about her contacting them, but I was told it would be easier and to 'leave it up to her'. I had no control, therefore, on the selection of sample. This was also the case in the CSA Store, at least for the shopfloor level staff, where the Customer Service Manager, asked them to take time off their shift to talk to me. The majority of the participants did not seem to mind, and some said they were actually happy to do be interviewed, as it would mean some time off work. Some of them however, seemed apprehensive and a bit wary of me and this may have been, at least in part, caused by the fact that they did not know what the interview was about until they came to meet me in the interview room. This was disappointing, since I requested several times that the participants were given some information on my research in advance and that they should have the option to participate. I did however, try to give these participants as much information as possible, once we met and this seemed to put, at least some of them, at ease.

I wanted to audio-tape the interviews so as to engage myself with what the participants were saying and create a dialogue, a two-way communication. That would have been extremely hard, if I had to be making detailed notes and at the same time try to pick out interesting points the interviewees were making. With the

exception of two, all of the interviewees, agreed to audio-taping. Some of the sample who agreed, seemed a bit uncomfortable at first, but when I stated that this was completely confidential and that the reasons for taping the interviews, was to allow me to effectively engage with the discussion and aid me with transcription and analysis, they seemed at ease. The two interviewees who refused to be taped, argued that they would be much more comfortable to discuss any issues with me without a tape recorded. In these two cases, detailed manual notes were made during the interview. All tapes were subsequently transcribed by myself and a research diary was kept, where I would record any thoughts or ideas which arose during my field work.

The data collection occupied a lot of my time and a large proportion of the second and third year of this study. There were numerous postponements by potential participants, who wanted to re-arrange the interview time, or who did not show up at the arranged location. There were some problems with access to the CSA's store, as the managers who were supposed to help me with the interview arrangements, kept insisting that "this was a bad time", when I tried to go ahead with the research. After a number of meetings and phone conversations with the Head Office, they finally arranged for me to have most of the interviews in the Store, within two weeks. However, by that time, eight months had passed since what was supposed to be the start date for conducting the field research. Within CSB, the process was slightly 'smoother' but there were still problems with cancellations and postponing of meetings, as people were always "extremely busy".

4.3.4 Data analysis

Two pilot analyses of a sample of the interviews were carried out at different times (for the latter analysis, see Kamenou and Fearfull, 2001), before the completion of all the interview meetings. This was useful in aiding me to identify key themes arising from the sample and with re-formulating some of the question areas and focus of the remaining interviews, when topics I did not initially include in the interviews, were arising.

With both the pilot and the full analysis, I initially found it surprising that there were no general guidelines on how to conduct qualitative data analysis⁶. I was aware of the fact that this type of analysis was more 'messy' and involved reading the transcripts a number of times and immersing myself in the data, looking for emergent themes. I was not however, prepared for the fact that there was not one clear cut path for proceeding with the analysis when the first steps were completed.

In the process of analysing the data and spending time reading, reflecting and making detailed notes on how I intended to link different interview conversations or events, I realised that a 'clear path' for analysis, was by definition inappropriate for qualitative studies, as it goes against the 'philosophy' of qualitative work. This is not to say that there should not be consistency or validity in this type of research; there is an acknowledgement however that an 'input-output' method is not possible when exploring people's attitudes and experiences, especially within a sensitive topic.

In one way the analysis started from the time of the interviews, as the participants expressed their views on their careers and work experiences. Typically, after the interview, I would make notes on issues arising and links with previous research. The analysis and my thinking would continue with the transcriptions in the same way, involving me making more notes and adding footnotes in the transcripts on what I wanted to examine further. More concrete analysis took place when I was reading the interview transcripts. My strategy was firstly, to absorb myself in this data, by reading and re-reading the transcripts and, as a second stage, I made notes at the margins and started to see a number of themes emerging. Some themes were identified through literature review - where I wanted to examine whether they would be present in my data - but I also wanted to keep an open mind, to account

⁶ The exception of this are books or manuals which adopt a quantitative approach to analysing qualitative data (for example, Miles and Huberman, 1994). I did not find those useful, however, as I believe that this approach is not suited for in-depth analysis, when examining people's attitudes and perceptions.

for any 'surprises' that might appear from reading the transcripts. In time, I made some decisions on which themes I would initially concentrate on and I then went through the transcripts again, noting and highlighting relevant quotes from the participants.

The 'formal' process of analysis which took place was the identification of emergent themes and their subsequent 'coding'. This method of analysis is defined as the template approach (Crabtree and Miller, 1992) and involves the analysis of text, through a 'codebook' which consists of a number of categories or themes relevant to the research questions (Aguilar-Manjarrez, 2001). This codebook may be revised a number of times through the engagement with the data and the themes are then interpreted qualitatively. Each code is labelled in a manner that facilitates analysis (Aguilar-Manjarrez, 2001).

The coding method I adopted was the use of different colours for different themes arising. The same colours were used consistently through the interviews with all participants. I would highlight the relevant data with the appropriate colour given to each theme, and then I would transfer all the chunks of data into a new document (using the copy-paste computer function). I would therefore have a number of different documents with all the quotes from interviews with regard to a specific theme. In this manner, I surpassed one of the disadvantages of the template approach, which states that multiple copies of each transcript should be made. After these documents, each one encompassing the quotes on a specific theme, were produced, I would spend time reading and identifying similarities, differences and 'surprises' in the data. I would also provide links across different documents, and hence themes, when analysing the data.

At the initial stages of analysis, I considered using qualitative computer software packages but decided against it, as I did not believe that a software could effectively identify people's personal experiences, attitudes and also body language, such as frowns, laughs, silences or indeed frustrations of the participants.

Dembkowski and Hammer-Lloyd (1995) discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using computer software and argued that a main advantage is the fact that these softwares may reduce the burdens of analysis and carry out sophisticated and rapid searches through textual data. Some of the disadvantages they considered were the danger of the data becoming too mechanistic, text could be lost in the process, the volume of data accumulated and the limitations of the software package itself. Rubin and Rubin (1995: 241) also contended that computers cannot do the creative part of coding, nor label ideas or recognise themes: “any claims for a computer software package that it can think for you, are exaggerated”. Thus, after reading about the limitations of software packages for analysing qualitative data, my instinctive reasoning for avoiding them, was confirmed.

As mentioned above, during the field research, I kept an informal research diary of my experiences and thoughts through the interviews and also of any problems that I encountered with access, any changes or updates. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) and Riley (1990) both advocate using a journal of research to record experiences and thoughts and this had proved useful in my research, as I developed a ‘train of thought’ through these notes and also, in more practical terms, there was no danger of forgetting some issues that were deemed important at the time of the field research.

A form of ‘grounded theory’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) was also adopted, in that some of the findings from the data analysis, helped re-conceptualise or develop some ideas for the literature review chapters. As Mason (1996: 141) suggested (see Section 4.2), I moved “back and forth” between the analysis of the data and the process of explanation.

4.3.5 Reflexivity within the study

In section 4.2.1, reflexivity and the position of the researcher in the research was discussed, focusing primarily on white women conducting research involving ethnic minority groups. In this section, I will present my own experiences in this study as a white female researcher interviewing both ethnic minority and white individuals.

When I first decided to conduct this study, I did not consider in detail whether I should or should not be undertaking this research. I knew that I was interested in and sensitive to my research topic and believed that that would be enough to 'qualify' me as an appropriate researcher. It was only as I engaged myself with the literature and talking to people about my research topic, that I became more aware of the issues of the relationship between the researcher and the 'researched'. I did know that as a white researcher, I needed to gain a stronger background on ethnic minority issues and race relations but I never thought I should not be conducting this research. I came across some research on white women interviewing ethnic minority women or more generally white people conducting research involving ethnic minorities and, started formulating my own arguments. By deciding to adopt a qualitative methodology, where the interview participants could speak in their own words, I thought that this potential problem was overridden. However, it was during the interviews, that I became more sensitive to how I was perceived by ethnic minority women and ethnic minority men.

As discussed above, the open-ended nature of the interviews allowed for a two-way communication with the participants, and indeed, a number of them enquired about myself, my background and my experiences. The majority of the participants who wanted to know more about myself were women, and more specifically ethnic minority women. Some of them said that they detected an accent and I would then tell them that I was Greek- Cypriot. They would then continue this discussion and ask me things such as, why did I want to come to England, what was I studying, whether I liked it "here" and similar personal questions. I sensed a change in their

perceptions of me when they realised that I am in a way a minority in England. I found these conversations comforting in some respects in that I did not feel I was a 'cold', formal researcher, asking question after question, but I was also happy with the fact that by talking to the participants about my background I could relate to them and they could relate to me in some ways. I liked the dialogue, and I believe it created an immediate bond with some of the ethnic minority women. As a Greek-Cypriot woman, culture, religion, tradition and strong family ties were central in my upbringing. These factors affected, I believe the way in which I could relate to ethnic minority women, especially Asian women who came from a 'strong' cultural background. In talking, we found similarities, for example the issues and demands of extended families. I was brought up by my grandmother and grandfather, as much as by my mum and dad and I am aware of the concerns with family responsibilities, family respect and not bringing shame to the family. When some of the ethnic minority women asked me about myself, and we started discussing these areas, I could actually see a 'transformation' sometimes from them being wary and uncomfortable, to seeing me as close to them, as understanding their experiences, as "knowing how it is". A relevant incident was when an Afro-Caribbean woman was discussing racial harassment and she told me "you know how it...", but before she finished, she stopped herself, paused for a while and then started explaining to me "how it is". I found this interesting because I felt as though I was perceived as 'one of them', as understanding the issues and, it was only when the woman stopped and reflected, that she perhaps thought that I do not know how it is. A more surprising incident was with a Pakistani woman, who, when discussing the politics in her organisation and how she believed that management did not care about ethnic minority issues, she repeatedly told me "you know how it is, Nicolina". She was relating to me, I sensed, as an ethnic minority woman, regardless of colour, and her attitude towards me immediately changed when she discovered I was from Cyprus, stating that she knew Cypriot people are close to their families and "more traditional".

These incidents relate to Edwards's (1993: 186) arguments, who discussed the issue of two-way communication and of the researcher engaging herself in the research and stated that "the sharing of yourself -reciprocity- with the women who are the participants of your research has [...] been a feature of much feminist writing on methodology and interviewing. This sharing is recommended to reduce the exploitative power balance between researcher and subject (Graham, 1984), to show solidarity between women (Oakley, 1981), and also more instrumentally, because self-disclosure on the part of the researcher helps elicit more information from the subject".

Conversely, I had one experience prior to an interview with an Afro-Caribbean woman, which pointed to our differences rather than our similarities. When we met in the reception area of her organisation she looked slightly surprised and taken aback. As we were going upstairs to the interview room she laughed and told me "I was expecting a black person!" but then continued to say "it doesn't make a difference to me". Of course, I cannot be sure whether this would make a difference to her approach to me and her responses to my questions. This was the only experience of this nature I had, but of course, I cannot be sure how different participants perceived me, in terms of ethnicity, class or background. Kyriacou (2000) adopting a feminist oral history approach, has argued that the success of the interviews rest on the level of intimacy and trust present. She cited Song and Parker (1995) arguing that assumptions made by the subjects regarding the cultural identity of the researcher shapes interviewees accounts (Kyriacou, 2000: 89).

I acknowledge that there may be certain limitations when a white woman researcher is conducting research involving ethnic minority participants and these were discussed in Section 4.2.1. As a white person, there are experiences that I cannot fully comprehend due to lack of first-hand experience. However, my stance is, that what is crucial, is how open a researcher is to other people's experience and how well one can record this in their research. The researcher should be able to

elicit and then portray the participants' views and experiences and the best way to do that is to let them speak in their own words (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992).

I was, especially at the earlier stages of the research, particularly sensitive and wary of criticising black feminists, arguing that they "should know best" about ethnic minority women's experiences and "who am I to criticise them?". This fear however, slowly diminished as I became more confident of my own arguments and research findings. I do not agree with writers such as Carby (1982) who argued that white researchers cannot conduct research on ethnic minorities, but I would agree with other black feminists who argue that the majority of feminist writings are ethnocentric, based on white middle-class women (see Chapter 2). I recognise the limitations and acknowledge my position in the research but I agree with Phillips (1987: 154) who argued that "wanting to avoid error, we are often paralysed by fear of ending up in the wrong camp". I believe there is a need to create an informed dialogue between white and ethnic minority writers and conduct sensitive and well-informed research, on any grounds, be it 'race', ethnicity, gender or class.

During the interviews, I felt rapport was built more easily with all women rather than men. Obviously divisions based on ethnicity or class could have affected this rapport, but this issue was discussed above. I think that differences were accentuated sometimes between myself and the participants, when I was interviewing older women, or women at senior positions. I believe that I was perceived by them as too young or inexperienced to either ask them about their experiences or to understand where they were coming from. Kyriacou (2000: 92) highlighted the differences based on age and social class which may become obvious within research. She cited Cotterill (1992: 600) who argued that:

"There can be very real problems for the younger woman interviewing older women, particularly if they occupy and originate from a higher class position than her own. The older woman may set boundaries for the interview which are difficult, if not impossible, for the younger woman to cross, and thereby questions the nature of hierarchical research relationships which presume the dominant position of the researcher".

As the researcher, I continuously assessed and re-negotiated my stance. I became aware early on, that being dressed formally in a suit, made some of the participants who were at lower levels of the organisational hierarchy, uncomfortable, perceiving me as very different to them, as a professional academic, who would not understand their experiences and attitudes. I therefore, decided to adopt a different dressing style and also different language depending on who I was interviewing. I would dress and behave in a more 'professional' manner when I was interviewing managers and senior staff, but I would be more casual and relaxed when I was interviewing shopfloor level staff. This was constant across ethnicity. I agonised on numerous occasions about my own role in the research, on how I was perceived and whether I was obtaining honest responses. As Kyriacou (2000) argued however, rapport could be built through dressing, speech and the revealing of personal information; I adopted all of these strategies appropriate to each circumstance.

With regard to the male participants, I did not feel that the same level of rapport was built with them. They provided me with very interesting and important information and, as far as I can say, seemed open to the interview areas and discussion. However, I detected a form of paternalism from them, particularly with the older white males, in the manner in which they were asking me whether I was happy in England, what I was planning to do with my future and similar questions. I also felt at points that they wanted information about myself, for more instrumental reasons (for example, when asking me where my work would be published) rather than merely having a friendly conversation.

I extensively reflected on the interviews I conducted with lower level staff at CSA and CSB, where I often found it difficult to elicit information from them. This situation was more prominent in the CSA Store, when interviewing shopfloor level staff. As argued above, some of this staff appeared apprehensive at the time of the interview, and I believe that this was partly caused by the fact that management in CSA did not provide them with any preliminary information on my research. The

majority of the shopfloor level staff were young, between eighteen to twenty two years of age and were only working in the Store for less than a year. These factors, when combined, could provide some answers therefore, to why I felt that this group of participants were not as forthcoming in discussing their experiences in the organisation, in relation to career support, possible barriers and organisational policies. Moreover, as Collinson (1992) argued in his research, shopfloor level workers are rarely asked for their opinion and hence, they are probably not used to communicating and reflecting on their experiences, perceptions and frustrations, especially to an 'outsider', who they may well believe, is connected to their organisations' management.

As a white researcher interviewing white men and women on issues of discrimination and racism, I believe that in some respects this group may have been more honest and open with me than they would have been with a non-white researcher, especially with regard to issues of resentment for diversity initiatives in their organisations (see Chapter 7). I am not arguing however, that I have in any way achieved one 'ultimate truth' as this would go against my chosen methodological framework. Different researchers may gain different insights depending on the relationships they establish with the 'researched', and hence they main gain different realities.

4.4 Summary

This chapter commenced with an introduction to and rationale of the methodological framework adopted, providing a comparison between qualitative and quantitative research, in Section 4.2. I argued that it is pertinent for the methodological framework to be in line with the theoretical framework, discussed in Chapter 2. Therefore, a qualitative framework, which acknowledges the interaction of structure and agency, with the addition of culture, was adopted for this study.

The discussion moved on to Section 4.2.1, to explore feminist methodology and its usefulness for this research. It was argued that one should be cautious about western feminist work, which as argued in Chapter 2, often ignores ethnicity or class concerns. Literature on investigating 'race' and ethnicity issues within methodology was presented and primarily work on the interaction between gender and ethnicity in research was explored. The emphasis of this was in examining issues of reflexivity within research; the position of the researcher in the research, with a focus on white women interviewing ethnic minority participants.

Section 4.3 engaged with the research design and the implementation of the empirical study, presenting issues of access and data collection, research methods adopted, sampling strategy, data analysis and reflexivity within this study, i.e. my own reflections of my position as a white female ethnic minority researcher investigating career experiences of distinct groups of individuals based on gender, ethnicity and organisational levels. My own background was discussed as it was associated with how participants perceived me and how they related to me. I acknowledged the limitations and constraints in conducting research on ethnic minority participants, arguing however that qualitative methodology, which is sensitive to 'race', ethnicity and gender, can successfully allow a researcher to conduct research involving participants who do not exactly resemble her or him. At the same time, the fact that I was perceived by the majority of the ethnic minority participants as a white minority myself was important in how they related to me. In addition, without arguing that my findings were the only possible findings, I felt that there were some advantages in interviewing white staff in CSA and CSB, contending that some of them may have been more open and honest with me, than they would have been with a non-white researcher, especially when expressing their resentment of equal opportunity/diversity policies and initiatives in their organisations.

The focus of the thesis will now shift to the empirical findings, in Chapters 5 to 7.

CHAPTER 5

Organisational Policies and Managers' Perceptions in Case Study A (CSA) and Case Study B (CSB)

5.1 Introduction

Following the literature review chapters, Chapters 2 and 3, and Chapter 4 on research methodology and methods, the thesis moves on to the analysis of primary data collected through policy documentation and interviews with management and staff. In this first chapter of data analysis, the focus is placed on organisational policies and the perceptions of managers in the two case study organisations. As stated in Chapter 4, these organisations would be hereafter named CSA (Private retail organisation) and CSB (Community Health Trust). CSA and CSB were selected based on the criterion that they were perceived as leaders in diversity and equality management and have implemented a number of diversity initiatives. The aim of this chapter, and partly of Chapter 7, is to examine the practical implementation of these policies and initiatives within 'best practice' organisations. Chapter 7, however has a broader focus in that it also addresses the perceptions of individuals from the 'independent group'.

Firstly, a comprehensive background in terms of each organisation's history, staff numbers, policies and initiatives is provided (see Appendix 5 for a list of documentation provided by CSA and CSB). The chapter then moves on to the managers' perceptions - who were in majority working in the Human Resource and Diversity field - on their organisation's formal policies and implementation, informal practices, organisational career support and equality strategies and initiatives. Chapter 5 therefore engages predominantly with the organisational structure and culture dimensions of the theoretical framework, examining, at least in part, the rhetoric and the reality (Legge, 1995) regarding policies and how they are implemented in practice.

5.2 Organisational policies

5.2.1 Case Study A (CSA)

CSA is a large private retail (food and clothing) organisation, with its Head Office based in the North of England. It employs approximately 100,000 staff in a range of jobs, from shopfloor to director level. Of those employees, approximately 73,000 are part-time and 27,000 are full-time (CSA's documentation). Documentation from CSA stated that the organisation has "been rapidly expanding and over the past five years, it has opened 60 new Stores and renewed 54 others creating 25,000 new jobs", therefore providing good employment opportunities for a range of jobs, especially within Stores.

CSA's philosophy is that it wants to play an active role in the communities it is in and its aims include: demonstrating good relationships with local MPs, councillors, emergency services, schools and charities and ensuring that each Store's staff, products and services reflect the local population and customer base.

The organisation also advocates full involvement of its staff, stating that customer service should come "from the heart" and this can be achieved when staff enjoy their work and feel respected and valued (CSA's documentation). The organisational culture therefore is one of involvement and participation, with the aim of 'winning the hearts and minds' of its employees.

CSA has different schemes to enable its employees to be listened to and subsequently act on their feedback. These schemes include an attitude survey administered every month of the year to at least 30 Stores. The staff can give their comments on their Store, management team, pay and benefits, training, motivation and teamwork. Another initiative is a suggestion scheme the organisation offers, where staff can offer their suggestions and comments on any aspect of the organisation. In addition to these schemes, there is also an employee share ownership plan where a large number of employees hold share options.

CSA has detailed formal policies on equal opportunities, performance appraisal and training. The organisation is a member of the Work Life Balance Alliance, prides itself in being a leader in flexible working practices and has received an award for its practices to help staff balance work and home commitments (CSA's documentation). Some of the flexible working practices include Store manager job share, child care leave, shift swapping schemes, carers' leave, maternity and paternity leave. In terms of career development and progression, there are a number of schemes which provide information on how to apply and how to acquire the necessary skills and experience to develop by a lateral move to a different post or by vertical progression. For example, with regard to the latter, there are schemes and information on how a shopfloor level member of staff can progress to a higher grade shopfloor level, supervisor level or managerial level.

CSA strongly advocates its commitment to equality through policies which are circulated to every employee during induction and also through being a member in a number of equality initiatives, for example Race for Opportunity, Leadership Challenge, the Equality Exchange (where large retailers share best practice) and the Employers' Forum on Disability. CSA's equality policy, stated in the staff handbook, is as follows:

"We are all colleagues...therefore everyone at [CSA] is equal in status and we always treat each other with respect. Our aims are to make sure that no job applicant, existing colleague, contractor, visitor or customer is treated less favourably on the grounds of their sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, colour, nationality, ethnic origin or age, and that no one is disadvantaged by conditions, requirements or practices which cannot be shown to be just or fair. The way we recruit and work should make sure that colleagues are selected, promoted and treated according to their ability and everyone will have equal opportunities to train and develop"

The company has been involved with equality initiatives, specifically on gender, race and ethnicity since the 1980s and recently there has been more focus and commitment to "getting it right" as some of the managers said, in terms of understanding ethnic minority communities, respecting and appreciating cultural and religious differences and diversity. The Chief Executive of CSA has stated that:

“The importance of achieving a diverse workforce cannot be underestimated- it reflects our business philosophy and underpins our values of treating everyone with dignity and respect. My role is to maintain an environment which engenders equality and outlaws discrimination, by taking every opportunity to promote diversity and to monitor success” (CSA’s formal guidelines on equality)

Managers obtain training on equal opportunity policies and on dealing with incidents of harassment and discrimination.

CSA provides positive action schemes for women and ethnic minorities, in the form of targets for improving representation of women and ethnic minorities at management level, specifically Store manager level, advertising in ethnic minority newspapers and attending cultural and religious fairs where CSA’s staff provide information on the opportunities within the organisation. With regard to increasing female representation at Store manager level, CSA has launched a programme to encourage female managers to put themselves forward to be “Store managers of the future” (CSA documentation). The organisation’s aim is to increase the level of female Store managers from 7% (at the time of the research) to 30% by 2003 (CSA documentation). The organisation has also recently launched a campaign, with the backing of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), to encourage people from ethnic minority backgrounds to pursue a career in retail management. A number of ‘open days’ have been held recently where ethnic minority people interested in CSA, could attend and have discussions with existing ethnic minority employees about their experiences and opportunities in the organisation. CSA intended these events to provide a clearer picture of what life is like for ethnic minority employees in the organisation and also help break any wrong perceptions ethnic minority communities might have of CSA.

The organisation also had an aspirational target for increasing ethnic minority employees within their Head Office from 3% (at the time of the research) to 5% within a year of conducting this research (2000-2001). Another positive action initiative at the time of this research (2000-1) was a concentrated effort to recruit

ethnic minority graduates, where a target of 11% was set for the year 2000. There are also targets of increasing ethnic minority representation at Store level, which is decided by the regional directors and which depends on the ethnic minority population in the locality the Store is in, mainly the ‘travellability to work’, i.e. how many ethnic minority people live within 15 minutes of the Store.

All CSA Stores, are required to report to their regional director on what they termed, the “ethnic headcount”. They are periodically asked to provide a current comparison between the ethnic minority target against the actual headcount; the progress against the management targets set; and, the numbers of ethnic minority staff currently attending development programmes within each Store.

The case study Store (hereafter called ‘the Store’), opened in 2000 and, CSA claims, it is Britain’s first multi-lingual Store. At the time of opening it featured customer service signs and announcements in three languages (English, Punjabi and Urdu). The Store focuses on meeting the needs of the local community, with a high Asian population, by selling products and providing services appropriate for local people. There have been concentrated efforts by CSA for the Store to employ staff who would reflect the local population profile and at the time of opening, 47% of the Store’s employees were from an Asian background.

At the early stages of this research, the ethnic breakdown in terms of numbers of employees in the CSA Store was as follows¹:

	UK/EUROPEAN/IRISH	ASIAN	OTHER EUROPEAN	OTHER ETHNIC
MALE	64	42	1	1
FEMALE	211	18	0	0

Table 5.1: Ethnic breakdown in CSA Store

¹ I requested more detailed information in terms of levels/ positions, age, ethnic group, but I was told that the organisation can only provide me with the above table. I obviously have more detailed information for the group I have interviewed (See Appendix 3)

As a total, at the time of this research, 19% of the Store's employees were from ethnic minority background, in an area where the number of ethnic minorities living within 10 minutes drive from work were 15-16%². This indicates a dramatic fall from the 47% Asian staff initially recruited in the Store. At the time this data was collected (November 2000), only one Asian female was at supervisory level but a few months later an Asian female became the Store Manager and the existing Store Manager moved to a different Store. Two Asian males were in middle management positions. In total, there were twenty five managers within the Store. Table 5.1 indicates there were no African or Afro-Caribbean staff in the CSA Store at the time of this research. (See Appendix 3 for details on how many of these staff were interviewed)

Within CSA's Head Office, as mentioned earlier, approximately 3% of staff were of ethnic minority background. A simple breakdown of this is given below:

AFRICAN	ASIAN	CARIBBEAN	OTHERS	UK/EUROPEAN
3	24	2	5	1292

Table 5.2: Ethnic breakdown in CSA Head Office

(More detailed information and breakdown of employee records in Head Office is provided in Appendix 6. However, I was only given the detailed breakdown of nine Asian staff and could not acquire information on the other fifteen)

5.2.2 Case Study B (CSB)

CSB is a community health trust based in the North of England, formed to provide community, mental health and learning disability services. The Trust employs approximately 2300 staff in a range of services and jobs, such as in medical and dental posts, in nursing, ancillary staff, administration and clerical posts and management posts. Staff are based in health centres, clinics, rehabilitation centres, community health units, day centres, group homes, local authority and voluntary sector premises, and general practitioners' medical centres. The Trust serves the community of a very diverse population and the percentage in this city for ethnic

² The Store manager stated however that these figures were based on the 1991 Census.

minority communities was approximately 21.6% in the year 2000 (CSB's Personnel and Development Annual Report, 1999-2000).

CSB has very detailed, well developed policies on Equal Opportunities, training, performance appraisals and family friendly policies. The organisation claims full commitment to equality and valuing of diversity. In the Trust's Equality of Opportunity in Employment Policy, it is stated that the aim of the policy is:

“To ensure that in their relationship with the Trust as current or prospective employees, employees and job applicants will be treated equally irrespective of gender, marital status, age, disability, race, colour, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origin. They shall not be disadvantaged by any conditions or requirements related to employment which cannot be shown to be justifiable”.

The objectives of the policy are as follows:

- *To commit to a programme of action through practical measures to ensure the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment and prevention of discrimination*
- *To ensure the operational policies and procedures are regularly reviewed, ensuring promotion of equality of opportunity in employment*
- *To comply with the current legislation and Codes of Practice and strive to exceed these requirements where possible to achieve best practice*
- *To recruit a diverse workforce that accurately reflects the local population and which, therefore, is better placed to develop and deliver culturally appropriate care*

(CSB's Equality of Opportunity in Employment Policy Statement)

There is a very detailed policy on harassment of staff in CSB, where the Trust states that it seeks to improve the work environment of all in line with current government directives: Working Together (Department of Health, 1998), Tackling Racial Harassment (Department of Health, 1999) and the Vital Connection (Department of Health, 2000). The Trust states that harassment experienced by staff in the course of their work in this Trust needs to be addressed:

- *Training for staff in [HR department] to assist in tightening procedures and in advising and supporting all staff on all forms of harassment.*
- *Training is developed and delivered to managers, team leaders and supervisors to implement the organisation's policy and procedures on harassment.*
- *Training is developed and delivered to all staff, which incorporates the organisations core competencies, to enable them to understand the impact of their behaviour on each other and to operate a policy of zero tolerance on harassment in the Trust.*

There are a number of positive action schemes in place to increase representation of ethnic minorities within the organisation. These schemes are part of a wider project within CSB to employ more ethnic minority staff but also help develop their existing ethnic minority staff base. The project definition, provided by CSB is:

“To reach out to all sectors of the community which we serve, with particular importance being afforded to reflecting the local population in the Trust's workforce, thereby ensuring a more sensitive and flexible delivery of services”

This diversity initiative is part of a major national NHS programme to increase representation of ethnic minorities in NHS Trusts in order to reflect the local population in which they are based. The objectives of the project are to provide measurable improvements in recruitment and retention of nurses from ethnic minority groups; to establish a dialogue with all sectors of the local population about the appropriateness and effectiveness of services; and, to be perceived by employees and potential employees as an organisation that is well informed and both values and nurtures diversity (CSB's documentation).

Examples of positive action within CSB include: job advertisements to reach and encourage underrepresented groups to apply; recruitment and training schemes, for example, an apprenticeship scheme in place to recruit nurses from ethnic minority communities; and, exclusive seminars for ethnic minorities who have aspirations to progress to management level. Some other sections of the initiative include more effective communication and dissemination of information of new jobs and opportunities within the Trust.

It was claimed by a CSB publication, that the apprenticeship scheme, has been very successful and has been mentioned in the national press and presented at a national conference. The initiative's aim is to increase the number of ethnic minority nurses within the Trust by registering them on a health care apprenticeship scheme, where they can gain first hand experience of nursing. Managers in CSB stated that the idea behind this scheme is that a number of ethnic minorities, especially Asian women, do not see nursing as an appealing profession. This scheme then provides the opportunity for people to work within nursing and find out if it is an occupation they would be interested in.

The Trust has set targets in place to increase the representation of women and ethnic minorities, in line with the Department of Health's (2000) document 'Vital Connection', which is an equality framework for the NHS. The 'Vital Connection' provides a broad framework for action for the period 2000-2004. It states that local NHS employers and partner organisations need to make progress on the three underpinning equality aims: a workforce for equality and diversity; a better place to work; and, a service using its leverage to make a difference (The Vital Connection, 2000: 40).

The Department of Health has set targets for appointments to executive board posts for NHS employers for 2001-2004, with national and regional implementation support: there is a national target to increase ethnic minority representation and women's representation in executive posts at board level to 7% and 40% respectively by the end of March 2004 across all sectors of the NHS. Local employers were to agree appropriate targets for appointments with Regional Offices by April 2001 in line with national targets (The Vital Connection, 2000: 42).

At the time of this research, 11% of the total number of employees were ethnic minority staff. The number of white staff was 2055 but I was not given a gender or

salary breakdown. The ethnic minority staff breakdown is given below by ethnic origin and gender:

	PA	BA	B-A	B-C	B-O	CH	IND	NOT KNOWN	OTHER
MALE	27	7	6	12	4	2	11	1	7
FEMALE	68	7	3	38	14	2	36	9	8

Table 5.3: Staff breakdown by ethnic origin and gender in CSB

PA: Pakistani, BA: Bangladeshi, B-A: Black African, B-C: Black Caribbean, B-O: Black Other, CH: Chinese, IND: Indian.

It can be seen that the largest ethnic minority groups employed in the Trust are first Pakistani and then Afro-Caribbean staff. CSB states that white and black Caribbean people are over-represented within the Trust and Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese and Other groups are under-represented (for a more detailed breakdown of ethnic minority staff by ethnic origin, gender and salary band see Appendix 7). Appendix 7 also shows that the majority of all ethnic minority people, regardless of their ethnic group, are in the lower salary bands, £5,000-£10,000 and £10,000-£15,000 with the exception of Afro-Caribbean women of whom the majority are in the £15,000-£20,000 band. Only one Indian male and one 'Other' male are in the higher band of £45,000- £60,000 and only one Indian male and one Pakistani male are in the highest band of £60,000- £70,000. I did not have access to the same detailed information for white staff, but in CSB's Personnel and Development Annual Report (1999-2000, a graph compares white and non-white staff in term of salary (Appendix 8). It can be shown that the majority of white male and female staff are also employed within the £10,000- £15,000 salary band. What is of pertinence, is that non-white females are employed in higher numbers than anyone else on a salary below £10,000.

After providing some background and data on the two case study organisations, I will now move on to explore the views and perceptions of the managers responsible for HR and equality/diversity issues within CSA and CSB.

5.3 Managers' perceptions in CSA and CSB

Managers interviewed in CSA were employed both at Head office and Store level. At Head Office, the HR/ Diversity manager, an HR manager responsible for certain client groups and the Deputy Retail Managing Director, who was part of CSA's project on diversity, which involved increasing representation of ethnic minority staff at Head Office and Store level, were interviewed. In addition, the Employee Relations Manager and the Divisional Advisor on Employee Relations, were also interviewed in the Head Office, although they were not based there. Within the Store, two Store Managers were interviewed (one succeeded the other during this study), as well as the Customer Service Manager, who was also involved in the diversity project for the specific Store. In CSB the Human Resources Director and the Diversity Manager were interviewed (see Appendix 3 for biographical information).

A range of topics in relation to equality strategies, EO policies and career opportunities were discussed with management in CSA and CSB (see Appendix 9). Although the focus of this research is on ethnic minority women's career experiences and opportunities, the interviews with managers, encompassed both a broader discussion on equality initiatives and organisational structure and schemes and a more specific emphasis on ethnic minority women's careers and individual circumstances. I perceived that managers found it hard to concentrate on a specific group at points when discussing organisational policies and support. They appeared to find it easier, overall, to state the policies and their perceptions of them and then present their views separately on ethnic minority women's careers. This is significant in that it shows that there was not any specific focus or awareness of ethnic minority women's position and circumstances in the two organisations.

5.3.1 Organisational support, policies and informal practices

Four out of the five managers interviewed in CSA's Head Office (HO) stated that they felt their organisation was very committed to equality and that this commitment was fed down from the top, with only one manager adopting a more

sceptical attitude. From the first four, two managers, Donna and Miranda, argued that they were really committed to the organisation's philosophy and policies:

"I'm really passionate about the policies of [CSA]! Through my own personal circumstances, I know flexibility is very important. [CSA] is very understanding of individual needs" (Donna, Employee Relations Manager, CSA HO, White, 40)

"We haven't got barriers of people developing in our organisation, in terms of our policies and I do believe that, and in the role I do, I see there can be improvements in how we deliver a job at times, but the policies and how we look at things and our philosophy is about fairness, is about involvement, it's sound! It sounds like I'm saying that [CSA] is wonderful and obviously I've been with the business a long time, but I am passionate about the fact that we've got some policies, we've got that philosophy and I wouldn't want to go and work for a company that sells cigarettes, because that's how I feel! [in determined voice]" (Miranda, Divisional Advisor on Employee Relations, CSA HO, White, 33)

Miranda, working at regional level, believed in the philosophy of fairness and involvement of CSA and that their policies are good and that the organisation is working hard to achieve equality. She did acknowledge however the difficulties of controlling the attitudes and behaviours of individuals:

"Our policies are sound and we try to ensure that there are not any barriers. It's about looking at it, it's about making sure that people understand it, and what's acceptable. You'll always get in organisations, people who don't believe in the philosophy, or are stupid enough to make silly comments" (Miranda, Divisional Advisor on Employee Relations, CSA HO, White, 33)

Miranda seemed to be professional and committed to her work and she was instrumental in helping me gain access to the CSA Store. At the same time, she seemed disillusioned and frustrated with the diversity policies and initiatives. She came across as slightly defensive at times, but a reason for this could be her frustration with finding diversity initiatives difficult to implement. She stated above that she sees racist attitudes as manifested only as "silly comments", which may imply a lack of understanding of the issues or merely believing that these attitudes are not serious enough to affect CSA as a whole. Miranda seemed to believe that the organisation, as a whole, is committed to equality and that the few individuals

who do have racist or sexist attitudes cannot hinder opportunities for women or ethnic minorities.

Finola, the HR manager working specifically on the diversity project CSA has undertaken, took a more sceptical view on the actual implementation of policies, specifically in terms of recruitment and progression, at the CSA Head Office:

“[M]y view is, [...], that there is a situation, whereby you would get a director in this building, who would maybe recruit somebody to work for him, and would discriminate. [...] they would look at CVs and say..it needn't be race, it might just be on a particular school someone has been, the class or it might be 'oh, God, is that all they've done? When I was that age I could do x, y, z'. So you are thinking... there are people higher up that are fighting equality off [frowning] [...] If we did the recruitment the way we do it in Stores, which is about a person sending their application form for a position, and they just put it through a scoring system here, a point system and it scans through and if that person gets points then we ought to consider them. But no, we can't do that in [Head Office]! [says in ironic voice] [...] and the more senior you are, the harder it is for us to fight it off” (Finola, HR project manager on diversity, CSA HO, White, 40)

Finola acknowledged that the organisation's policies are well developed, but she did point to the danger that people within CSA, especially those occupying senior positions, can manipulate these policies in order to hire the people they want. She argued that there was more danger of this happening at Head Office level, rather than in CSA's Stores, where a points system is used to recruit people. Her quote is indicative of the often informal nature of recruitment, where people can discriminate indirectly on a variety of grounds that may go beyond 'race' or gender, and may be inter-linked with class, attainment of education in certain schools or universities, and a certain arrogance that those individuals did so much more when they “were their age”. This demonstrates an elitist attitude that Finola perceived to be present in CSA's Head Office, that one needs to 'fit in' the organisation's culture. When probed, Finola went on to say that she does not believe promotions are always based on merit:

“In this business with these people that are around? Is it only based on merit? Not entirely... I think there are some great examples, where it has been based solely on merit [...]. But I think there is an element of political behaviour, that has produced some problems, which in my view has not produced the best for the business. [...] I think it's more to do with senior positions... I would say that there are some people that really live the [CSA's] values and will never be senior managers, ever. And yes they are valued and appreciated, but they don't necessarily get the recognition that some of the political managers do, who they don't actually deliver as much, they just do the talking” (Finola, HR project manager on diversity, CSA HO, White, 40)

Finola seemed to imply that ‘fitting in’ the organisational culture and internal/informal politics, who one knows in the organisation, what links and networks one has and what personality or behaviour one displays, may be more important than one’s actual abilities. She was disappointed with the organisational culture of “you either fit in or you don’t”.

Crystal and Ashwin, an HR manager and the Deputy Retail Managing Director respectively, both stated that there are very good opportunities for progression in CSA and that one can advance within the organisation:

“Opportunities in [CSA] are good and [CSA] is still a company where you can start at the shopfloor and end up as a director” (Crystal, HR manager, CSA HO, White, 30s)

Both managers however, went on to give their more personal views, in a similar vein as Finola, of what happens in reality in terms of promotions. They argued that progression in CSA and promotions do not always take place in a fair manner:

“No, [it is not always based on merit]. I think a lot of it is personality driven in the organisation I would say” (Crystal, HR manager, CSA HO, White, 30s)

Ashwin made an additional point in relation to these arguments, which may indicate that politics seem to be quite powerful in CSA. He stated that some people “use blackmail” as a means of being promoted:

“To be held at ransom... that you threaten to resign. And then you are promoted!” (Ashwin, Deputy Retail Managing Director, CSA HO, Indian, 30s)

The effectiveness of organisational policies was also discussed within the Store. Joanne, the Customer Service Manager, argued that line managers have a profound effect on whether employees receive support and fair treatment. She also implied that informal practices may be contradictory to the formal equality policies:

“How much you develop and progress will depend on opportunities available and your direct manager. [...] Not all managers can spot talent and push people. And also they push people like themselves... the old boy’s club still exists [nods]” (Joanne, Customer Service Manager, CSA Store, White, 44)

Within CSA’s head office, Crystal also argued that the implementation of policies may be different from their ‘aspiration’:

“If they [policies] are implemented on the ground, that’s very different to the aspirations of policies. Policies are only as good as the understanding and the way people implement them” (Crystal, HR manager, CSA HO, White, 30s)

As discussed above, all managers interviewed in CSA believed that their policies are well developed but work is needed on their implementation. Miranda’s answer when asked whether there are any improvements she would like to see in terms of policies and practices, illustrates these arguments well:

“I think we’ve got sound policies. I think we can do better within them. [...] I think there’s always room for improvement. I wouldn’t say that there are any of our policies that I would read them and say, that’s outdated or that’s not right. It’s improving awareness and improving the competencies of the people in the business rather than improving the policies we’ve got. Their understanding and their application is where we can be better” (Miranda, Divisional Advisor on Employee Relations, CSA HO, White, 33)

With regard to CSB, effectiveness of policies and opportunities for progression were discussed with both managers. Denise, the diversity manager within the Trust, argued that there are not many opportunities for vertical progression since CSB has a flat hierarchy. This was exacerbated when the Trust decided to delayer and “got rid of a lot of middle managers”. She did state however that there are still

opportunities for development and also progression within the grades, especially within nursing:

“We try to grow our own [...] We try and recruit from within... we have internal vacancies, we have opportunities for secondment [...]” (Denise, Diversity Manager, CSB, Afro-Caribbean, 48)

There was a similar discussion in CSB, as within CSA, on promotions being based on merit and effectiveness of policies and Denise argued that she did not believe that promotions are always implemented impartially. She used her own experiences as a black woman manager and argued that ability on its own is not enough:

“My personal view is that promotions are not only based on merit [...] I think it’s probably because I feel I have lots of ability, but I’m not ... a lot of people have a lot of ability who are not self-promoting [...] you still need to have a personal attribute if you like [...] and I don’t think I have that! [laughs]. Some people don’t, and if you don’t, you spend a lot of time being [here] until somebody realises that you can do that job” (Denise, Diversity Manager, CSB, Afro-Caribbean, 48)

This argument relates quite closely to the views of some of the managers in CSA discussed earlier, on the organisation being personality driven rather than based on ability. Denise’s views confirm this statement in that it seems that what is important in CSB is whether you can ‘blow your own horn’ rather than merely doing a good job.

With regard to the effectiveness of policies, Monica, also presented similar views to some of the managers in CSA. She argued that typically, one’s line manager is more important than the formal policies because line managers have authority and discretion, i.e., in practice, the application of policy can depend upon the manner in which managers choose to implement it. In many respects, it is this knowledge and ‘enlightened’ manner, in which the managers deal with policy implementation, which is respected. The point at issue is the degree of fairness with which a policy is implemented. Monica did not think there is a uniform picture throughout the organisation on how effective policies are, or how supportive employees’ managers are:

“I think the policies exist [but] I think the problem with the policies is that they are only as good as your immediate manager. Because it’s your manager that has got to decide when the policy is appropriate in [one’s] circumstances, there’s an element of discretion within the policy [...] So I can say we have a wonderful flexible working policy, and in my department, everybody is happy with flexible working, but I know that there are other parts of this Trust, which I can point to, where people would say ‘Flexible working? Never heard of it!’ and that’s to do with management style. And when we are in a diverse organisation like this [...] there’s going to be some variability, some bad practice in there”(Monica, HR Director, CSB, White, 40s)

Finola, in CSA, made a very similar point on flexibility and opportunities to work part-time in the organisation’s Stores, which stems from the lack of consistency of policies and depends on the profile of the Store manager:

“I don’t think it’s a consistent policy, I think it’s very much down to the Store manager. So if you get a good Store manager, who perhaps himself or herself is married or has children or has a partner, and trying to manage these, then you’ll get a lot more interest in making the lives of his or her managers easier. If you got the classic archetypal male white Store manager, around 40, where his wife sits at home all day looking after the kids, then he won’t be thinking of these issues” (Finola, HR project manager on diversity, CSA HO, White, 40)

Denise in CSB, argued that there is institutional discrimination on gender and ‘race’ grounds with regard to policies and practices:

“The way things are set out, there is institutional discrimination. There is still a culture, we talk about Family Friendly policies, about good work environment, there’s still very much a culture that we have to work every hour God gave us. You see people get stuck in their desks for hours and hours [...] it could be that you are messing around on the internet for your own purposes, as long as you seem to be working and be present in the office” (Denise, Diversity Manager, CSB, Afro-Caribbean, 48)

She believed that although the Trust had well developed Family Friendly policies and prided themselves on a good working environment and culture, the measurement of commitment was based on a macho culture of long hours and ‘showing face’.

Denise went on to discuss her views on institutional racism in more detail and her belief that there are 'gatekeepers' to specific jobs or professions within the Trust:

"There's still a feeling that minority ethnic individuals would be in management if they had the skills, that it's their fault. There is an attitude that they haven't got the skills... It's more indirect, if it was direct it would be penalised. [...] There is a talk that we need to do something around recruitment, to recruit people that have not been given the opportunities, but then you take it to service managers and you have to fight all sort of different quarters... they put all those blocks and hurdles for you to jump across. You finally get the individual there and you find those people who they actually have to work with [...] are operating some sort of gateway to their profession. [...] they [...] see someone who understands the culture [of ethnic minority patients] and have language skills and they see it as a threat [seemed frustrated]" (Denise, Diversity Manager, CSB, Afro-Caribbean, 48)

She believed that these 'gatekeepers' create barriers for the career development and advancement of ethnic minorities, who are perceived as a threat due to increased awareness of ethnic minority patients' culture or language. The reason for this may be that white staff may feel that they do not have a great deal of understanding of ethnic minority issues and they may be concerned that they may be seen as incompetent.

Monica, the Human Resources Director of the Trust, also acknowledged that there is institutional discrimination and barriers to ethnic minorities' careers, stemming to a great extent from stereotypes and generalisations about ethnic minority groups. She confirmed Denise's point, that the main issue is with indirect, institutional discrimination, arguing that if it was direct, it would be easier to confront and deal with. She also reinforced her previous point that managers and their capability and sensitivity to deal with these issues is more important than the formal policies:

"It is more indirect, I think we've tried to deal with overt and direct stuff and I think further down it's the institutionalised stuff... And we are trying to focus on promoting individuals and diversity and mutual respect and that sort of things, but inevitably you are dealing with groups who are generalising individuals into categories dependent upon their religion, etc. [...] This can then create barriers to progression... [...] We have tons of formal policies.. Formal stuff I think, is all in place, as I said, the weak link is the managerial capacity to utilise those policies to best effect" (Monica, HR Director, CSB, White, 40s)

Denise argued that there is a lot of cynicism around equal opportunity policies, despite the fact that NHS organisations have a reputation for being EO employers. She stated that ethnic minorities have to try harder to succeed and they face numerous barriers. She did say however that the organisation is trying very hard to eliminate discrimination and that people have been fired in the past for being discriminatory.

Within CSA, a very different type of organisation, the views were to a certain extent similar in terms of acknowledging institutional discrimination and discriminatory practices. As discussed above, some of the CSA's managers argued that the organisation is not fulfilling the rhetoric of being diverse in that staff have to 'fit in' the organisational culture. This can be an issue of concern for ethnic minority staff who may have quite different religious or cultural expectations than their white counterparts (see Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion on religion and culture from the perspective of staff). As discussed above, however, there was not one uniform view in CSA, with some managers recognising the problems and concerns for ethnic minorities and women, whereas others thought that "silly comments" and isolated incidents of sexism or racism were not serious enough to create barriers for women or ethnic minorities. With regard to the first view, Donna, the Employee Relations Manager, argued that there is a need for CSA to acknowledge cultural differences and to understand their diverse employees:

"Although we do have an excellent equal opportunity policy and I do believe that we are fair employers, there's still work to be done on culture, and it's not about EO, it's not about employing from ethnic minority backgrounds, it's about understanding those people when they are actually working for us. [It's important] to raise Store awareness on cultural differences and how they impact on people's working lives. And about religious festivals and the impact that that has on somebody's work. In some religions, they have the fasting periods, and that has an impact at work and that's something that we need to respect" (Donna, Employee Relations Manager, CSA HO, White, 40)

She argued that more sensitivity, understanding and respect which goes beyond their formal EO policies, is necessary in CSA. Donna also argued that it is very hard to change people's attitudes and beliefs, but that it is nevertheless important to

get the message across that discrimination will not be tolerated and that people should control their behaviour. She believes that organisations cannot always control every single employee and circumstances would arise where people have been discriminated against:

“[Y]ou hope don’t you, that the culture we are working in, encourages everybody to be tolerant of everybody else. But within an organisation [...] you’ll always have the bad apple and that’s human nature... you just have to control that, and make sure that when things are brought to light, that [indicates] we are discriminating, that we deal with it. You can’t always stop it happening, it’s dealing with it when it does happen, and about making sure that it’s dealt with fairly, and making sure that the right course of action happens” (Donna, Employee Relations Manager, CSA HO, White, 40).

This quote links clearly with the debates around culture and whether managers can, or should, attempt, to change employees’ values and attitudes or whether what actually changes is merely the visible behaviour.

Two of the managers within CSA discussed incidents where ethnic minority people accused CSA of discriminating against them, when the managers’ perception was that there was no case of discrimination:

“I think that what some people can perceive as discrimination can be [something different]. I’ve seen situations where people have said that ‘I’ve been discriminated against’ and you look at it and you think how?! [frowns] They’ve decided that they’ve been discriminated and it might not be, it might be about your ability and that they can’t do the job” (Miranda, Divisional Advisor on Employee Relations, CSA HO, White, 33)

Miranda seemed frustrated when discussing this and this may stem from the fact that she personally had to deal with a number of cases where she believed discriminatory claims were not valid. At the same time, Monica in CSB argued that there were situations where individuals fought the wrong cases of discrimination but these were instances from white staff accusing the organisation of discriminating in favour of ethnic minorities.

Crystal, also discussed incidents where she was verbally abused for discriminating against ethnic minorities when vacancies were advertised. She looked beyond the specific incidents however and demonstrated a more informed attitude which acknowledged the history of discrimination and the structural constraints ethnic minorities may face:

“I think that sometimes there is discontent ... ethnic minorities feel that they are discriminated against [when they are not]. I used to work in an area in [Midlands city] where 80% of the population were ethnic minorities and we would get about that number of applications. And I would get people calling and abusing me down the phone that they have applied and they have been discriminated against, and I wanted to say ‘shut up, a black person got the job anyway!’. And you think where does this come from? You can call it chip on the shoulder and then you think, well I’m not surprised people have these chips on their shoulders because of the way society is!” (Crystal, HR manager, CSA HO, White, 30s)

This section has focused on the informal practices and implementation of policies in CSA and CSB, with the emphasis being on managers’ own perceptions of their organisations’ rhetoric versus reality in relation to formal policies. The concerns around making oneself ‘fit in’ the organisational culture were discussed, but there were however different and sometimes contrasting views among managers in both CSA and CSB. There seemed to be frustration and disillusionment with the organisational policies, specifically with the diversity initiatives managers had responsibility of implementing. The next section will focus explicitly on the perceptions of managers on these initiatives in CSA and CSB.

5.3.2 Positive action and diversity initiatives in CSA and CSB

On a formal level at least, both organisations adopted a number of positive action initiatives, which indicates a commitment to diversity and an acknowledgement of the history of discrimination and of the consequences for some ethnic groups and for women. In section 5.2, a number of these initiatives were introduced, and therefore this section concentrates on the perceptions and views of managers in their respective organisations.

There were different views within CSA and CSB on positive action, exclusive training and applying targets for increasing representation of women and ethnic minorities. Some managers felt that positive action, at least in the short-term, is a necessity:

“For me, the only way we got the female Store managers [increasing] was by setting targets. In the short term, the only way to get this off the ground, is to have the targets. Until you get the numbers in the Stores, in the organisation, nothing will happen” (Ashwin, Deputy Retail Managing Director, CSA HO, Indian, 30s)

Ashwin believed that positive action is needed in order to improve the careers and positions of under-represented groups within organisations and that it is important to “get the numbers in” to facilitate future development and progression. On the other hand, Crystal discussed a past CSA initiative for promoting women at senior levels (see Section 5.2.1) and expressed her concerns:

“[W]hereas on the face of it, it looked like an absolutely great thing to do, it actually demeaned some women that got promoted, because some started to say ‘they only got that job because they are a woman’. And some women started to doubt whether they were good enough for this promotion, [thinking] ‘did I only get this because I’m a woman?’. So while I think the intention is absolutely admirable, I’m not sure that it actually helps the cause” (Crystal, HR manager, CSA HO, White, 30s)

Finola argued that it is important for CSA to promote themselves as a company who values diversity and to actively attempt to recruit staff from ethnic minority communities. She stated that there are misconceptions about CSA and it is up to the organisation to ‘break the ice’, by attending religious and cultural festivals of ethnic minority communities, where they can talk to members of ethnic minority communities and discuss with them their opportunities within CSA:

“I don’t have a problem with positive action [...] the interesting thing that I’ve learned is that if you don’t do it, if you don’t take positive action, what actually happens is you leave huge groups of people to their own assumptions. [A commissioned researcher from CSA] went out and talked to a number of people in the [Asian Muslim] community in [the city where the Store is located], and there were some nice things they said about CSA, but there were some real shockers, about perceptions, about what it’s like to work for CSA. Things like ‘you have to

be white to work there’, or ‘there’s only jobs at the check-out for you anyway’, ‘you are not allowed to wear your hijab’, [...] ‘you have to handle meat and alcohol whether you like it or not’. And none of that it’s true! But unless you actually go out ... because we’ve never actually gone out and said this is what it’s actually like to work for CSA, the information is probably based on bad experiences of people that they know” (Finola, HR project manager on diversity, CSA HO, White, 40)

In similar vein to Ashwin, Finola believed that initially CSA needs to concentrate on increasing their ‘base’ of ethnic minority staff and then there would be more opportunities for them to be promoted to senior levels. She believed that this was an area where CSA was doing well:

“What we are finding that we are able to do, where we are making great strides on, is actually getting the employee base up, which we need to do in order to get the management base up. Because if I look at the statistics from where the managers come from, I can say that 50% are recruited from outside and 50% are recruited internally. So it’s absolutely vital that we get some good ethnic minority employees [progressing]” (Finola, HR project manager on diversity, CSA HO, White, 40)

However, with regard to providing exclusive training to ethnic minority groups in terms of on the job training or training on their management skills or assertiveness, the managers in CSA, acknowledged that this can backfire in that it may create the perception that ethnic minorities need extra help to succeed and also, it may create resentment among white staff. The first view on ethnic minorities being seen as requiring ‘special treatment’ was illustrated well by Finola’s quote:

“[T]his [exclusive training] is still being debated actually. There is an in-house view, amongst a number of our ethnic minority staff and managers, that they are very much against that. Their view is [that] they wouldn’t want to be part of a programme for special people, [be] singled out” (Finola, HR project manager on diversity, CSA HO, White, 40)

The positive action initiatives were wider in CSB encompassing, as mentioned in Section 5.2.2, targets for increasing representation of ethnic minorities and women at senior levels and active recruitment of ethnic minorities in nursing. The main difference between CSA and CSB, is that CSB offered exclusive training for ethnic

minorities within the Trust, who were at, or aspired to, progress to managerial level.

Denise, the diversity manager in CSB, provided a general picture on what the course entails, together with some of her own views formed from attending the course herself:

“I think the [course] works for some people, there are people, like people I introduced this to, and there were people in my cohort, who had done a lot, they obviously get the ambition, they’ve done a lot of degrees [...], and they were stuck in local jobs and in low management jobs, and they felt they should have been progressing. So [the course] helps you to explore some of that views in a safe environment [...] and to push yourself forward [...] it gives you the skills, by putting all sorts of things in your way [...] you get shadowing opportunities, if you sat in the corner during meetings helps you explore what’s going on in the organisation that you might not be aware of” (Denise, Diversity Manager, CSB, Afro-Caribbean, 48)

Denise argued that there is a lot of remedial work to create a working environment where equal opportunities is “part of everybody’s life and everybody here values diversity”. There was discussion on whether there is a danger of ethnic minorities being seen as not having the same skills as white staff, if they attend exclusive training or courses:

“That’s not why you need the training at all! You need the training because there’s a lot of baggage, from a lot of other things that had happened to you that held you back, people treat you badly and you start seeing yourself in that way, so you’ve got to shed that. The other thing that you’ve got to realise is that you need to push yourself forward. The third thing is getting the support and confidence in yourself to do that job, because as long as things stay the way they are, there’s also that ugly dimension of the black manager, that you will come across people who they don’t think you should be where you are and make life difficult for you, always undermining you, always have a little snide remark, that’s the ugly dimension that you have to learn to ignore” (Denise, Diversity Manager, CSB, Afro-Caribbean, 48)

Here Denise touched on a number of inter-related points, where she argued that some courses or training programmes which are only available to ethnic minorities are needed because historical disadvantage may have had an effect on their

confidence and assertiveness and they might need 'a push'. She also discussed the problems black managers may face due to stereotypical views that they might not be capable for the job and she saw this as another area where training may help ethnic minority people with dealing with situations of indirect or direct racism.

Monica, CSB's HR director, also believed that positive action and exclusive courses for ethnic minorities, are needed at present, but her view was that they should be seen as a temporary measure:

"My views are that it [exclusive training] is appropriate at a certain point in time, but very quickly it should become redundant. I think for women [...] my view at the moment is that we are now on race issues where we were ten years ago on gender issues. And I think we've come through on gender issues, so now I will be wholly against single gender training, because I think there are enough women represented throughout levels of the organisation [...] That's not the case for race [...] I think it's a timing issue, so I think potentially it is appropriate at the moment, that there is separate training for minority ethnic managers to help them break through. But once sufficient numbers of them have broken through, then I'm absolutely favouring mainstream training, because I think it's not in the interest of the individuals [nodding]" (Monica, HR Director, CSB, White, 40s)

Monica therefore argued that separate training is not necessary for (white) women in the organisation, but there are still reasons why it should be available for ethnic minority staff. She did, however, favour mainstream training, across ethnicity and gender, stating that social groups do not live in isolation in society and it is important for them to interact within, and outside, the work environment. She also raised another related issue of backlash, where tensions and resentment were prevalent in CSB and in the city where the organisation was located. She argued that racial tensions were increasing but she stated that these tensions were not only between white and ethnic minority groups, but also within ethnic minority communities.

"I think we are at a very tense point at the moment [frowning], but I think this city is at a very tense point at the moment. I think it's interesting that the discussion we've had has been ethnic minority versus white, but we have some tremendous issues about different minorities within this city and then within this organisation. For example, it's common to try and help, facilitate some resolutions between Sikhs and Muslims particularly. Also we have some backlash problems [where

white staff say] 'it's alright if you are black and [you get] all this special treatment' [...] and we get some hugely racist opinions of white staff trotted out. (Monica, HR Director, CSB, White, 40s)

Issues of resentment of white staff on exclusive training or other positive action initiatives, were also discussed in CSA. Four out of the five managers in the Head Office believed that there were not any issues of resentment or backlash, whereas within the Store the views of managers were quite different. A reason for this difference may be that the managers in the Store were working with staff at shopfloor level and may have had a better insight into the everyday life of employees, than the managers in the Head Office. The following quotes illustrate this contradiction:

"CSA is very committed to it [gender and racial equality]. There's never been as much commitment as there is now. [...] not aware of any resistance [...] I don't think these views [of resentment] exist as much" (Crystal, HR manager, CSA HO, White, 30s)

"I think the staff are clear [on what's acceptable in CSA]. I wouldn't say it doesn't stop them [sic]...I've had incidents in the past of racist nature. From white to black colleagues and black to white. We live in that kind of area, it's very tense. We are across the housing estates...[there is] unemployment, tension [...] This is the first Store [I've worked in] I've experienced racial tension like this [...] we are on the fringe of a very white working class area and an ethnic minority area [frowns] [...] There has been resentment from white people [about positive action initiatives in Store]. There have been comments from white customers" (David, Store Manager, CSA Store, White, 30s)

Joanne, the Customer Service Manager in the Store, was not in favour of exclusive training, which she perceived as unfair. She also argued that exclusive training in the Store would create more problems in terms of resentment and also in terms of actually increasing barriers for progression:

"I don't think there should be a separate training programme because it would cause more resentment in Store. Wherever we come from, whoever we are, we have to achieve on the same level. If a colleague had a special training programme, because she was Asian or whatever, after completing the course, there would be so much resentment from our other [staff] that she wouldn't progress anyway" (Joanne, Customer Service Manager, CSA Store, White, 44)

Joanne discussed some pertinent, and yet disappointing, issues in relation to their commitment to diversity as a Store. As discussed in Section 5.2.1, the Store opened in 2000 with 47% of its staff comprising of Asian men and women. The Store displayed signs in English, Urdu and Punjabi, and offered a high number of diverse products and services in order meet the demands of the Asian population in the area. The Store was considered by CSA as a big success on promoting diversity initiatives. It became clear early on however, a number of white customers were quite unhappy with the multi-cultural nature of the Store, which forced CSA to withdraw some of their initiatives. Joanne and David stated that the Store's ethnic minority staff reduced from 47% to 19% within the first five months of opening, and a reason behind some of them leaving was that they faced overt racism from customers. Joanne's following quote is indicative of the tensions and problems:

“It has been a struggle with diversity [seemed frustrated] [...] it's difficult [...] because our customer base is a racist base of people and having moved into [the city] especially for this job, I was surprised by the reaction from the customers. We opened a multi-cultural Store, we had multi-lingual operators, greeters and we had so many objections that we had to scale it down. And I had five Asian ladies who worked at the front of the Store, greeting customers and they were subjected to so much racism from the customers, that they've all left their jobs [...] I was surprised that for an area that has a high population of non-white people, I was surprised that the racism was so strong here. [...] I think, if we worked in an area that was more affluent, where the white population wasn't 33% unemployed, then I think the racism wouldn't be a problem. But because of high unemployment, you go to narrow minded white people, where they think that ethnic minority people have taken their jobs which isn't the case, but that's the perception and that's where the root of racism is” (Joanne, Customer Service Manager, CSA Store, White, 44)

The area in which the Store is located is considered to be a major determinant of racial tension and discrimination. Joanne acknowledges that the fact that there is a very high level of unemployment creates more tensions and discontent among different ethnic groups. It is surprising therefore, when she goes on to argue that a major reason why Asian staff have left the Store was their lack of commitment:

“We have targets [for the Store]. And we've achieved the target for this Store when opening here. For my department I had to have thirty-two ethnic minority people out of the total. I actually started with thirty-seven from which now I've got

18 left. There was a high turnover because we sacked some for theft, some for poor attendance, we didn't renew the contracts for other people who didn't work well. [...] a lot of the ... particularly the young Asian lads, they didn't understand our disciplines, even if they were fully trained and inducted into the company [...] We have a set policy and we recruit on ability not ethnic origin.[...] But where managers can become concerned with diversity is that they had a lot of ethnic minority staff who've let them down. [...] We all have to take people on merits or ability or references. We have to give them a chance. Often the chance is a waste of time... I don't know if there's something with the Asian population that don't seem to have that commitment" (Joanne, Customer Service Manager, CSA Store, White, 44)

Joanne had a distinct experience of working with young Asian staff in a disadvantaged area, which may have been negative, but she nevertheless makes a huge generalisation to the whole Asian population. David, the Store manager also acknowledged that the Store had lost a number of its Asian staff but he based this on a variety of reasons and stated:

"No more of [a problem of retention] that would be normally. The issue is that we've recruited a lot of ethnic minority people in our first twelve weeks and a lot of the temporary workers would leave [...] They left for different reasons, some were here as temporary, some didn't feel it's what they wanted" (David, Store Manager, CSA Store, White, 30s)

A prominent issue emerging from the research in the CSA Store is the fact that although CSA invested a lot of resources into improving diversity and increasing the representation of ethnic minorities in the Head Office and in its Stores, the 'bottom line' was the main focus. As the situation in the Store indicated, managers removed the majority of the diversity initiatives in place to attract ethnic minority staff and customers, from fear that they were losing white customers, who formed the majority in their total customer base. Joanne stated that the Store had to scale down a number of initiatives and multi-cultural events they were planning, because of the objections of their white customers. Her statement below about their customers, illustrates very clearly that if CSA's aims of being committed to diversity and providing products and services which reflect the local population, are not in line with profits, the 'bottom line' would typically win:

“We have to keep them happy, we don’t have to agree with them” (Joanne, Customer Service Manager, CSA Store, White, 44)

5.3.3 Perceptions on gender and ethnicity: ethnic minority women’s opportunities

The chapter will now progress to an area which relates mainly to ethnic minority women’s careers. There was a discussion with some of the managers on ethnic minority women’s specific circumstances and opportunities. Crystal presented her perceptions on how ethnic minority women fare in CSA:

“I think the numbers will tell you that they are not so well off. My personal view is that we are not thinking much about it. So I don’t think there’s any deliberate attempt to keep people back, it’s not a conscious thing ... They [managers] are trying to fill the vacancies with what they regard as the best person for the job. And I suppose we can be guilty as any other organisation in that we like ourselves, the mirroring effect, people who know each other...we are a personality driven company [nods]. And also if there are cultural issues where people are less likely to put themselves forward for something, that’s going to have an impact” (Crystal, HR manager, CSA HO, White, 30s)

This quote indicates a number of inter-related issues; there is the perception, by this manager at least, that CSA does not employ a high number of ethnic minority women. She believed that the specific issues of ethnic minority women are not understood in the organisation but she felt that there was not a deliberate attempt to hold them back. She went back to her earlier point that CSA is a personality driven organisation where people might recruit or promote people who resemble themselves, “the mirroring effect”, and also implied that there may be cultural issues that hold ethnic minority women back. This statement relates again to the often unconscious ‘acceptability’ and ‘fitting in’ criteria but also the assumption that there are cultural or community issues that may prevent people from progressing and ‘fitting in’ organisations. This was also discussed with some of the other managers and within CSA the majority of them believed that it is up to them as an organisation to reach out to the ethnic minority communities and promote CSA as a company who values diversity. As discussed above, they also felt that there are a lot of misperceptions about CSA and that ethnic minority women,

especially Asian women, have different cultural background and family expectations to deal with.

In the CSA Store, David, the Store manager, felt that the positions and opportunities of ethnic minority women are affected more by their own communities and culture than the organisational structure and support:

“[T]his is the first time I’ve worked with a lot of ethnic minority people and got to know more about the culture, Muslim religion, Sikh religion etc. Now that I’ve got that insight, I can see how difficult it is for them but at the same time, the barriers that are there come more from them than the company I think. [...] Personally I think that for the [ethnic minority] ladies in the checkouts, it’s personal circumstances [which are important for their position]. They are not here to progress to management, they are here for additional income, it fits with family commitments” (David, Store Manager, CSA Store, White, 30s)

David believed that the female ethnic minority staff at the checkouts of the Store was not committed to a career. This, however, can be the case for white women and men at the checkout or shopfloor if they are there with the aim of gaining some additional income for their family. It does seem to be a generalisation to ethnic minority women, and specifically Asian women for this Store, in that their organisational commitment is negatively related to their culture or family responsibilities and demands.

Joanne, also discussed the personal circumstances and culture of Asian women staff on the shopfloor:

“[T]hey are used to come in and do their regular shifts, not taking part...And sometimes it’s because they don’t want to mix, other times they are not aware of what they can do, or they don’t want to progress. They have the ability... but they fear resentment, racism... so they don’t want to put themselves in that situation. If an employee wants to develop, they have to fight to develop and to do that, they have to feel confident” (Joanne, Customer Service Manager, CSA Store, White, 44)

Joanne argued that some of the Asian women are not interested in progressing, but in some cases they are also apprehensive of the fact that they may deal with racism

and resentment from white staff if they do express the interest in developing and progressing.

In the Head Office of CSA, three of the managers stated that they believed it was important for CSA to involve the families of Asian staff or potential staff:

“If you were to approach our Asian women and say ‘this is what we can do and this is how your family can be involved and informed’, then we might stand a chance! [...] If you don’t actually go out and talk to people about their particular situation and how they might achieve this, then you are not really helping them [to progress to management level]. A second issue, is maybe yes, maybe there are some worries about family responsibilities. I don’t know about ambition, from what I’ve seen when you talk to women is not the ambition that’s missing! I think everyone one of us, that are mums, worry about family responsibilities, I do!” (Finola, HR project manager on diversity, CSA HO, White, 40)

Finola believed that involving the families is particularly important when concerning Asian women, because their families would play an important role in their decision to work in CSA. She also argued that family responsibilities should be acknowledged but not viewed as a negative characteristic by the organisation.

Within CSB, Denise argued that as a whole, ethnic minority staff are concentrated at the bottom end and are untrained and unqualified, with very few at managerial levels. She said that there may be differences among ethnic groups of women:

“I think by and large in the NHS, Afro-Caribbean women are better off than the men. They are given more opportunities, I don’t know what that says to be honest...I think it has to do with the fact that Afro-Caribbean men are still seen as aggressive ... [but] you see Asian men doing better than Asian women” (Denise, Diversity Manager, CSB, Afro-Caribbean, 48)

Denise believed that Afro-Caribbean women have more opportunities in CSB than Afro-Caribbean men but that Asian men fare better than Asian women. Monica discussed this in a broader manner arguing that she felt ethnic minority women are better off than ethnic minority men, but they are at the same level as white women. She believed that this is related to the fact that nursing employs higher numbers of women than men:

“I would probably say that ethnic minority women fare better, but that would be because we have a history of employing more ethnic minority women, more women in general [...] I think in terms of this type of the organisation, ethnic minority women have a history of working in nursing, so they are starting from a higher platform. Ethnic minority men don’t have a history of nursing, which is the bulk of our workforce [...] I think [ethnic minority women] fare comparably with white women. The groups that do best are white men still” (Monica, HR Director, CSB, White, 40s)

When discussing personal circumstances of ethnic minority women, Denise contended that there is a need for ethnic minority women to want to succeed and progress but also for the organisational structures to provide the support and the right framework to help them in their aspirations:

“I think that the policies by themselves can’t take you anywhere, they can sit on the shelves. To have a strategy to actually make it happen [...] is a different case” (Denise, Diversity Manager, CSB, Afro-Caribbean, 48)

This quote illustrates in practical terms the interaction of structure and agency dimensions of the theoretical framework. A supportive organisational structure might be a pre-requisite but this needs to be complemented by the ethnic minority women’s agency; a determination to succeed and a strategy to deal with their organisational and also their own community’s structure and culture.

5.4 Summary

Chapter 5 is the first empirical chapter of this study, focusing explicitly on the two case study organisations, CSA and CSB. The organisational contexts of CSA and CSB, were presented in Section 5.2, with the focus placed on equal opportunity policies and diversity initiatives CSA and CSB undertook. The main focus of the chapter, was placed in Section 5.3 which engaged with managers’ perceptions of their organisations’ policies, initiatives and also, of ethnic minority women’s opportunities and constraints affected by the organisations’ structures and cultures.

Within Section 5.3, managers’ perceptions of their organisations’ support and policies were explored, presenting their views on the rhetoric and reality of formal

policies and informal practices. Issues around 'fitting in' as an ethnic minority or female staff were discussed with some managers in CSA and CSB, shedding light on 'old boy's clubs' and networks being present in both organisations. The importance of supportive line managers was also discussed, and participating managers argued that subjectivity is central, with regard to the extent of support one receives for their career development, with some managers stating that promotions and career progression are often not based on merit, but rather on "who you know". Section 5.3.2 focused on positive action and diversity initiatives in CSA and CSB, presenting a range of different and sometimes contrasting views and attitudes by managers. Section 5.3.3 engaged more explicitly with managers' perceptions of female ethnic minority staff's opportunities in their organisation, discussing issues around lack of understanding of these women's culture and religion, and providing a brief comparison between ethnic minority male and female staff.

There was great diversity of views from managers in CSA and CSB, with some arguing that their organisation had effective equality policies, which were implemented in practice, whereas another group of managers were more sceptical believing that informal practices and favouritism were prevalent in their organisation. Discussions around positive action schemes, shed some light on the dilemmas organisations may face, if they are attempting to implement diversity initiatives. Some managers argued that positive action initiatives are necessary to "get the numbers in", with others stating that positive action can create problems for their organisation, manifested in the form of resentment from white staff, but also white customers, as was perceived to be the case in the CSA Store. CSA had to scale down a number of their diversity initiatives due to white customers' discontent. However, this was based on the managers' perceptions of the situation and there did not seem to be any hard evidence to verify the white customers' views. There was fear in the CSA Store that profits may be affected if some of their white customers decided to shop elsewhere; whether this fear was founded or not, it clearly indicates that CSA's priority was based on the 'bottom line', with any

equality commitments being made, rapidly abandoned. Some of these issues, will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 6

Ethnic Minority Women's Careers: Organisational and personal life experiences

6.1 Introduction

In chapters 6 and 7, the focus shifts from the managers' views, discussed in Chapter 5, to staff's perceptions in CSA and CSB and to the views of ethnic minority men and women from the 'independent group'¹. In both chapters, the emphasis is on ethnic minority women's views and perceptions of their careers, with the perceptions of ethnic minority men, white men and white women incorporated, where they provide relevant, and sometimes contradictory, views to those of ethnic minority women. The purpose of this is to place ethnic minority women's experiences in the broader organisational context by presenting and discussing the views and perceptions of the other three groups in terms of their career opportunities and experiences.

The focal point of this chapter is the perceived effects of gender, 'race'/ethnicity, culture and religion on ethnic minority women's experiences and perceptions of their careers. Their efforts in balancing their work and personal life, which encompasses family responsibilities and cultural and religious expectations, are also discussed. Some central themes recurring through the interviews with the ethnic minority female participants were the effect of stereotypes, self-presentation and integration in the dominant white organisational culture; organisational, community and family expectations and responsibilities; career strategies and confidence; and, perceptions of career success. Chapter 6 engages primarily with the agency and cultural dimensions of the theoretical framework, where culture is divided into social group and organisational culture. Structural concerns, namely organisational, but mainly family support and constraints, are also discussed in this

¹ As stated in Chapter 4, twenty six ethnic minority women, fifteen ethnic minority men, eight white women and six white men were interviewed (see Appendix 3 for detailed breakdown).

chapter. The agency, culture and structure dimensions are intertwined within ethnic minority women's career experiences, and although difficult to separate in practice, it is useful to present arguments around these three areas in a distinct, yet inter-linked manner. Chapter 7 will engage to a greater extent with organisational structures and cultures, focusing on the perceptions of participants regarding their organisations' policies, diversity initiatives and career support.

6.2 Dimensions of ethnicity/'race', gender, culture and religion: Stereotypes and 'fitting in'

This first section of analysis, deals primarily with the perceptions of ethnic minority women participants on how they are perceived with regard to their ethnicity, 'race', gender and culture/religion. Discussions around stereotypes these women face on an every day basis and issues around their dressing and self-presentation which may allow them or hinder them from 'fitting in' white western organisations, are presented.

6.2.1 Racial, gender and cultural/religious stereotypes

During the course of the interviews the female ethnic minority participants have argued that stereotypes still prevail in organisations resulting in detrimental effects on their careers. For ethnic minority women and men alike, these stereotypes will negatively affect their career opportunities but ethnic minority women may have to deal with additional stereotypes due to the interaction of their gender, 'race' and ethnicity. Within this study, five out of the eleven Pakistani Muslim women argued that they have to deal with organisational barriers due to the fact that they are not perceived as "career women" by the dominant culture. Similar arguments were made by six out of the nine Afro-Caribbean women and by the one African woman participant in terms of how they believe they are perceived in white organisations.

Asian women, however, argued that they have to deal with additional barriers due to perceptions of their culture or religion. This was discussed with five of the

Pakistani female participants and the following quote by Saira, stating how Asian women are viewed, demonstrates this:

“... submissive, passive, they do what the men tell them to do, they walk three steps behind, they are subdued, very passive” (Saira, Pakistani, Education Welfare Officer, 35)

This quote indicates that there is an interaction of gender and culture within stereotypical views of Asian women as submissive and passive to ‘their men’. Saira and Sarrah, two Muslim Pakistani women and Jane, an Afro-Caribbean woman, stated that there are certain sexual and racial stereotypes that ethnic minority women have to deal with when they are in contact with white people, and specifically white men in organisations. They argued, they are often seen as either overly sexual or in need of protection, stimulating ‘paternal instinct’:

“In the work scenario, there have been some white men who I found intolerable because of the way they treat you it has been in a very sexual way and I think it’s because of this myth that the black woman is highly sexed, so I’ve had that. I also had the very caring white male who all the time is “oh my God, you’ll be alright?” or “don’t worry” [mimicking a worried tone], you know... and I think that’s probably to do with being black and a woman” (Jane, Afro-Caribbean, Solicitor, 34)

“...for me, I think with gender for me, it’s more tied with race. It’s the idea of me being seen as subordinate [...] [I’ve experienced] sort of like subtle sexual innuendoes or comments on clothes I wear” (Sarrah, Pakistani, Community Mental Health Nurse, CSB, 27)

Sarrah, experienced “subtle sexual harassment”, as she put it, where she believed that her gender and ethnicity were intertwined in forming the perceptions of her in organisational settings and in effect, undermining her credibility.

Denise, the Afro-Caribbean Diversity Manager in CSB, also discussed how she thought she was perceived as a black woman manager and the effect of this on her career:

“The fact that I wouldn’t be seen as credible, stopped me moving on [frowned] Because I knew that as a black or other ethnic minority manager, it is difficult to

manage people of a different race [...] It's extremely hard, they [white staff] won't accept it. They don't see you as capable or credible [shrugs]" (Denise, Afro-Caribbean, Diversity Manager, CSB, 48)

6.2.2 'Fitting in': Western culture, dressing and self-presentation

The issue of dressing and self-presentation and the impact these can have on how one is perceived in organisations, was discussed with the majority of ethnic minority women and some of the ethnic minority men participants.

All of the Muslim women contended that dressing, in terms of whether one is dressed in their cultural or religious outfits rather than being dressed in more 'western' clothing, can reinforce stereotypes. Samina, a Pakistani project worker, mentioned her sister, working in the financial sector, and discussed the importance of how she presented herself when meeting clients in her organisation:

"She works in a bank and she dresses western, it's part of the corporate image really. Some days she goes in an Asian dress, but if she was meeting high-flying clients, she wouldn't go in an Asian dress...I think it's part of the role, she's a financial manager...so she ought to be in a formal suit, to have 'the look'" (Samina, Pakistani, Project worker in voluntary sector, 30)

Saira, talking earlier about how Asian women are perceived, argued that it is difficult for her religious group to bypass the stereotypes and progress in organisations, especially if the individuals in this group hold traditional views and values and their dressing reflects that:

"..if you think about Muslims, if somebody is very orthodox and they wear long coat and women wear a head scarf ... and this is not necessarily from ethnic minority background, this is from a white Muslim that I know, that she wears the hijab, and she said that she finds it very difficult to go to interviews dressed like that because they immediately got an impression, and she's a web designer, she's very intelligent, and she finds it difficult... Yes, I think people are prejudiced and have stereotypes about the way you dress and the background that you are from. [...] You have to conform" (Saira, Pakistani, Education Welfare Officer, 35).

In this case, there is an indication that the stereotypes related to Muslim women can surpass 'race', affecting both non-white and white Muslims. A white Muslim woman, as Saira argued, was not perceived as a "career woman" because she was

wearing a hijab, and this in effect could have created barriers for her career. This incident indicates that religion and the reflection of this on dressing is a key factor, in this case, for this white woman facing prejudice in interviews. The religious or ethnic dressing and the hijab can be perceived as a symbol of submissiveness and passiveness in white dominated organisations, with negative effects on career oriented Muslim women choosing to wear their ethnic or religious clothes.

Within this project, only two Muslim women, who were employed in the CSA Store, were wearing the hijab and they stated that it was their own personal choice to do so. These two women, Razwana and Farrah, argued that they sensed they were perceived in a very different light to their more 'western' Pakistani colleagues and they also faced very direct verbal harassment by white customers whilst working as greeters in the CSA Store. As discussed in Chapter 5, by Joanne the Customer Service Manager in the Store, this constant harassment escalated to such an extent that management withdrew their multi-lingual greeters from the entrance of the Store and had to place Razwana and Farrah in new positions as checkout operators.

Saira contended that it is very difficult for Muslim women to fit in and progress in mainstream organisations, especially if they are dressed according to their religion:

"... there is a conflict there, that's the conflict between work and home [...] if I really get into it seriously [being a strict practising Muslim] I would have to leave this kind of job and I could only work with an ethnic minority [organisation], because they would be quite understanding and accepting [...] If I started praying and wearing a hijab [in present organisation], they would see me as somebody very different to them" (Saira, Pakistani, Education Welfare Officer, 35)

This excerpt illustrates a contradiction and conflict between organisational culture and the ethnic minority women's own culture when it comes to expectations on what appropriate dressing and behaviours are.

Samina, who has always dressed in Pakistani clothing, discussed her perceptions on being accepted as an Asian woman in the private sector:

“I do believe that within the private world, it’s hard to maintain your identity as an Asian, in dress code...you walk into an interview, or you walk into a work environment, ... you want to be seen as a person, not as how you’re dressed, you want to be treated as who you are and not what you dress like! [in assertive voice]” (Samina, Pakistani, Project worker in voluntary sector, 30)

Saeda, a CSB employee, who was dressed in western clothing at the time of the interview, argued that she normally wears a western suit or trousers to work as she feels more accepted when dressed in this manner. On the odd occasion when she has attended work meetings or events in her Pakistani clothing, she felt that her white colleagues were:

“a bit shocked and taken aback. I can see the reaction of people and how they perceive me” (Saeda, Pakistani, Clinical Child Psychologist, CSB, 28)

The importance of appearance and also of accent, was discussed by John, an Afro-Caribbean male manager, also employed in CSB:

“...as a black West Indian male, I had dressed very much in a western way [pause-seemed to be reflecting] If I chose to dress in more traditional clothes, I am not quite sure how colleagues might view that. They might be frightened by it, threatened by it, they might have issues [pause] And also my accent is local as well, if I had a stronger accent, maybe there would be issues then. There is this old racist joke ‘you are one of us, I don’t see you as being black’ [smiles], and it’s that perception. If I was more ethnically dressed, it could have been an issue” (John, Afro-Caribbean, Applications Manager, CSB, 34)

John, reflected on a number of issues from an ethnic minority male’s perspective. His arguments are quite similar to the ethnic minority female participants, but he also brings up the issue of fitting in as an ethnic minority, if you are perceived as “one of us”. He believed that if one’s appearance is outside the ‘norm’, the majority white people may feel threatened by it, as the individual would not be a ‘known quantity’ to them that they can understand and predict.

A different perspective was offered by Ravinder, an Indian male, with regard to whether one wears their traditional clothing or chooses to dress in a more western manner:

“... the employers would always stereotype! Even if you wear non-traditional dress. Most [ethnic minority] people are born in this country and can wear whatever they are comfortable with, but the point is that when you go in, you would still stand out [...] You can't hide what you are, the minute you walk into a room, you can't pretend to be white” (Ravinder, Indian, Chief Executive of Housing Association, 37)

He believed that stereotypical views about ethnic minorities are always present and although acknowledging the fact that dressing in ‘traditional’, cultural or religious clothing may accentuate these stereotypes, he argued that ethnic minorities would be seen as inferior and stereotyped in every situation, regardless of clothing, language or education.

Yasmin, a Pakistani female, working in the CSA Head Office, discussed her perceptions on her appearance and behaviour and the effects of these on ‘fitting in’ the dominant culture:

“I'm particularly westernised and I think it's worth mentioning. It helps, massively. That's how I was brought up ... I was brought up to not having an issue with what I was, my colour or anything, we adapted. We always mixed [...] I was always integrated in the white culture, so I've never known anything different” (Yasmin, Pakistani, Training advisor, CSA HO, 28)

Yasmin acknowledged openly that being westernised, in terms of dressing and behaviour, helps her career tremendously. She argued that she has never dressed in traditional Pakistani clothing because she has been raised by her family in a more westernised style and in a manner which instilled confidence in her, by “not having an issue with what I was”. At the same time, she acknowledged, although indirectly, that her parents probably developed a strategy, by adapting to, and assimilating in, the white culture. Yasmin was brought up in a middle-class area with predominantly white neighbours and schoolmates and this indicates that class may be a strong factor in one's identity and perceptions. She asserted that she feels

very comfortable in her organisation and she never felt as, or made to feel, an outsider. In this respect, she was 'accepted' in the organisation "as one of us", as Robert, a white male colleague of hers, mentioned about her. Yasmin was clearly a very confident, assertive woman, who by also being westernised, wearing smart suits and trousers and socialising with her colleagues, fitted in quite well within the organisational culture at CSA, which was described as "young, lively, fashionable" by a number of CSA staff.

On the other hand, Nasim, a practising Muslim in the CSA Store, argued that he felt quite external to the white western culture of the organisation:

"... in this business, the only way I feel you can get on is if your face fits within an environment and it evolves basically around that. If your face doesn't fit, then you can have some difficult times in the company [...]" (Nasim, Pakistani, Provisions Manager, CSA Store, 30)

Nasim went on to argue however, that he believes ethnic minorities who are 'brainwashed' in the CSA culture, are more easily accepted and can integrate with their white colleagues. He argued that as an ethnic minority, one can fit in the CSA's culture but he or she has to give up his or her own culture or religion. Nasim then made a comment, which gave me the impression he was talking about Yasmin, who had progressed by this time of the research from her role as training advisor in the CSA Head Office to Store Manager at the CSA Store:

"Their [ethnic minorities'] colour would still be there. [But] if you are brainwashed and you fit in... [pause] who immediately comes to your mind? [smirks]" (Nasim, Pakistani, Provisions Manager, CSA Store, 30)

The reason I believe Nasim was referring to Yasmin, was that his above quote was stated almost immediately after my probing that the CSA's new Store Manager is a Muslim woman and whether he believed that this indicates a change in the culture of CSA. Farrah made a much more direct comment about Yasmin, which corresponds to Nasim's views:

“Yasmin is Muslim herself but she is trapped in [CSA’s] beliefs” (Farrah, Pakistani, Checkout Operator, CSA Store, 21)

There appear to be some issues with how Yasmin was perceived by other managers and staff in CSA, and these are also explored in Chapter 7, mainly in relation to diversity initiatives. Some of the other Pakistani staff working at shopfloor level in the CSA Store, discussed Yasmin’s success and argued that they saw her achievements in a positive light. She was perceived as a role model by such Pakistani female and male staff, where they saw her progression as creating hope and determination among them, in that they can also achieve their goals and succeed.

Yasmin herself had very different views to Nasim and Farrah when discussing the relationship between religion, social group culture and ‘fitting in’ at CSA. Whilst she was working at CSA’s Head Office, she discussed her own views on Pakistani people in Britain, which were presented to me as though she was educating me in this area. Her exact discussion is reproduced in full below in order to give a more complete picture of her perceptions:

“Nicolina, there’s two populations of Asians in this country. There is typical Pakistanis, and other Pakistanis call them TPs, typical Pakis. And these are the people who are unskilled, uneducated, came to this country from farmers and they thought they would have a better life in this country. I will be very racist when I say this but generally they don’t speak English, they live off the state, don’t have jobs. They are the ones who give [us] this bad reputation. You will not get progression from their children because they are still living in 1950s Pakistan! Then you’ve got another population, which I think I come from, and that’s educated Asians. Who have come to this country and made something for themselves and educated their children and adopted some white behaviours and have learned to adjust to the lifestyle. These typical Pakis live in areas that are densely populated by Pakistanis, the shops are Pakistani, they don’t want anything than Pakistanis around them. And they’ve made themselves a Pakistan in this country [pause] So depending on which population you are talking about, there is a very clear divide. [...] [Educated Pakistanis are] very well presented, very smart, very career oriented, success oriented. But in [city of CSA Store] they aren’t. In here the only views people got of Pakistanis is [the city’s] typical Pakistanis. There’s bad in every creed, in every race, but unfortunately the bad of our race, live very local to this Head Office! So it’s stereotyping [all Pakistanis to those close to Head Office]. But if you go [more South] all the Asians there, they are more like me. [pause] I think it’s what your social norm is and the way you

were brought up. I think the social norm for TPs is to stay at home, get married at fourteen and have children at fifteen and live at home. And they still have seven, eight children and the husband is a taxi driver and he's sleeping around. But that's acceptable because it's part of their culture. And then you have other norms of people like us, who have career aspirations" (Yasmin, Pakistani, Training Advisor, CSA HO, 28)

Yasmin's views may be viewed as controversial, since she places Pakistani people into two distinct categories, with fixed personalities and characteristics. The one group, which she sees herself a part of, is the "career minded, well presented" Pakistanis and the other groups is what she describes as the "typical" Pakistanis, with no family morals, no ambition and no education. Yasmin uses the phrase "TPs" which has racist connotations and an additional danger is that her arguments imply that Pakistani people who want to maintain their cultural identity, adhere to their religion and dress in ethnic or religious dressing are "TPs", who, in her eyes, have no ambitions or responsibilities. Her arguments may also imply that she views class as a determining factor in assessing individuals, in terms of their lifestyle and behaviours.

Yasmin told me that she does not feel part of the (traditional or "typical") Asian community and does not have strong religious beliefs which could affect how she is presented and also how she is perceived in CSA. She discussed her social network and stated that the limited Asian friends she does have acknowledge the career benefits of being westernised in an organisational setting

"I don't think I'm part of the Asian community. We have some Asian friends but we don't socialise with them very much. My parents don't have too many Asian friends [pause] Although, I have two Asian friends who wear Asian clothes at home and one is a lawyer and the other one is a doctor. And when they are outside the home they are completely westernised but in the home they are completely easternised. And it's done them no harm in career" (Yasmin, Pakistani, Training Advisor, CSA HO, 28)

6.2.3 Summary

Section 6.2 has engaged with ethnic minority women experiences of stereotypes and their views on how they think they are perceived in predominantly white

western organisations. They argued that there is typically an interaction of gender and ethnicity in the formation of stereotypes, i.e. how they are perceived as ethnic minorities *and* as women. This section has also dealt with the perceptions of predominantly ethnic minority women participants with regard to dressing and appearance. Issues around self-presentation and whether one is more westernised than 'easternised', has an effect on how one is accepted in a predominantly white organisation and on one's career opportunities.

6.3 Conflicting expectations and responsibilities: Organisational and social group culture

The focal point of Section 6.2 rested on the stereotypical views ethnic minority women experienced in organisations and their perceptions on their dressing, appearance and being 'westernised'. Section 6.3 is in effect an extension of the arguments presented above, with the focus being more explicitly on the tension between organisational and social group cultures. The expectations and responsibilities ethnic minority women have with respect to both their work and their family and community life are discussed mainly from their perspective, with views from ethnic minority, white men and women incorporated where they reinforce ethnic minority women's views or where they add a different dimension to their arguments.

6.3.1. "Living in two worlds"

In this study, eight Pakistani women and two Afro-Caribbean women experienced tension by trying to conform to both their organisational and their social group culture and expectations. It is important to note that although only ten ethnic minority women argued that they personally found these expectations to be conflicting, all of the female ethnic minority participants acknowledged that there are problems for ethnic minorities in dealing with contrasting expectations. The remaining sixteen women however, argued that they either found ways to deal with this tension, such as 'cutting themselves off' from their community and culture or

that, for them, there is no tension as they are fully assimilated in the white western culture.

Three of the Pakistani women made strong arguments on the tensions between their community and their work life:

On the home front, I probably have to conform to the cultural issues ... I have to interact with the family and community and if someone is ill I've got to go and see them, parents phone and I've got to go see them ... there's all that demands of family and community and culture and religion... You've got it both ways from work and from community (Samina, Pakistani, Project worker in voluntary sector, 30)

"It's like living in two worlds, the white world at work and your own world with your community. It's difficult ... I have a role within my working life and a role with my home life" (Salimah, Pakistani, Liaison Officer, CSB, 32)

"I'm [...] working and living in two different... [pause] ... because the community to some degree, some of them are very traditional and not forward looking, and then I'm working within an institution which is very traditional, but has different values to my community and I think I have struggled with that" (Sarrah, Pakistani, Community mental health nurse, CSB, 27)

In many respects, these views represent the clash between the cultures where ethnic minority women are forced to mutually satisfy as a means of fulfilling family, cultural and career responsibilities, demands and desires. Nasim introduced his views on the relationship between family and religious responsibilities and career minded Asian women:

"...I think it's harder for Asian females, if they are career minded... The only way that the Asian female is going to succeed is if she comes away from the family and the religious duties. To give that up and move to the western side. And then if you are there, you are OK, you are on the career side, you've done it. Forget your family, your religious duties, it's more important to get my career [in cynical tone]" (Nasim, Pakistani, Provisions Manager, CSA Store, 30)

Mary, an Afro-Caribbean woman, believed that family concerns and responsibilities is an issue that affects women to a greater extent than men. She contended that there are no race or ethnicity differences and that her experiences

with balancing her work and family life were similar to her white female colleagues. She stated that support from one's partner or extended family is crucial but she did not receive it as much from her husband:

"... When I was with my husband, because he was very academic and I wasn't, I think he thought [pause] although he encouraged me to study at the time and I was having the children and I didn't have a degree, he didn't really recognise that I was at his level. And although he treated me OK, it was always about a career for him, about me not being ambitious. He would say I wasn't ambitious. But when I went and started to study, it was a major problem for him, because I changed [pause] He couldn't take that change [shrugs]" (Mary, Afro-Caribbean, Training and Development Advisor for Equal Opportunities in the Health Service, 52)

Mary and her husband are now separated and Mary believed that a central determinant of their separation was the fact that her husband could not see her as his career equal and would not offer her the "much needed support". Samina, also discussed family and community support in relation to her work and personal life:

"It's [balancing work and family] not easy, it's complex [nodding] If there was ever a moment... if I didn't have family support and the community support, I would struggle... it's a key ingredient" (Samina, Pakistani, Project worker in voluntary sector, 30)

She argued that support from her husband and family was a main factor in her fulfilling her career ambitions. She also stated that the Pakistani community where she lives has been very supportive and her child minder is a "lady from the community" whom they trust as their "families have known each other for years".

Samina believed that she has received support and encouragement from her family and community with regard to her career. She argued nevertheless that compromises are important and she discussed the tensions between her life at work and her life as a religious Asian woman:

"When you are around Asian people or Asian families it's whether they perceive you as being ... you've got to think of how they perceive you, that do they think that you are being disrespectful because you don't have your head covered? When I'm at home I've got a scarf [but] I throw it on the chair when I come here [to work]."

But if I went outside now and I was walking through the community and I saw an older guy who was very religious, I might feel that I should have my head covered as a respect to him” (Samina, Pakistani, Project worker in voluntary sector, 30)

She stated that how she is perceived from her community is very important to her and that she needs to be seen as respectful especially to her elders. It seems that Samina’s identity as a Muslim woman, committing to her cultural and religious responsibilities is very important to her and she may believe that being respectful to her community is part of, and also an affirmation, that identity.

Diane, Ruth and Gurjit, three ethnic minority women in CSB, argued that they had to try hard to balance their work with their family life and they believed that having children changed their priorities in life and that their career had to take second place, at least for a while:

“It was not easy at all [dealing with childcare arrangements] [...] If I worked in wards, maybe it would be more difficult. In many ways I feel less guilty because I’ve been there for my kids. I worked Monday to Friday, nine to five, so I was there for evenings and weekends. All I had to do was arrange for someone to pick them up from school. And I’ve always worked local, so it was easier [pause] Hence that’s why I haven’t made much of a career move for myself” (Ruth, Asian, Community Psychiatric Nurse/ Sister, CSB, 48)

Ruth, argued that she had family support and private childcare but she still felt she wanted to be more involved in her children’s lives, especially when they were younger. She stated that she took more responsibility for their children and domestic issues than her husband but it was not necessarily a conscious decision from either part:

“It just worked out that way. It’s more of a mother’s role really. My husband has always worked in different places, so it’s always been me who has taken more responsibility. He’s worked in Sweden, in Brighton. He’s a technical consultant. So it’s always been me [frowns]” (Ruth, Asian, Community Psychiatric Nurse/ Sister, CSB, 48)

Gurjit also discussed the effect of family and having children on her career:

“I think it’s taking me longer to get to where I want to get to, in the respect that I wasn’t able to work full-time [when children were younger]. [...] If I was more focused and knew what I wanted, it could have taken me less [time] ... and the glass ceiling... it was hard” (Gurjit, Asian, Senior Nurse Manager, CSB, 46)

Gurjit argued that having children could have ‘slowed’ her career for a period of time, but she also acknowledged “the glass ceiling” as a structural constraint and the lack of her own agency, as she was less focused and determined in the past because, as she argued, she was lacking the confidence to push herself forward.

Denise, had slightly different views with regard to how she balanced her work and her family life:

“I think especially with my first child, which wasn’t planned at all, I had to change my plans a little... but I thought it won’t stop me doing what I want to do, or else you get very resentful. I had a lot of support from family. You can be only a mum if you want to, but I didn’t feel I wanted to [laughs]. I need to feel I’m a good mum and that I’m a good homeowner, but I need to balance it” (Denise, Afro-Caribbean, Diversity Manager, CSB, 48)

Denise believed that if she sacrificed her career for her children, she would have been resentful and therefore she tried to balance her career and family life. She argued however that she felt guilty for not spending enough time with her children when they were younger and that this had created a lot of stress for her.

Some of the ethnic minority men and white men argued that they faced difficulties in dealing with their work and family demands but overall, they themselves stated, that domestic responsibilities and child care were placed to a much greater extent, on their partners or wives.

Balvinder, an Indian male employed in the CSA Head Office, argued that he has faced difficulties balancing his work and family life, especially as he has a young child, although his wife is not working and looks after their son:

“There are frustrations... there’s a challenge to keep a balance. You need to make time. But there are long hours here [CSA]” (Balvinder, Indian, Process Improvement Manager, CSA HO, 48)

A different perspective with regard to family responsibilities and ethnic minority women was presented by Steven:

“It is EO anyway [in his organisation], so I cannot say there’s any problem in the trust, provided they [ethnic minority women] are willing to do [the required work]... because the majority of ethnic [minority] women, they are married, they cannot sort of do full time job and career progress as well... unless the children have grown... you know if they decided to carry on [...] Family responsibilities can hold them back” (Steven, Asian, Senior Change Nurse in Health Trust, 53)

Steven, an Asian male discussed the issues around family responsibilities but he seemed to imply that organisations provide equal opportunities regardless of gender or ethnicity, but it is the women’s personal circumstances that make it difficult to have a family and a successful career. He therefore, ‘excuses’ and takes responsibility away from, his organisation with regard to employees’ family circumstances and demands. He believes that the ‘problems’ women face are unavoidable if they want a family and a career and if they want to be successful in both ‘worlds’.

The interview data has indicated that family responsibilities have rested more on the female rather than male participants regardless of their ethnicity. Four out of the five white women with children, argued that having children changed their priorities and that balancing family and work has been a struggle:

“Having children definitely had an effect on my career aspirations! You have to make a decision on what you want really. On whether you want a full blown career or a balance [between work and family]” (Laura, White, Child Protection Health Visitor, CSB, 41)

“I think your career aspirations change when you have children and for a long while you settle where you work. And it’s enough to have a job that’s nearby, handy for the children. And I think that changes again as you get older. So ... I think you put your career on hold when your children are young” (Brenda, White, Finance Manager, CSB, 37)

There are a number of similarities between ethnic minority women and white women in how they deal with balancing work and family life and in that respect white women also 'live in two worlds'; their work world and their family world, with different sets of expectations. For ethnic minority women participants however, there seemed to be additional concerns when it came to their personal life, in that they felt they have to fulfil family responsibilities and expectations but also, if they ascribe to their religion or if they are close to their ethnic minority community, cultural or religious demands. Saira discussed her views on the tension between work and religious demands:

"... they are very different, very different [...] because at home my life revolves around living life as a Muslim, even if I don't pray really that much [pause] My mum does, my dad does, my brother does, my sense of clothing has to be respectful. At work, it's nothing to do with religion, it doesn't come into it at all, it doesn't affect any part of my work, it's all about work and that's that [pause] But at home it's like, you are constantly reminded of it, because you know ... [shrugs]" (Saira, Pakistani, Education Welfare Officer, 35)

Saira stated that she finds it hard to fulfil her religious obligations as a Muslim within her organisation and she discussed the clash between the Muslim culture and the socialising aspect of the organisational culture:

"Sometimes, it's things like when they [work colleagues] say, let's go the pub, you might not really want to go to the pub, it's not really the type of thing I do, but every time we have a social, that's where they all go, to the pub [rolling her eyes]. They would never suggest let's go to a café and they never ever do think about Muslims, that they don't drink [frowning]" (Saira, Pakistani, Education Welfare Officer, 35)

The interview data indicated that cultural and religious issues, are more prominent for Asian Muslim women than for the African and Afro-Caribbean women participants:

"Their culture ... the culture they are coming from, the norms, the patterns, their behaviour, is such that in order to integrate their work style into another culture, ... there are some adjustments, to bridge that ... into the new culture" (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

“I think for Asian women there are bigger issues. I think for Afro-Caribbean women it’s not an issue, because we are westernised” (Jane, Afro-Caribbean, Solicitor, 34)

The majority of the Afro-Caribbean women acknowledged cultural differences among ethnic groups and argued that Asian, and particularly Asian Muslim women, may have to make more adjustments and sacrifices to fit in white dominated organisations. They argued that with regard to their dressing and religious requirements, they would probably face more difficulties and barriers in being accepted in a white western organisation.

Harpal, working in CSB, argued that one way of dealing with the tension between work and community obligations and developing personal independence, was to be “cut off” from her Indian community:

“... it sounds awful doesn’t it?! [with embarrassed smile] But because of all the other things you got on, you have extra pressures if you are part of a community, like you should be doing that or you shouldn’t ... it’s extra pressure” (Harpal, Indian, Dentist, CSB, 43)

In this case this seemed to be more of a conscious strategy for Harpal than maybe Yasmin who was working in CSA. However, Yasmin’s parents seemed to have made a conscious decision, they had a strategy to help her integrate and therefore, this might be the reason why it was not a conscious decision for her.

However, in extending her earlier discussion on satisfying community expectations, Samina had different views from Harpal and Yasmin:

“I think the community view me... as a working professional, they see me as someone who’s progressed that hasn’t compromised with culture and religion and see that those values ... that I’m still a practising Muslim ... they see me as a success but they don’t see me as I’ve compromised. [My community] has never seen me in a Western dress [laughs] and I wouldn’t [let them] ... because it would be an insult, they would see that as ‘oh, she’s becoming western now, she’d given up her religion, she’d given up her identity for her career” (Samina, Pakistani, Project worker in voluntary sector, 30)

Samina argued that it was very important to her to satisfy the expectations of her Pakistani community. As argued earlier, Samina always dresses in Pakistani clothing and adheres to her religious responsibilities. At the same time, she would most probably be very uncomfortable with the idea of being seen in the manner described earlier by Yasmin, who would see Samina as a “traditional” Pakistani woman with low career aspirations. Samina sees herself as a successful professional woman who was also managed to maintain her cultural and religious identity.

The interview data has indicated therefore that for Muslim women, who value the perceptions of them from their community and who want to be practising Muslims, the issues are different to those faced by more westernised ethnic minority women. This situation creates a lot of stress and tension for the women who wish to ascribe to their culture and religion, but also succeed in their careers in predominantly white western organisations, as the expectations of these ‘two worlds’ are often conflicting.

6.3.2 Downplaying cultural identity: “Acting white”?, “Selling out”?

The discussions and data up to this point demonstrated that ethnic minority women deal with stereotypes in relation to their appearance, culture or religion. Eight Pakistani, four Afro-Caribbean women and one Indian woman believed their existing organisations would not accept them if they were wearing traditional or cultural dressing, had ethnic hairstyles or were wearing the hijab. They believed, therefore, that they had to sacrifice part of their cultural or religious identity for the benefits of their professional identity in white dominated organisations.

Some of these women argued that they had “to act white”, as they put it, if they wanted to ‘fit in’ and succeed in organisations. The following quotes are illustrative of the views of these thirteen ethnic minority women participants:

“[To act white] could be termed as playing the game... if I came into this post and I was a Muslim and I came with that thing over my face, that part of my culture... or I came in a rasta ... to be accepted, you’d have to act white [...]. You couldn’t get the post, a senior post in this organisation and wear that thing across your face” (Mary, Afro-Caribbean, Training and Development Advisor for Equal Opportunities in the Health Service, 52)

“... you have to be seen to fit in... whether it means simple things like not coming to work with your hair in plaits... it could be seen as inappropriate” (Emma, Afro-Caribbean, Equality action team member in voluntary organisation, 39)

“It’s almost like leaving your tribe to join another tribe. Deny yourself to become somebody else... you don’t have to deny, but it’s true, it’s easier” (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

“... the problem is when you are in [an] institution which is predominantly white and working on western values, I think that’s when the struggle comes. Because you don’t feel you belong, you are aware of the differences yourself and there is an expectation that you would conform” (Sarrah, Pakistani, Community mental health nurse, CSB, 27)

These instances of the discussion with ethnic minority women participants indicate that it is easier to penetrate organisations if you “play the game”, if you assimilate in the white culture and “leave your own tribe”. Balvinder presents similar views to John, the Afro-Caribbean man in CSB, when discussing his views on ‘fitting in’:

“You know when you fit, that’s when the organisation says ‘oh, you are alright, you are one of us’. But that misses the whole point! If I can mimic the right behaviours, then I’ll be accepted” (Balvinder, Indian, Process Improvement Manager, CSA HO, 48)

As Balvinder stated, if ethnic minorities want to get ahead they have to “mimic the right behaviours”. Balvinder seemed to imply that this does not change the fact that his is Asian and not white, and that this then “misses the whole point” because one is accepted for ‘fitting in’ rather than for their skills and abilities.

There were some different views however, from ethnic minority women, when discussing the issues around ethnic minorities believing they have to “act white”. Jane’s quote is representative of these views:

“I think that’s stupid! [arguments that one has to act white] you are [...] really detracting yourself from the fact that you are a black person, who’s struggled and done well to get where you are” (Jane, Afro-Caribbean, Solicitor, 34)

Jane believed that if ethnic minorities try to “act white”, they discredit their own success and they make the statement that they cannot be successful as a black person. She argued that she personally did not make any adjustments in terms of her appearance or behaviour but she stated that the fact that she is westernised may have made it easier for her to be accepted in her organisation. Jane did not experience any pressure from her family or community to behave in a certain manner and therefore this was not an area of concern to her.

At the same time however, some of the other female ethnic minority participants believed that their community may see them in a negative light if they have downplayed their culture or religion - either consciously or unconsciously - and accuse them of “selling out”; as betraying their culture and religion by adopting the white western standard. Yasmin, acknowledged that, what she would call the “traditional”, Asian Muslim community would see her as giving up her culture and tradition, as “selling out”. This was exacerbated by the fact that she has a long-term white partner, a situation she believes is frowned upon in the Asian community:

“They [the Asian community] would be more proud of me [in terms of her success] if I had an Asian partner. They would have said to their children ‘oh, she’s so good, she’s stuck to her culture and she’s doing well at work. See? Anybody can do it’. As opposed to ‘[She] is with this white person and that’s why she’s done well. She’s forgotten her roots’” (Yasmin, Pakistani, Training Advisor, CSA HO, 28)

Sarrah, who was working in CSB as a nurse, experienced some concern on how she would be perceived by her community:

“...I think there are also people that might perceive me [frowns] because they don’t know me, but they might know what I do, they may perceive me as I have conformed really, that I’ve sold out [...] I think when people meet me they might see me as that. But once we’ve spoken, they get to know me and they come to realise how strong my identity is” (Sarrah, Pakistani, Community mental health nurse, CSB, 27)

Sarrah claimed that people from her community may believe she has sacrificed her cultural background in order to work in a large public organisation but she believed that their views of her would change as they got to know her. It seemed as though it was important to her to 'prove' to her community that she is still part of that community, that she is committed to her cultural or religious responsibilities and she has a strong Muslim identity.

Denise who dresses in western clothing, generally suits, and has very short relaxed hair, also discussed the perceptions of Afro-Caribbean people with regard to her appearance and also to the fact that her husband is white:

“People might say I’m a bit of a coconut! White on the inside, brown on the outside! [laughs] I think it’s because my husband is English [white] [...] It could be that perhaps I don’t look as ethnic as I could, but that’s personal choice. [...] If you come with braids and stuff on your hair, you will fit the stereotypes. You need to tone it down, but not lose your connection with your background” (Denise, Afro-Caribbean, Diversity Manager, CSB, 48)

She did not feel part of the Afro-Caribbean community however, and this could be a factor on why she did not place as much emphasis on people’s views of herself as perhaps, Sarrah who wanted to fulfil her community expectations. Denise believed that Afro-Caribbean women may need to “tone down” their ethnic hairstyles and general appearance but she did not see this as “selling out”. She believed that one’s identity has more to do with how one feels and acts, rather than how one presents herself or himself.

Ravinder, whose views were presented above in relation to fitting in white organisations, believed that the “selling out” arguments were often stemming either from jealousy from community members who felt they were not successful themselves or from being narrow minded:

“There’s an issue of the community, they are being narrow minded, it’s cultural, that’s their own stereotypes, especially Muslim communities, they are very insulate. They don’t want their women to look western, all lots of things” (Ravinder, Indian, Chief Executive of Housing Association, 37)

Views on the “selling out” argument were also presented by another ethnic minority male, John:

“There is this argument of [...] get rich and switch! That’s something that is said. Some of my friends [and] one in particular, a white friend, when I moved to management... his family is from a very strong trade union background, had some big issues with me and we needed to talk. The black friends I have all aspire to do better, in business or social services or private sector, they all strive to improve themselves. And I’m not quite sure that I’d want to be around people where if one is doing better than the rest, would have to be shot down” (John, Afro-Caribbean, Applications Manager, CSB, 34)

John’s quote indicates that he relates the “selling out” argument to class as much as ethnicity. He discussed situations where some of his working class social circle viewed him as “selling out” when he moved into management, which was perceived by them as a middle class job. John also discussed the argument of selling out with relation to ethnicity but he believed that he does not have to deal with these issues within his network of black friends, as they are all ambitious and striving to succeed in their careers, rather than trying to keep each other down.

There was a contrasting view on the “acting white” and “selling out” arguments from some of the ethnic minority participants. Salimah, Elizabeth and Helen, three ethnic minority women working in CSB, and Nasim, the manager in CSB, believed that these statements were ‘valid’ for some ethnic minorities. They argued that people from their community have ‘sold out’ and they viewed them as traitors:

“You get that in the [Muslim] community a lot. It’s the nature of people. That you’ve sold out your religion for your career. A lot of people sold their family for their career. I agree 100% with that statement. I can name hundreds of people in the community that have done that” (Nasim, Pakistani, Provisions Manager, CSA Store, 30)

This section has focused on the perceptions of ethnic minority women and men with regard to their cultural and religious identity and whether they felt they had to downplay part of that identity in order to succeed in white dominated organisations. Some of the participants argued that they had to sacrifice part of their culture or religion, but others believed that if they do they would be “selling out” their communities and their traditions.

6.3.3 Internalising negative attitudes

An inter-related argument to the previous section, was presented by some of the ethnic minority participants, who believed that the fact that ethnic minorities feel they have to downplay their cultural or religious identity and also, the fact that they deal with stereotypes on an everyday basis, may cause them to internalise negative attitudes and reduce their self-confidence.

Saira discussed the effects of racial stereotypes on ethnic minorities:

“Whites have these connotations and stereotypes [about ethnic minorities] and it’s really negative... and those stereotypes about being inferior, I think, get ingrained in us, [in] the kids as well, you get these stereotypes from the media, everywhere ... and I think in the long term this is why as you get older, you’ve already got these stereotypes ingrained in you” (Saira, Pakistani, Education Welfare Officer, 35)

A related statement was made by Helen, regarding Afro-Caribbean people, when she was discussing the lack of opportunities and progression for her community:

“I don’t know whether black people don’t push themselves forward, I don’t know if that’s the issue, because they know they are going to get knocked back or whether they are not encouraged to be made to feel the self-worth” (Helen, Afro-Caribbean, House Leader, CSB, 51)

Denise argued that there is a two-fold reason for ethnic minority women not progressing as much. She argued that organisations do not give enough

opportunities to ethnic minorities as a whole but also, discrimination and disadvantage through the years, had an effect on ethnic minorities' confidence:

"... if you are told all the time you can't do it, you feel you can't do it. Or you feel you have to prove yourself that you can do something ten times better than everyone else before you get paid for doing it. A lot of people will apply for the job and will know a quarter of it and learn a lot on the job. We, ethnic minorities feel that we need to do exceptionally well to even get the job" (Denise, Afro-Caribbean, Diversity Manager, CSB, 48)

Denise believed that ethnic minorities internalise the oppression and find it difficult to promote themselves. As a consequence of this, she felt that an ethnic minority worker would often not apply for a job if she or he did not feel completely confident that they can handle every aspect of it perfectly.

It was argued during the interviews, that a reason for the low self-confidence ethnic minority women may experience, is the lack of positive role models and mentors. Saira discussed her experiences within her profession:

"...for me, it's like, because there are so few ethnic minority role models in my type of work, it doesn't really give me a push to go for [...] [I feel] I wouldn't have those support mechanisms if I was in management, as an ethnic minority woman [...] I think assertiveness, confidence building, mentoring on [what to do] when you are put in [an awkward position] ... we don't have any role models" (Saira, Pakistani, Education Welfare Officer, 35)

Samina also discussed that she had to push herself career wise and not succumb to low self-confidence but this was "extra hard" as:

"Within [my] family, there isn't any female role model. I see cousins who are well established, as accountants and things but because they are males ... so I can't associate with them in a certain degree [frowns]" (Samina, Pakistani, Project worker in voluntary sector, 30)

Yasmin discussed in broader terms the lack of role models for young Asian women and this resulting in lack of confidence and ambition. After discussing her views on the two groups of Pakistani people, Yasmin argued that there are issues of confidence for "typical" Asian women:

“Typically, Asian women struggle with confidence I think, because they are never brought up thinking of a career [...] I think it’s about knowing how it works ... I think it’s about confidence ... learning the norms. [pause] A lot of Asian girls are not allowed to play after school and we take away all the social skills from Asian women and I think that when they grow up that’s an issue because they don’t know how to interact. Because they haven’t been to town with their friends shopping or to the movies or to a club so they are lacking socially in comparison to their white counterparts. [...] It’s cultural. I do think it’s wrong, but that’s Asian families, penalising their children by wanting them to be successful but not expecting them to interact in society” (Yasmin, Pakistani, Training advisor, CSA HO, 28)

Mary, who was a mentor for young ethnic minorities in her organisation, also discussed the fact that there is a lack of role models because there are limited numbers of ethnic minority people in higher positions in the NHS:

“[People] say to me ‘oh, I don’t think I would go any further because it’s no point, you won’t get there anyway’, you know that kind of thing! That you won’t get there anyway, it’s pointless trying. So, if you don’t see many people at that level [...] you get that feeling anyway that you won’t get there. But if you have one or two, or three or four role models, and then you could start aspiring to be...” (Mary, Afro-Caribbean, Training and Development Advisor for Equal Opportunities in the Health Service, 52)

6.3.4 Summary

Section 6.3 explored the conflicting responsibilities and demands ethnic minority women have to satisfy in order to be deemed successful as career women, as family women and within their community. Some of the participants argued that they feel they are “living in two worlds” and that they believed that they had to downplay their cultural or religious identity to fit in organisations. The tensions they faced with regard to how they were perceived by their own community and how they believed they may have internalised negative attitudes with detrimental effects on their ambition and determination were also presented.

The next two sections shift the discussion to this ambition and determination and focus more on the agency of ethnic minority women, with regard to career strategies, high confidence and their perceptions of success.

6.4 Career strategies and confidence

The majority of ethnic minority women participants, as well as the majority of the other three groups interviewed, believed that having a strategy and clear plans for their career is very important. At the same time, however, only eight of the twenty six ethnic minority women stated that they have developed a clear career plan. The other eighteen minority female participants argued that they did not have a clear strategy or goals and some of these women contended that there was lack of support or encouragement with regard to their career from their organisations or their families. Some of the ethnic minority, and some of the white, women argued that serendipity was a factor and “things have just fallen into place” for them and therefore, they did not believe they were disadvantaged by not having a strategy.

Yasmin, who had argued that she had always has clear career plans, presented her views on the importance of having a strategy:

“I think it’s very easy to lose focus if you don’t know where you are heading and I know people who stay in positions longer than they plan to because they don’t know what to do next. I would get frustrated, to me it’s really important to know where I want to be” (Yasmin, Pakistani, Training advisor, CSA HO, 28)

Pamela, working in the same role as Yasmin, in CSA, offered her own perspective on goals and strategies:

“I think it’s very important [to have a strategy] and I think that’s one of my weaknesses. Things have fallen into place for me and opportunities have appeared rather than me looking for them. Because I was asked to come down to [CSA Head Office], so I was fortunate. I think I’ve been quite complacent and enjoying what I’ve been doing. [pause] But I think you should be able to have goals and force myself to move to an area where I’m learning” (Pamela, White, Training Advisor, CSA HO, 27)

Janet, a white woman, argued that women as a group had different priorities than men, especially when she was younger:

“No, definitely not! [did not have goals]. I think it had to do more with family need. We went where our husbands went and we addressed their needs first. So, no I don't think I had clear goals. I think in the last few years, I was more focused [...] Women didn't have a structure to their life, it was the husbands' needs first”
(Janet, White, Health Visitor, CSB, 60)

She argued that, for women, the emphasis was on taking care of their families and supporting their husband's careers rather than developing or even seeking their own. She believed that this was the same for all women, regardless of ethnicity and 'race', but she contended that “things are now changing”.

From the eight ethnic minority women who had developed a strategy, Mary and Anna, suggested that part of their strategy to fit in and succeed in their jobs was their dressing and self-presentation:

“If you wear trousers, I always wear trousers, you were only making it right for your own back ... if there's some kind of conformity or accepting that will get you through the doors easier, that you are making yourself similar ... So in some way it's a strategy, it's one of the strategies for getting on [...] it's a strategy to get from a to b...that I don't say 'right, I'm going to come in with my dreadlocks'”
(Mary, Afro-Caribbean, Training and Development Advisor for Equal Opportunities in the Health Service, 52)

Mary believed that by only wearing trousers at work and therefore downplaying her femininity by not wearing skirts or dresses, she would appear more 'acceptable' and she would have more confidence in herself because she would be perceived as more capable. She also mentioned how she downplays her ethnic roots, by not coming in “with my dreadlocks”. This is again is form of strategy for 'fitting in', in order to get her “from a to b”.

Ethnic minority women therefore, may have to deal with additional issues to those dealt with by white women, when they have to adopt a more masculine form of dressing and more generally a more 'masculinised' form of behaviour as well as appearing more 'white', or more westernised. Mary's statement that she is only 'making it right for her own back' indicates that she feels that she is conforming to this standard of not appearing 'too feminine' but in a way, she might feel that she

does not help in breaking, and she could even be reinforcing, the stereotypes and beliefs that a woman cannot be assertive, intelligent and successful if she is 'too feminine' or 'too made up'.

Anna also provided her own reasoning in relation to how one might dress to appear confident and successful in an organisational setting, regardless of whether or not one's culture or community would have expectations of them to dress in ethnic or religious clothes:

"... I'm not saying I'm completely westernised but I do know that my house isn't decorated in the West Indian way, ... my wardrobe is certainly as eurocentric as the rest of them. I want suits that look good [smiles] ... For me [it] is not the white orientation, it is the currency, what works" (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

Anna stated that her house is not decorated in the 'West Indian way'. It is not possible to infer the reasons for this, but one explanation may be that Anna has been fully assimilated in the white English culture since her parents moved from Barbados when she was a child. She does seem to imply that she sees her actions as a strategy, when she argues that this is "the currency, what works" and it could be argued that her "eurocentric" dressing and westernised behaviour are means to help her fit in and be accepted easier in large civil service organisation.

Anna went on to argue that being determined and believing in herself was crucial for her career progression. She mentioned an example to illustrate how confidence was important when she found herself in a challenging situation:

"I had sufficient experience from my clinical background and my managerial background, [so] this didn't seem as a threat to me. I had [the] information and I was sufficiently socially and professionally groomed and I knew I could pick this up and apply the wisdom [smiling]" (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

Five of the eight female minority participants who had a career strategy, argued that having role models and mentors were crucial determinants to their success and self-

confidence. Anna and Salma, discussing the importance of role models for their career, argued:

“My managers, that were politically influential... I used [as] role models. What’s their manners, what’s their strengths? So I would try and identify strengths and you look at what really makes you anxious and what could you not do if you are called upon to do [...] I looked at people [to learn] what are the best techniques [and] that helps to inform my practice” (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

“Role models are important. They let you believe in a living thing, that it is possible to do it. [...] It’s important to see Asian people that make it... ethnicity is a factor” (Salma, Pakistani, Retail Commercial Assistant, CSA HO, 28)

Mary discussed her views on mentoring and how it links to success:

“I think it’s important not to have just one mentor. You can have several people you can talk to [...] The role [of a mentor] is to open doors, advise you, give advice, to let you into their circles of colleagues, to direct you, to help you to run, to put you in a position where you could be better, to give you those opportunities to do it, and not to carry you, certainly not carry you” (Mary, Afro-Caribbean, Training and Development Advisor for Equal Opportunities in the Health Service, 52)

She believed that a mentor should be seen as a support mechanism, as helping one move forward and develop as an individual but should not “carry you”. She also argued that developing a sound career strategy involves having more than one mentor, her argument for this being, that different mentors can be supportive in different manners, for example one mentor may have the power to instrumentally aid one’s careers by helping one penetrate “their circle of colleagues”, whereas another mentor may be necessary for the emotional support and building of one’s self confidence. Identifying mentors and role models was seen by these women as a strategy to help them learn the right behaviours, penetrate powerful and influential work networks and increase their self-confidence which was seen as paramount for career success.

The agency and determination of ethnic minority women was cited as important when confronted with stereotypes and discrimination. A strategy developed by

some ethnic minority women in order to deal with, and hopefully break, these stereotypes, was to appear very confident and assertive:

“In a meeting, their first impression may have been that I’m the secretary...not realising...that, I was a key player in that meeting...but from the moment I opened my mouth they’d switch off to the fact I was Asian. By the end of the meeting, it was me doing all the talking and negotiation” (Samina, Pakistani, Project worker in voluntary sector, 30)

“...you put them right through your knowledge, and then you watch with inner amusement as the respect hat is turned on” (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

Samina and Anna argued that their expertise and skills should win people over and by gaining respect on the knowledge domain, stereotypical perceptions stemming on the women’s gender and ethnicity would be eliminated. An additional strategy to deal with sexual and racial stereotypes was developed by Anna:

“There are times when I’m the only woman at the table, there are times when I’m the only black person at the table ... often! And the thing about gender is not claim to the gender, not to play the gender card and do the gender thing ... I don’t pour them coffee, it’s not my job, I don’t go eyes fluttering, I’m not in bed! [laughs] [...] I don’t use unnecessarily feminist currency to achieve [...] and I don’t play the weaker, I don’t play the weaker help me syndrome to make someone else feel able and bigger and better, I don’t do that. I play the equity game” (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59).

Anna argued that it is very important for ethnic minority women not to allow themselves to fall into the ‘expected roles’ but to portray themselves and act as equals in the organisational setting.

An inter-related issue introduced by some of the ethnic minority women participants was their arguments that they are “not making much” of their ethnicity or gender and that they believe this is beneficial to how they are perceived in their organisations:

“I don’t [think my gender is important]. I think I’m probably the other way, I probably underestimate the fact that I’m a woman. I don’t think anything of it. I don’t act like a man, but it’s not an issue. Maybe I’m being naïve there... but

maybe it helps. The fact that I don't make a big deal of the fact I'm ethnic minority or a woman and just get on with the job... and the less of a deal I make it, the less people see me as that, an ethnic minority woman. Because they see me as an individual" (Yasmin, Pakistani, Training advisor, CSA HO, 28)

Yasmin believed that by not placing emphasis on her gender and ethnicity, people only see her as a capable person for the job. She contended that if one sees their ethnicity or gender as the focal point of their lives, their confidence may reduce and they are 'extracting something' from their skills and abilities.

Jane, argued that the legal profession is male oriented and the law firm where she is employed consists predominantly of white male lawyers. In contrast to her previous arguments above on the effects of her gender and 'race', however, she argued here:

"I never thought of myself as being a black woman in an all white firm ... although I am. It's never been an issue for me, I don't wake up in the morning and that's the first thing I think about! I just get on and do my job. I don't know [what it would mean] if you did wake up and think that every morning [pause] that's lack of confidence really" (Jane, Afro-Caribbean, Solicitor, 34)

Anna and Mary also argued that they do not "make much" of their "blackness". Anna's quote is illustrative of their arguments:

"I have the view that blackness has nothing to do with what I do. I'm black but that's not the only think I am! I wouldn't deny that the black thing is not a barrier [sic] [shakes her head]. However, I have a way of dealing with barriers, I don't see it as barriers, I see it as an alternative way to approach what I want" (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

Mahesh, an Asian male consultant in CSB, also discussed his ethnicity as a factor in his everyday work life:

*"...generally, I'm not aware of my ethnicity, **generally** [original emphasis]. If I'm in the clinic or sitting here with you or in a meeting" (Mahesh, Indian, Consultant Psychiatrist, CSB, 52)*

Nevertheless, immediately after this statement, he went on to argue:

“ ...But you become aware of it, when the issues come up. So in a meeting, for example, you think sometimes, ‘hmm, I’m the only black person here, where’s the rest of them?!’ it does happen from time to time, so yes the awareness comes in specific issues” (Mahesh, Indian, Consultant Psychiatrist, CSB, 52)

Mahesh believed that it is unrealistic to assume or behave as though one’s ethnicity is never a factor, because “the issues come up”. He discussed this in relation to colour blindness:

“Whether it’s [not placing emphasis on ethnicity] a good thing or not... I don’t know. It’s the whole business about colour blindness. People say ‘oh, I don’t consider people’s colour, everyone is treated the same’. Maybe it’s not such a good thing to be colour blind, maybe we need to be aware that people are of different colour, or different creed, different culture, and maybe their needs are a little bit different. If you are colour blind you won’t see that. So I don’t think that me saying that I don’t see my ethnicity as an issue is a good thing. But I don’t say ‘oh, I want to do something but maybe I shouldn’t because my ethnicity could hold me down’ ... even if I’m aware it’s an issue. It doesn’t hinder me in that way” (Mahesh, Indian, Consultant Psychiatrist, CSB, 52)

Mahesh therefore believed that colour blindness can hinder understanding and appreciation of different cultural needs, but at the same time, he did not believe that him being aware of his ethnicity can have an effect on his confidence and how far he is pushing himself.

This section has predominantly engaged with the agency dimension of the theoretical framework, where participants’ career strategies and plans were explored. The next section also focuses on the agency of participants, addressing their perceptions of success.

6.5 Perceptions of career success

Career success may be perceived in a number of different ways. The ‘traditional’ view of success is linked to vertical progression and financial rewards, but as stated in Chapter 1, a pre-determined definition of success is not useful for this study, since the emphasis is placed on the participants’ perceptions. Within this study, therefore, all participants were asked to discuss their own perception of success and a number of very diverse views were presented.

Anna perceived career success in much broader terms than the 'traditional' notion:

"Career success has something to do with confidence, confidence that you bring with you from your background, how your parents helped you to perceive yourself. It also has something to do with your knowledge basis and your value systems. It has to do with your purpose and your goals and it has something to do with your personal integrity" (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

She therefore, saw success more linked to one's family background and to the confidence and self-belief instilled from parents. Anna also believed that success is equated to one's values and integrity, rather than material rewards.

Success was also perceived as directly linked to community and family expectations and responsibilities:

"The thing is, the Asian community measures success in different ways ... me being single, they wouldn't see you as being successful, they would think she's not married, that's the first thing that would cross their minds... not the fact that I got a job and career. So to certain people, yes I've got a good job, but at the end of the day, they would still say 'well, she should be married'" (Saira, Pakistani woman, Education Welfare Officer, 35)

Saira, discussing community expectations, argued that although she sees herself as career oriented, the value of success is measured in different ways within the Asian community, where the emphasis is placed on being married and having a family. In some respects therefore, Saira argued, she may be viewed as a failure within her community, since she has not fulfilled her 'primary' role.

Ethnic minority and white women participants with children, perceived success as consisting of a diverse number of factors, with the balancing of work and family being a crucial one:

"I see success in getting where I am in my career, not the money. Money is the advantage. But being successful is seeing that I've gone far in my career, I brought up two beautiful kids and because they see me as a career woman, they might go

that way [in terms of their own work]" (Dorothy, Afro-Caribbean, Nurse Grade E, CSB, 35)

"I perceive it [success] in terms of how satisfied you are with what you are doing. And you feel you put forward your potential. I'm satisfied.. I know I could have done more [if did not have family responsibilities], but that's not causing me a problem" (Laura, White, Child Protection Health Visitor, CSB, 41)

Whether one has achieved their goals and personal satisfaction were also seen as important aspects of career success:

"I think success is about achieving one's own goals and objectives and achieving the vision one has for themselves. Five years ago I said that I want to be in the position [I am in]. I am in a community practising what I want to be doing and in a service which to me, it's provided some of the solutions, an antidote to the disillusionment I felt when I became a qualified nurse. I've developed different ways of working with people with different issues. ... I feel I'm part of ... the established system" (Sarrah, Pakistani, Community Mental Health Nurse, CSB, 27)

Perceptions of success were also discussed with ethnic minority and white men and again a diverse range of views were produced. The following quotes are illustrative of the extent of the male perceptions:

"...I don't know.. I suppose I got to that stage now ... if you asked that [his perception of success] a year ago, two years ago, [the answer] would be that you are moving upwards in an organisation and earning more money than before.. I'm coming up with the viewpoint now that [the answer is] how happy are you in the job, and how stress-free is your job? Would you be prepared to take a few thousands pay cut if you've found a more stress-free job, where you would have a bit more freedom? [pause] I'm not quite sure at the moment..." (John, Afro-Caribbean, Applications Manager, CSB, 34)

"Success is what I get from the job, helping the people, what I've achieved. That I know that I've delivered what I'm expected to, and that people respect me" (Richard, African, Senior Staff Nurse, CSB, 54)

"I have achieved something. I have qualifications and I've raised a family and bought a house. So I have status and security, I have respect from my family, from having supported them and provided them with an education and a home. I have a decent home so we are secure for the future" (Daniel, White, Independent Reviewing Officer, CSB, 50)

In this section of the chapter, the participants' perceptions of success were presented. As argued above, it was deemed as important to let participants express their own views and perceptions on career and success, and consequently assess their own experiences within these perceptions. A diversity of views emerged, encompassing more 'traditional' views of success, but generally viewing success as a broader concept, including work and family balance, achieving one's own goals, being satisfied with one's job and gaining respect from colleagues.

6.6 Summary

This chapter focused on the perceived effects of gender, 'race'/ethnicity, religion and culture on ethnic minority women's career experiences and opportunities. The perceptions of ethnic minority men, white women and men were incorporated, where appropriate, to place career experiences in the broader organisational context.

Section 6.2 presented predominantly ethnic minority women's experiences of dealing with stereotypes in their organisations. These stereotypes typically stemmed from the interaction of gender, 'race' and ethnicity, but as the empirical data indicated, this situation, was accentuated by perceptions of culture or religion. A number of the ethnic minority participants believed that they had to 'fit in' the dominant white organisational culture by downplaying their cultural, ethnic or religious identity, often exhibited through clothing and hairstyles. They believed they had to "tone down" aspects of their appearance in order to be accepted in white organisations.

This situation created a great amount of tension for the ethnic minority women, who wanted to be part of their ethnic community and maintain their cultural or religious identity, but at the same time, wanted to succeed in white dominated organisations. Within Section 6.3, a number of these participants used the term "living in two worlds" to describe their bi-cultural existence in their organisations and in their private life with their family and community. There were some

similarities in the perceptions of ethnic minority and white women with regard to balancing domestic and child care responsibilities and careers, and hence it can be argued that white women are also living in two worlds. Ethnic minority women, however, often have to deal with additional cultural or religious responsibilities, which may create a greater distance between their work and private worlds.

Empirical data has indicated that the bi-cultural stress ethnic minority women participants experience, may often be accentuated by the fact that their community may view them as “acting white” or “selling out”, if they attempt to downplay their ethnic or cultural identity in order to fit into the dominant white organisational culture. It seems therefore, that ethnic minority women who want to ascribe to their culture and be part of their social group community, may find themselves in a very difficult position when it comes to their dressing and general self-presentation. If they try to conform to their organisation’s norms and behaviour they may be labelled as traitors - or feel like traitors themselves- by their community. If on the other hand, they ascribe to their cultural expectations and norms, their organisations may label them as submissive and non-career oriented. At the same time, if ethnic minority women feel they have to downplay their cultural or religious identity to be successful, this may result in the internalisation of the negative perceptions they face and in a reduction of their confidence, with detrimental effects on their determination and ambition.

As Sections 6.4 and 6.5 analysed however, it is pertinent to state that the agency of ethnic minority women, and of the other participants, was central to their experiences with regard to their career but also personal life. Section 6.4 presented the participants’ views on the importance of career strategies and confidence. The majority of the ethnic minority women argued that they did not have clear career plans, with some arguing that they realise however that strategies are crucial to their career development. Having and demonstrating confidence in one’s knowledge and expertise was also deemed very important by some ethnic minority women participants, who believed they had to break racial or gender stereotypes in

their organisations. Section 6.5 addressed the participants' own views and perceptions of their success. As indicated, success was perceived in a great diversity of ways, encompassing traditional views of status and financial rewards, but often seen as broader, including the maintenance of one's values and integrity, gaining respect from colleagues, and balancing work and family demands and responsibilities. The participants' own perceptions and hence, their agency in assessing their success is therefore central to any discussion of career experiences and opportunities.

The thesis now moves on to Chapter 7, the final empirical chapter, where participants' perceptions of their organisations' policies and practices are presented and analysed.

CHAPTER 7

Organisational Support and Equality Policies and Strategies

7.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is placed primarily on the perceptions of ethnic minority women on their organisations' equality policies and initiatives and their views on the level of organisational support for their career development and advancement. As with Chapter 6, the views of ethnic minority men, white men and women are incorporated in this chapter, with the aim of presenting their perceptions of organisational support and policies, but also their views on diversity initiatives for increasing ethnic minority representation.

Chapter 7 engages primarily within the organisational structure dimension of the theoretical framework, where the policies and practices are discussed, and with the culture dimension, with regard to the informal organisational culture. In effect, it examines similar concerns as Chapter 5, albeit this time from employees' viewpoints. It also addresses broader perceptions and concerns on organisational policies and practices of employees in CSA and CSB, and of the 'independent group' of ethnic minority men and ethnic minority women.

A central issue stemming from the interviews was ethnic minority women's perceptions of their employing organisations in terms of effective equality and diversity policies and initiatives and the extent of support they received for their career development and progression. In particular, the effectiveness of EO and diversity policies were discussed in terms of recruitment, training and development, and progression. Whether the participants' organisation provided any positive action initiatives which would have an impact on ethnic minority women, such as exclusive training or targets for their recruitment and progression, was also analysed as well as the difficulties ethnic minority women faced in penetrating influential networks. The importance placed by participants on more personal or individual support from line managers and mentors was also analysed. These issues

were discussed, to a greater or lesser extent with ethnic minority men, white men and white women, but with different emphases depending on whether they were expressing views on their personal career experiences or whether they were discussing their perceptions of other social groups' opportunities and experiences.

7.2 Organisational career support and opportunities

The existence of an organisational support structure was seen as a critical factor, by all ethnic minority women, for their career opportunities and advancement. Three ethnic minority women stated that their organisation has provided support for their careers, in terms of training, career consultation and guidance and supportive managers. However, the remaining twenty three female ethnic minority participants, felt that this support is not present and that they have to manage and take responsibility for their own career, commonly without guidance or encouragement from their employers. They believed that it is important for individuals to be proactive in relation to their career but that this should go hand-in-hand with organisational support.

The following three quotes are representative of these views:

“First you need the ability to get to [a higher] level, to want to move on, but also your employers must make the facilities available, to give you [the] opportunity to move on... it's a two way thing, you are actually developing yourself with the assistance of the organisation. It has to be a win-win scenario, that your organisation develops you and that they see it as a way of developing themselves and the organisation” (Mary, Afro-Caribbean, Training and Development Advisor for Equal Opportunities in the Health Service, 52)

“I have to be very critical of the organisation... I don't think I had support in terms of career development” (Emma, Afro-Caribbean, Equality action team member in voluntary organisation, 39)

“I place the responsibility for my career on myself... [but] I think the role of the organisation is [pause] I guess supporting me in my career, if I want to do courses or support me financially [...] I don't think it's fair [at present]. I think they should ensure that they have structures in place where individuals have [the] opportunity to move through” (Sarrah, Pakistani, Community mental health nurse, CSB, 27)

When asked whether her organisation has offered any advice, guidance or consultation with regard to her career and organisational experiences, Salimah's response sharply illustrated her feelings:

"You've spent more time with me, than this organisation ever has!" (Salimah, Pakistani, Liaison Officer, CSB, 32)

Joanne, a white woman, who was also interviewed in her role as a manager in CSA, discussed her views on opportunities and support in her organisation:

"If you want support you have to go find it. It isn't automatically available [...] I think opportunities are provided equally. I think where we fail is encouraging people who may have disadvantages to take the opportunity [...] We provide the same opportunity but we don't encourage equally [...] I think subconsciously we have the old boys school type regime" (Joanne, White, Customer Service Manager, CSA Store, 44)

Joanne believed that there are opportunities in CSA but had the same view as the majority of the ethnic minority women participants, in that she had to take responsibility for her own career. With regard to her views on the 'old boys regime', clear links are evident between her views and other managers' perceptions, that informal networks are powerful and can affect opportunities for groups who do not fall in the 'white male' category. In addition, her argument that CSA does not encourage ethnic minority groups to apply or push themselves, also corresponds to discussions in Chapter 5, with managers in both CSA and CSB, suggesting that more efforts are needed for the organisations to promote themselves as open and in favour of diversity in order to attract more candidates from ethnic minority communities.

A white woman's view on organisational culture and opportunities echoed the perceptions of a number of staff across gender and 'race':

"I think there are clear opportunities [in CSA], they are well documented but also quite often some of these opportunities are driven by the personalities in the organisation" (Pamela, White, Training Advisor, CSA HO, 27)

Like Pamela, other staff believed that personality and ‘fitting in’ are very important for one’s career opportunities. At the same time, however, six out of the eight white women and three out of the six white men interviewed believed that racism is not present in their organisation and argued that ethnicity is not a factor that can affect one’s opportunities.

Jenny and Pamela, the two white women interviewed in CSA Head Office argued that what is important in retail is to have a ‘vibrant, welcoming personality’ and that ability, not gender or ‘race’ is the main factor for one’s opportunities.

Balvinder, who discussed his views on ‘fitting in’ in Chapter 6, contradicted this ‘theory of personality’ when discussing his lack of opportunities for further advancement:

“There’s a [ethnic minority] colleague of mine here who ... I would say that I’m probably more reserved and he’s more outgoing and we always joke and say ‘that one of us would have made it by now’ ... if it was personality driven [with hint of disappointed smile]” (Balvinder, Indian, Process Improvement Manager, CSA HO, 48)

This quote is a sharp illustration of the fact that some ethnic minorities believe that there is a ‘race’/ ethnicity bias with regard to opportunities in their organisations. Twenty one of the twenty six female ethnic minority participants cited their ‘race’ and gender as possible factors which could influence the form and extent of organisational support they receive. Although they felt it was very hard to prove, they argued that stereotypes and discrimination could hinder their career opportunities and advancement. Some of the ethnic minority women argued that they felt that they had to try much harder than men and non-minorities to get ahead since their organisations were generally insensitive to their needs and the issues they face:

“... it’s a question of... if I had tried harder because I’m a woman and I’m an ethnic minority... I think the answer is yes... I’ve got two sons, but if I had a daughter, I would expect my daughter to be as equipped to handle life as much as

my sons, if not more. You end up being a woman first of all... and she's going to have more battles and ceilings to smash than perhaps my sons" (Samina, Pakistani, Project worker in voluntary organisation, 30)

"It's [her gender] is an added pressure. Men are progressing faster... Some men came in after me and progressed much faster. And I felt that they weren't working as hard as me. But they were seen in a different light by other people. My mistakes would be much more important than theirs' would" (Gurjit, Asian, Senior Nurse Manager, CSB, 46)

Gurjit believed that there is a gender division with regard to opportunities and that men as a group have more opportunities than, and are treated more favourably to, women. Both Samina and Gurjit believed that they have to try harder as ethnic minority women to succeed. However, Mahesh, whose views on the importance of ethnicity and colour blindness were discussed in Chapter 6, believed that ethnic minority men face racism which puts them in a very distinct category from white men:

"I would say generally that the NHS does give you the opportunities [but] you have to fight for it. [pause] But I would say that as a black person, I think you have to fight a little bit harder. My own experience has been that you have to try extra hard in order to progress. You have to make yourself obvious." (Mahesh, Indian, Consultant Psychiatrist, CSB, 52)

Mahesh, who moved from Kenya to England to train as a psychiatrist, argued that he has never experienced direct racism. His tone and body language suggested however, that he felt that discrimination is present but in a subtle manner which is difficult to prove, as his words illustrate:

"I wouldn't say that during my training and development in this country, that I've encountered any obvious discrimination. What I would say is that I had to work harder. If you infer that there is some kind of indirect or covert discrimination, fine [with a hint of an enigmatic, but sad, smile]" (Mahesh, Indian, Consultant Psychiatrist, CSB, 52)

Richard, an African man also working in CSB, believed that his 'race' plays a fundamental factor on how he is perceived and on what opportunities are 'reachable' to him:

“People see you in the typecast way, they see you and they put you in a place, whether you are better than them or not. [...] If someone comes to the ward and they see me as a black person, although I’m the boss, people think they are better than you [...] As a black person you got to be on your toes all the time, it’s so stressful. You can’t make mistakes, [you have to] work extra hard. People are watching you all the time [...] it’s a lot of pressure [seemed distressed]” (Richard, African, Senior Staff Nurse, CSB, 54)

In his organisation, Richard argued, white people view ethnic minorities in stereotypical ways, placing them in ‘boxes’ which determine how they would behave. In a similar manner to Gurjit above, he believed his mistakes would be more obvious, and he felt he always has to be alert and avoid taking any actions which could be used against him. He found that his everyday work is much more stressful as an ethnic minority man than it would have been if was merely facing job related stress.

For the twenty one ethnic minority women participants, racism and harassment are everyday elements of their working lives. They believed that these stemmed from both their ‘race’ and gender:

“There is discrimination [in CSB]... gender and race, very much so. If your colour is brown you are automatically worse off. It’s part of society” (Rekha, Indian, Health Visitor and Community Practice Teacher, CSB, 49)

“When you are an ethnic minority you always have to watch your back. I learned this since I was that high [indicated with hand] in school. Because of your colour you are bullied more, but even at work you do get bullied in a way but discretely. So if people tell you there is no racism in the Trust they are lying! Because there is! [in angry, frustrated tone]” (Salimah, Pakistani, Liaison Officer, CSB, 32)

Salimah, experienced racism as a girl in her school but she believed that racism is still present in her employing organisation, which however, is often more covert and difficult to prove. She seemed to be very frustrated and disillusioned with CSB, arguing that opportunities are very limited for ethnic minorities and that there is lack of appreciation and respect from management.

Anna, an Afro-Caribbean senior officer in the Health Service, whose views were presented in Chapter 6, argued that the culture of organisations is typically biased, male oriented and not open to diversity and she believed that this description applied to her employing organisation:

“... like every element of Civil Service, it has its own norms, values and status ... certainly they weren't in the habit of seeing a black person in a senior position. ... the Civil Service has got its norms ... it's entrenched in its rights, in its accents, its colour and its status” (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

Anna also discussed the presence of racism and stereotypes in organisations:

“... they don't want when they have climbed at the top of their hill, they don't want to look across at the other hill and see a black person sitting there, do they? They have positions for black people, at a table, she or he can serve tea, but sit next to me and discuss the same issues? Come again! [in cynical voice]” (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

She argued that white people often do not see ethnic minorities at an equal level and made a similar argument to Richard's above, that through their own stereotypes, they place them in specific positions or roles with a negative effect on their promotion opportunities. A related statement from Anna was her perceptions of how white people deal with the label 'racist':

“They don't want to be labelled racist, it's the one thing that no white man wants or white woman, it's very ... it sends out a message they can't unpick and they will avoid the title of racist, they never want to be regarded as a racist, ...they mask it in various ways ... There is indirect racism, institutional racism, professional racism, personal ... it comes under different labels. But nobody wants to be targeted as a racist” (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

As discussed above, there was a distinct lack of awareness of ethnic minority issues and of racism by the majority of white participants, who did not believe that one's opportunities could be affected by their ethnicity.

Stewart, a white male in CSB, seemed uncomfortable when discussing issues around 'race' and ethnicity, and there was a distinct impression that he did not want to say the wrong thing. He said that he does not believe CSB is discriminatory and then he, very subtly, introduced a discussion on the cultural issues of ethnic minorities, but it seemed like he stopped himself:

"I would have to say that in terms of the organisation promoting itself, it's approachable and friendly. Culturally I guess [long pause] I don't know... I can't give you an answer...I don't know... I just don't know" (Stewart, White, Co-ordinator for special care, CSB, 32)

It is difficult to infer anything concrete from Stewart's behaviour but it seemed that he believed that cultural expectations from ethnic minorities' communities were a central factor in their career. He kept emphasising ability when discussing issues on 'race', arguing that if one has the ability they would progress. This is obviously 'ideal' equal opportunities, but during the interview, the manner in which he was talking indicated that he may believe that ethnic minorities do not have the ability or commitment to progress. When probed on his views on why ethnic minorities do not occupy senior positions in CSB, he responded by saying he does not know, but immediately he linked it to ability and stated that "if one has the abilities, one would progress". It may have been a general point, but it seemed to me that he had much stronger views than he presented on the issues of ethnic minorities. At the end of the interview, Stewart asked for some more details about this research and after some information was provided in terms of the purpose of the research and my interests in it, he said as he was leaving:

"If you have the ability and are committed, you'll make it" (Stewart, White, Co-ordinator for special care, CSB, 32)

7.3 Organisational policies: the rhetoric and the reality

7.3.1 Equal opportunity and Diversity policies

The discussion up to this point, indicated that discrimination, harassment and stereotypes are present in organisations, and however indirect, they can have negative effects on ethnic minorities and women. Focusing specifically on ethnic

minority women, the majority of the participants believed that stereotypes and discrimination could hinder their career opportunities and block their advancement. Regardless of the fact that some of these women had better strategies or support to deal with this, they all believed that clear and fair policies on equal opportunities, and specifically on gender and racial discrimination and harassment, were very important, provided they were implemented in practice. The majority of ethnic minority women participants believed that their organisations had well developed and detailed equal opportunity policies, but, to use the words of one participant, that they ‘were just sitting in [sic] the shelves’:

“If an organisation has a policy, I don’t think it’s very important, because [it depends on] whether it’s a policy that’s sat there gathering dust or whether it’s real...Just because you’ve got it, doesn’t mean you do it” (Samina, Pakistani, Project worker in voluntary sector, 30)

The efforts of organisations to promote themselves as equal opportunity employers, claiming full commitment to equality and the effectiveness of EO policies were discussed with the participants:

“I think there is a lot of lip service. They [organisations] haven’t changed at all. I’m sure there are a lot of firms where the only black faces you see are secretaries [frowning]”(Caroline, African, Law firm Partner, 45)

“There’s a lot of hype nowadays about equal opportunities...if it actually happens, it’s a different case” (Helen, Afro-Caribbean, House Leader, CSB, 51)

“I think in theory, because all the policies are in place, one would think that [the organisational culture] it’s beneficial [to ethnic minority women] but I haven’t seen any evidence of some of the ethnic minority women being promoted or being offered the opportunities. ...I think it’s very much left to the individual... [but] it’s harder...I don’t think it’s made easier” (Harpal, Indian, Dentist, CSB, 43)

“I worked in the NHS, for goodness sake! [when asked about Equal Opportunities in the NHS] All of those nurses came over [migrated from West Indies], took the same exams as everybody else, how come only one or two of us managed to get all the way to the top? Equal opportunities is not a given [in frustrated tone]” (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

The perceptions of twenty three out of the twenty six ethnic minority women participants, which are illustrated from the quotes above, were that organisational

claims of providing an inclusive organisational culture which values difference and diversity and where there are equal opportunities for advancement, were often disingenuous. Some of the ethnic minority women participants argued that organisations nowadays promote themselves as equal opportunity employers because there are pressures for them to do so. As discussed in Chapter 5, in addition to the 1970s anti-discrimination legislation, the government has recently set targets to increase the representation of ethnic minorities in the Health Service (The Vital Connection, Department of Health, 2000) and private organisations have signed up to diversity initiatives such as Race for Opportunity (1995) and the Leadership Challenge (1997) with the aim of creating a more diverse organisation and publicising their commitment to equality:

“It’s [equality] becoming an alert position [...] It is now against the law, it is now an expectation, it is now a position to be striven for [...] As events ... the government is showing us the way through this, there are various legal elements [...] but is in most cases reactive, where things have gone wrong. So there’s a reactive element to the whole thing. So society is not joining hands in harmony, society is being forced by something that has been so disgraceful and so destructive” (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

“On the whole, the Trust is forced to go that way, so when it comes down to it, there are people who believe in it and others who do it because they have to” (Saeda, Pakistani, Clinical Child Psychologist, CSB, 28)

As the quotes by Anna and Saeda indicate, there has been a reactive element to equal opportunity policies where organisations may adhere to equality but with the aim being to comply with anti-discrimination legislation rather than due to genuine commitment. This seems to add to the disillusionment with the policies where, as seen above, ethnic minority women do not believe that their organisations are genuinely committed to equality.

Some of Salimah’s views were presented earlier and her frustration is again clear when discussing the EO policies in CSB:

“I’ve seen the EO policy because there’s been a lot of hoo ha about it recently [...] but personally [...] I don’t have faith in management anymore to tell you the truth

[...] It's like in the past, they had all these meetings about needs of ethnic minorities, asking you 'how is this, and how is that?'. All the ethnic minority people would come together and they would raise their views and they were these big meetings with the Chief Executive and they would say 'we don't want to sweep anything under the carpet' and everyone would raise their views. But then after some time, you never got anything,, they said there would be a report but nothing... it's a waste of time, what's the point? [...] What is the point of doing it, if you are not going to do anything about it? [frustrated]" (Salimah, Pakistani, Liaison Officer, CSB, 32)

The frustration of staff in both CSA and CSB is exacerbated by the fact that some ethnic minority women staff argued that they are not confident in using the EO policies when they have been discriminated against, because they felt that the organisation would turn against them as trouble makers:

"The policies are good, we have a reputation of having some really well developed policies. The problem is that they are used against people sometimes... people don't feel confident with policies or addressing issues formally because they feel it will be used against them. They are harassed, harassed with the harassment policies! [laughs]" (Denise, Afro-Caribbean, Diversity manager, CSB, 48)

Denise's quote is a good representation of the ethnic minority women's concerns that the EO policies might be used against them; they felt they would be ostracised if they took an issue of concern to management and they would be seen as 'rocking the boat' and creating extra problems for the organisation.

A relevant point was raised by Ravinder, an Indian male, who argued that ethnic minorities may not report they have been discriminated against because they know it is very difficult to prove:

"I think race is important, but you can't prove it, because the Housing Associations like to pretend that they are very EO, that they are politically correct. But if you look at the facts, there are only two black Chief Executives of mainstream Housing Associations and there are hundreds of mainstream associations in England. So something is wrong, but you can't prove there is racism" (Ravinder, Indian, Chief Executive of Housing Association, 37)

Although Ravinder was at a very senior position, he argued that he had to take on high risk projects with low probability of success and hence, low appeal to the majority of people, in order to get the opportunity to progress to Chief Executive level in a mainstream Housing Association. He argued that, on the whole, ethnic minorities progress in ethnic minority but not mainstream Housing Associations, which promote themselves as EO employers but with no instrumental results:

“...in housing they are very clever, not saying it in your face, but their actions, when they appoint somebody, you think that’s odd [...] In housing, they are very scared to say there’s racism. But reality speaks for itself. Until you get people from minority groups in senior positions in mainstream Housing Associations, then I think, it doesn’t matter what they say on paper that they are EO, I think it shows that there is a serious mismatch, the rhetoric doesn’t match the reality, by saying we want to employ black people etc.” (Ravinder, Indian, Chief Executive of Housing Association, 37)

Lack of commitment, lack of implementation of policies and informal discriminatory practices, led some of the ethnic minority participants to state that they believe their organisations use equality strategies as a “PR exercise” rather than being genuinely interested in promoting ethnic minorities. Nasim, a male Pakistani manager in the CSA Store, argued that CSA is promoting itself as an EO employer but he did not believe their claims were valid:

“You see them [ethnic minorities] at shopfloor level but not higher. You’ll only see one or two [at higher level] and then what they [CSA] do is say ‘oh, yes we have these two, they can do it, come along!’ [imitating an enthusiastic voice]. But this is just a PR exercise, I’m sorry but it is a public relations exercise! [angry tone] Think consumerism, think bottom line. What is the bottom line, profit! Let’s get the Asian customers in!” (Nasim, Pakistani, Provisions Manager, CSA Store, 30)

Nasim believed that CSA is only interested in ‘bottom line’ and by promoting themselves as valuing diversity, they can attract ethnic minority customers which would in turn increase profits. He believed however that the treatment of ethnic minority employees has not improved, as they are mainly clustered in lower level positions in CSA. Nasim expressed disappointment about the opportunities given to him in CSA:

“Why thirteen years on, I’m still in the position I am now? Why haven’t I been approached or guided or someone telling me ‘you could get that position’? When other people get ahead, but yet they had blocks but they are going places [...] The blocks are removed for them. If your face fits, you’ll go forward” (Nasim, Pakistani, Provisions Manager, CSA Store, 30)

Nasim contended that the barriers he has been facing are related to his ethnicity and religion. Nasim did not seem confident that he would have opportunities for his career and he seemed defeated. At times, one would feel that Nasim believed the whole world was against him as he was very angry and frustrated. It is hard to infer from this whether his frustration and disappointment were due to the fact that he believed there was racism in CSA or that other issues and circumstances would have affected his views. He argued that he did not identify with retail organisations’ philosophy and consumerism and that he wished he had proceeded with his studies at university level rather than being ‘lured’ into staying within CSA after his secondary education. These views and experiences may have also affected his outlook on life and opportunities and although some can be linked back to his ethnicity, they are probably broader concerns:

“You find yourself being consumed at [CSA]. You are sitting on the table, [CSA], you are talking [CSA], you are sleeping [CSA]. It’s like a brainwash culture with this kind of retail. It’s a big corporate company and consumerism is a bigger force than one individual” (Nasim, Pakistani, Provisions Manager, CSA Store, 30)

It is important to note that the majority of the Asian staff in the CSA Store were in their early 20s and had only been working in the Store for approximately six to seven months at the time of the research. Only Nasim and Narinder, an Indian woman, have been employed in this CSA Store for more than two years¹. Both Nasim and Narinder discussed this and argued that the majority of the Asian staff in the Store do not have the experience at the moment to discuss their career and whether they have opportunities. Nasim argued that the new staff is made to believe that they have numerous opportunities but they are brainwashed into the

¹ The present CSA store opened in 2000. However there was another CSA store in the same city and when the new one opened some of the staff relocated, but the majority of the Asian staff were employed for the new store.

organisational culture. He argued that they have not been in the Store long enough to experience barriers and to have an idea of how their career opportunities would develop. Nevertheless, some of the young Asian staff in the CSA Store, stated that there their job is sometimes affected by racism:

“They [white colleagues at shopfloor] don’t like you because of your colour. They think we are nothing compared to them” (Sharif, Pakistani, Administration Clerk, CSA Store, 22)

It seems therefore that although the majority of the young Asian staff have only been in the Store for a short time, they may still sense and experience racist attitudes from staff and customers. There might be some truth however in Nasim’s statement that they have been in CSA for a limited period and it is difficult for them to know what career opportunities will arise in the future.

Nasim discussed some of his views about Yasmin, the new Store manager, in Chapter 6. When introducing his views on opportunities in CSA, Nasim subtly brought up some of these views again. When he mentioned Yasmin, he did not use any words, but his gesture, which was tying his hands together close to the ground, indicating that Yasmin was helped to climb to the top, was indicative of his views on CSA placing particular people into positions in order to improve their public image.

The issue of ‘slotting people into positions’ was also raised by a large number of the ethnic minority women employees. It was more central in CSB, where a large number of the staff mentioned this as an issue of concern. Some of the female ethnic minority participants believed people were sometimes put in positions without the jobs being advertised properly or that the job advertising and interviews were merely a formality. That caused a great deal of disappointment, resentment and disenchantment by the staff who realised that the EO formal policies and procedures were not adhered to in the case of senior managers:

“We have to go through EO, we have to advertise every post etc., and then you see ... what’s happening is that people move into jobs without them being advertised and of course then you try to justify this to your staff because they say that post wasn’t advertised. One of the board appointments was done this way. [...] People did question it and one of my colleagues tried to address this but she was told ‘don’t rock the boat, just leave it at that’ [...] It feels that we have to do everything, but on the other hand we have top people who don’t do the same”(Harpal, Indian, Dentist, CSB, 43)

“The policies are in place [...] but the policies are actually pointless, if people don’t use them [...] There’s been a system of patronage when I first came into nursing, that if you worked hard in a ward and the Sister liked you, you got the job [...] and you are told that that job is for so and so, so if you apply you knew you wouldn’t get it anyway. [...] So there is a culture ... and unless you change these people’s behaviour and their minds, it wouldn’t change... and remember these people are at the top of the organisation and a lot of people that work for the organisation come from the community and they are racist so you can’t get away from it” (Mary, Afro-Caribbean, Training and Development Advisor for Equal Opportunities in the Health Service, 52)

Concerns on the informal practices of recruitment were raised by all groups regardless of gender and ethnicity. Laura, a white woman, working in CSB, expressed her disappointment on the inconsistencies of the EO policy:

“...unfortunately not always the same rules apply throughout. Certain jobs seem to be earmarked for people and sometimes the EO are quoted when it’s needed and other times people are slotted into positions that have not been advertised [...] I think this comes up a lot” (Laura, White, Child Protection Health Visitor, CSB, 41)

Abdul, who was also working in CSB, discussed the importance of informal networking and his views that ethnic minorities are marginalised from influential circles:

“I think [networking] can work positively in your favour, if you know the right people. If you don’t, you are marginalised” (Abdul, Pakistani, Grade E Nurse, CSB, 44)

Inconsistencies in policies and informal practices were also present in CSA. Jenny, discussed the opportunities given to people in her organisation:

“... it’s something we can do better at. Because every department is so different, there’s probably not a consistent approach. There could be a bit of [pause] people getting senior positions because of who they know so we need to do a lot more on succession planning and development centres” (Jenny, White, Training Advisor, CSA HO, 41)

This section has examined the perceptions of participants on their organisations’ formal policies and informal practices. Twenty two of the twenty six ethnic minority women participants believed that formal EO policies in their organisations are not effective as they are not typically implemented in practice. They believed that informal practices and favouritism were more powerful in determining one’s career opportunities and development. Some of the relevant views of ethnic minority men and white women were also presented and overall the perceptions on the informality of policies were similar to ethnic minority women’s.

7.3.2 Family Friendly Policies

The focus in the section above was explicitly on Equal opportunity and Diversity policies in organisations. Within this, the effectiveness of Family Friendly Policies were also discussed with the majority of the participants, focusing on the effectiveness of these policies in practice. This discussion is in some respects an extension of the perception of participants on work and family balance and family responsibilities presented in Chapter 6. The focus now moves to the role of the organisation in supporting employees’ work performance taking into account their personal and family life through Family Friendly policies.

Twenty four of the twenty six female ethnic minority participants and seven of the eight white women argued that organisational Family Friendly policies were an important support factor for their career. Flexibility was important to the majority of the women, for their own personal life and especially if they had young children. Twelve of the fifteen ethnic minority males and all of the white men acknowledged that Family Friendly policies were important but significantly - as presented in Chapter 6 - when discussing their own personal circumstances, the focus was

placed on their wives or partners; that they took most of the responsibility of domestic issues and child care.

One concern raised mainly from the female participants was that their organisations had well developed Family Friendly policies but they were not adhered to in practice. This could be related to the job demands due to the type of the employing organisation, as was the case in the CSA Store, where staff was required to work shifts. Salma, who was working in the CSA Head Office, argued that the Family Friendly policies are easier to implement at Head Office level than in stores:

“We are not Family Friendly at stores... but is as good as it gets” (Salma, Pakistani, Retail Commercial Assistant, CSA HO, 28)

Salma believed that the nature of store work is such that staff has to deal with ‘unfriendly’ hours and improvements with regard to balancing work and personal life can only be minimal.

Diane, a nurse working shifts in CSB with one child aged three, discussed the usefulness of Family Friendly policies to her:

“I have had information on that [Family Friendly policies]. About the nursery times, which was not of use to me... The thing about nurseries, that’s the standard time, but it caters more for personnel etc., rather than nurses doing shifts” (Diane, Afro-Caribbean, Community Psychiatric Nurse, CSB, 33)

This was a concern raised with a number of staff in CSB who had to work shifts and had a family and children; the childcare facilities on site were operating at the ‘normal’ nine to five time, and if these women were working outside ‘normal’ hours it was left to them to make childcare arrangements. The majority of them depended on their parents or their partners’ parents and child minders to take care of their children. Some of them depended on their husbands or partners but this was often not the case, either because the men were also working, or because other options were available. Two of the Afro-Caribbean women had young children but

were single and they depended either on their parents or private childcare arrangements.

There was also concern from ethnic minority women at higher level positions in their organisations with regard to flexibility and how they use the Family Friendly policies:

“I have difficulties [balancing family life with work]... yes I have ... perhaps I need more flexibility. I know this Trust operates a number of Family Friendly policies and it’s flexible. But when you have quite a responsible post, it’s not always as easy. If your staff tell you they have a problem you can sort it out but when it’s yourself, it’s quite difficult”

(Harpal, Indian, Dentist, CSB, 43)

A concern of all participants regardless of gender or ethnicity, was whether their organisations are genuinely committed to adhering to the Family Friendly policies and providing flexibility for their staff:

“We have what we call a Family Friendly schedule and I’ve never seen anything less friendly in my life! I don’t think that working till ten in the evening and then back at work at 7 [in the morning] ... it’s not friendly. And we are working at weekends till late [frowning]” (Joanne, White, Customer Service Manager, CSA Store, 44)

“I think we’ve got some good [Family Friendly] policies but I think they are under-utilised. I don’t think that people take advantage of some of the opportunities available. But some of that is to do with the support of the managers in stores, to support the policies” (Pamela, White, Training Advisor, CSA HO, 27)

Joanne, discussed her personal experiences with regard to balancing her personal life with her career at CSA:

“When I started in [CSA], my husband had to retire because he was ill so we went on a role reversal situation. It was a contributing factor to the divorce... trying to have a career in [CSA]. We didn’t need a baby sitter because my husband was with the kids but it caused us problems. [pause] I firmly believe that if I had been a single parent I wouldn’t have been able to develop a career within [CSA]” (Joanne, White, Customer Service Manager, CSA Store, 44)

Nasim, extended his views on the EO policies being a paper exercise to include Family Friendly Policies, when asked how he managed his work and family life:

“... they have a Family Friendly rota... it’s like another PR exercise, another doctrine, ‘we are Family Friendly’, but it’s like everything else” (Nasim, Pakistani, Provisions Manager, CSA Store, 30)

There was a discussion within CSA and CSB that commitment to one’s job and to the organisation is equated to long hours. This was briefly touched upon by Denise, in Chapter 5, and the following quotes illustrate the participants’ concerns:

“There is a culture of hard work [in CSA]. And I think it takes a long time to get rid of. There is the idea of commitment and long hours. And I just make a conscious effort to leave [on time]. But I do know that there are people who stick around and you think ‘well, how much work are they actually doing?’” (Jenny, White, Training Advisor, CSA HO, 41)

“For me personally it’s not an issue [combining work and family]. But I can see it being an issue for people with families. [CSA] has a very long hours culture. And that’s in stores and in head office and there’s the expectation that people will work long hours. And if they are not working long hours, it’s taken as low commitment ... I think that perception is still there. And that doesn’t support having that balance. For these policies to work, we need to have positive role models in the organisation. For your boss to say that we should only be working from eight-thirty to five-thirty. But it doesn’t happen. When I was in the stores, managers regularly work twelve hours and that was endorsed. It was the idea that that makes you a better manager” (Pamela, White, Training Advisor, CSA HO, 27)

Robert, a white male in CSA Head Office, had a different view on the effectiveness of Family Friendly policies in the organisation:

“There’s been a lot of work done on Family Friendly rotas and Family Friendly doesn’t necessarily mean having children, but having more flexibility. It’s valuing outputs not hours that you work, which I find very comfortable within [CSA]” (Robert, White, Category Training Advisor, CSA HO, 24)

As did Adam in CSB, but for different reasons:

“I think there’s a point where flexible working becomes ridiculous, where we are accommodating people for everything. I find often that we are seen as an organisation who will accommodate everything...it’s important but it can be

negative” (Adam, White, Business Operations Manager for Learning Disabilities, CSB, 48)

Adam believed that although flexibility is important, it is unrealistic for an organisation, with high demands and limited resources to be able to accommodate the needs of every individual staff. This view is contradictory however to the HRM doctrine of valuing people as individuals and understanding and accommodating their needs.

Mary, argued however, that organisations do have responsibilities with regard to their staff and that they will reap the benefits of a satisfied workforce who believe that their individual needs are accommodated:

“[What makes a good employer is] valuing all the members of staff and treating them fairly across the board, giving them opportunities, making the environment a good one to work in, avoiding the stress... not always seeing things as the outcomes of positive production, because people have to enjoy what they do, and perhaps not always looking to see whether... at that time if you look at resources and look at the best outcome on a mainly resource aspect, you can lose a lot because if you treat people well and give them money and time, when they come and perform they perform way above the level and they’ll give you more. So, an organisation which does that and recognises that people have to be flexible, work flexibly, child care, we don’t have that here, but recognising that people need child care, time off for sickness, time off for family, and ... a caring organisation... that they should care, they shouldn’t just provide care for clients, but they should also care for their staff” (Mary, Afro-Caribbean, Training and Development Advisor for Equal Opportunities in the Health Service, 52)

It is important to note that although a number of staff criticised the implementation of Family Friendly policies in CSB, they also argued that in comparison to other organisations they worked in, they believed that CSB is genuinely trying to improve and has better adherence to their policies:

“I am actually [committed to CSB]. I’ve worked in several trusts and I find this one far better than the others... in terms of Family Friendly policies and flexibility... Just the ethos, the whole style” (Harpal, Indian, Dentist, CSB, 43)

The above discussion illustrates that there is a range of views regarding flexibility and Family Friendly policies, with the vast majority of participants believing that formal Family Friendly policies are well developed, but there are worries, nevertheless, on whether they are implemented in practice, within an organisational culture where long hours equate to commitment.

The discussion will now move on to discuss positive action initiatives in organisations and the perceptions of participants with regard to their usefulness and effectiveness.

7.4 Positive action initiatives: more harm than good?

The discussions so far have indicated that in the majority of cases there is a perception of inadequate implementation of EO and also a feeling that organisations stated they were equal opportunity employers because they are forced to do so or as “PR exercise”. Regardless of whether organisations are genuinely committed to equality, a number of them have adopted diversity initiatives, such as positive action schemes and targets to increase representation of ethnic minorities and women.

As discussed in Chapter 5, both case study organisations had some form of positive action programmes ranging from targets to increase recruitment of ethnic minorities and representation at senior levels (CSA) to exclusive training and career development seminars for ethnic minority women (CSB). The ethnic minority women and men from the ‘independent group’ have discussed their own experiences and views on positive action and these are also presented below.

Irrespective of whether the ethnic minority women would want to be part of a positive action programme, the majority of them believed that training for ethnic minority women or ethnic minorities as a whole, which focuses on skills and strategies to help them move ahead and progress, might be necessary in order for them to understand the politics of organisations, the culture and the appropriate

behavioural skills (Kamenou and Fearfull, 2001). The following articulates this notion well and is representative of ethnic minority women participants' views on the matter:

"It's a whole range of things, general management skills, politics of organisations, the culture, behavioural skills, skills analysis, career development, a whole range of skills that you would learn on any management course. But here the emphasis with [exclusive training] is centred on black people who might be shy or not positive enough, or who recognise there's a barrier, and who might feel restless about going forward because there's nobody, there are no role models... So it gives you not just education, because education is one thing... it [gives you] the tools to actually move yourself within the circles" (Mary, Afro-Caribbean, Training and Development Advisor for Equal Opportunities in the Health Service, 52)

This quote relates to a number of different issues: the lack of role models for ethnic minorities which, as discussed in Chapter 6, could result in reducing their confidence to push themselves forward; exclusion from networks, and, the need to acquire tools to "move within the circles". Mary believed that positive action schemes are important for 'teaching' ethnic minorities to penetrate influential networks which are important for their career development.

The majority of the ethnic minority women participants argued that networking is very important in their organisations and they acknowledged the positive effects it can have on their career opportunities. Ten of these women argued, however, that they felt excluded from informal networks which could be beneficial to them and believed that positive action training or seminars may be necessary for learning how to 'play the game'. They argued that ethnic minority women may be lacking in managerial skills and assertiveness and a reason for this could be their exclusion from powerful networks:

"I'm beginning to see that it's about who you know! [...] I don't know that many people in the Trust. I guess it is [affecting your opportunities], because people that you know might know of opportunities that are there" (Sarraah, Pakistani, Community mental health nurse, CSB, 27)

"I'm working it out much more than I used to, that certain people can network better than other. They can pull strings. And ethnic minorities are missing out. [...]"

It's bound to affect [opportunities] isn't it? It's the difference between knowing what you need to know and having the information given to you. And then going to the interview much more prepared" (Denise, Afro-Caribbean, Diversity manager, CSB, 48)

Sarrah and Denise believed that as ethnic minority women they were “missing out” on opportunities to network and ‘learn the ropes’ of how to approach people, ask for opportunities and push themselves forward. Balvinder, the Indian male manager in CSB, contended that the Asian culture is quite different to the white organisational culture and believed that this is an issue that would affect their networking skills:

“If you look at the people who are successful they probably concentrate their networking so as to help their career and do their job. And probably [there is] a cultural imbalance... my imbalance is that to me I think that should not be necessary. I don't feel comfortable doing it [networking]. There is a cultural issue [pause] How do you make ethnic minorities more assertive?” (Balvinder, Indian, Process Improvement Manager, CSA HO, 48)

Balvinder sustained that ethnic minorities need more organisational support to increase assertiveness and named the positive action schemes in CSA as “a ladder of hope” for black and Asian staff.

Some other positive views of positive action and exclusive training are presented below:

“I can see a role for those [positive action programmes], because you need to bring, you need to get the playing field level, and black nurses do need to come up to maximise some of the opportunities that the white groups would have had, by virtue of their background and their positions” (Anna, Afro-Caribbean, Senior Officer in the Health Service, 59)

“I think exclusive training is effective. [...] I think supporting the black workers within the Trust is a must really, because it's all about them coming in this white institution and fitting in” (Sarrah, Pakistani, Community mental health nurse, CSB, 27)

The majority of the ethnic minority women participants acknowledged that there might be some benefits to exclusive training in terms of providing a safe

environment to discuss sensitive issues and increase their assertiveness. Eight of these women argued however that there are also dangers with exclusive training. The following are representative of this view:

“I haven’t been to any exclusive training [...] I avoided those because you can get too much into that and not be able to fit in. [...] I’ve avoided it for my own personal reasons but others feel there is a need. But I don’t think you can segregate, because [...] we have to work together. [...] We are a mixed community (Ruth, Asian, Community Psychiatric Nurse/ Sister, CSB, 48)

“... because at the end of the day, our social environment, our working environment, our living environment is mixed, so to have people totally exposed all the time to women only, men only etc., you are not encouraging real life” (Samina, Pakistani, Project worker in voluntary organisation, 30)

Samina did acknowledge however, that positive action programmes are still needed for ethnic minorities due to both their under-representation at higher levels and to inequality of opportunity in organisations:

“There is a lack of [ethnic minority] people in professional careers, or lack of people as accountants... positive action programmes are appropriate. [...] If organisations ... if equality was intrinsic to what they are doing in everyday life, in working life and the way that they deliver their services, if there was true equality practice, then there wouldn’t be a need to have positive action programmes” (Samina, Pakistani, Project worker in voluntary organisation, 30)

Positive action therefore, and specifically exclusive training, was not universally welcomed by ethnic minority women. As illustrated above, while the participants acknowledged that there are some benefits to be gained from engaging in exclusive training, a counter argument was made that there is a danger for them inherent in such approaches since they can be perceived as having “special needs” and “needing a push” (Kamenou and Fearfull, 2001). Such a perception, it was argued, would diminish their credibility in terms of their job performance:

“I would fail to see what would be the need. Ultimately if we recruited somebody into [CSA], then the view is that they have the same skills as everybody else, so it would almost be insulting in my view, for them to have specific courses, like saying ‘you are not up to the right level’ [...] It’s like being in school and going to dumb class! [laughs]” (Yasmin, Pakistani, Training Advisor, CSA HO, 28)

“I think you’ve got to be careful because people want the jobs because they have the skills and abilities not because they are under-represented” (Harpal, Indian, Dentist, CSB, 43)

Yasmin’s views were presented in Chapter 6, where she argued that opportunities were available to all individuals regardless of gender or ethnicity in CSA. Here she confirms these views in some ways by arguing that there is no need for positive action or exclusive schemes for ethnic minorities. After her interview as a training advisor in CSA’s Head Office, Yasmin moved to the CSA Store as the Store Manager. She was part of the graduate scheme in CSA, on the fast-track route to management and had a plan to move to Store Manager level within her first five years in the company, which she achieved. As presented earlier in the chapter, Nasim indirectly implied that Yasmin was helped to progress as an ethnic minority woman, in order to improve the image of CSA and reach their target for increased representation of ethnic minorities and women at Store Manager level. Yasmin, herself however, did not believe that she was part of CSA’s positive action scheme or at least, she stated that during this research. It was not verified whether Yasmin was or was not part of the scheme, but what is of pertinence is that this study and the discussions with participants took place within a context where targets were set and positive action was implemented. The above discussion indicates some of the concerns with positive action, in that it may reduce confidence in the ability of individuals who are, or perhaps are seen as, part of these schemes and where they are seen as mere tokens used for the organisation’s image.

Samina discussed her experiences when working in a profit-making organisation, before she moved to the voluntary sector:

“The reason I left [her previous job]...to be perfectly honest was because I felt that I’d been recruited at a positive action programme, but it was tokenistic. That they took on staff, but their career progression and development wasn’t supported. They took on staff to increase their ethnic minorities, but when it came to them wanting to excel further, the support wasn’t there” (Samina, Pakistani, Project worker in voluntary sector, 30)

Samina felt she was a 'token' hired to increase ethnic minority representation in the organisation, but her career was not supported. She stated that white staff was resentful towards her and she believed that a main reason for this was the fact that they did not see her as credible or capable for the job, as she was hired as part of the positive action programme.

A white male participant's view on the dangers of placing people in positions as tokens of their 'race' supports Samina's and Yasmin's view:

"Tokenism [...] caused problems for people, in that they see it as not genuine. So we set up a group of people and we don't aim for skills but on ethnic mix. A representative group which often are maybe not the most suitable people, so we have these tokens. [...] people are getting in because they are the right colour or right ethnicity, to promote the right image. And it's this image and tokenism that could damage opportunities for people, because they would never be regarded as being there on their own merits. There's a danger that it destroys their credibility as an able person" (Daniel, White, Independent Reviewing Officer, CSB, 50)

Daniel was well informed and aware of the issues around 'race' and racism and he acknowledged that bigotry and prejudice still exists. He raised his concerns however, with tokenism and with the government's targets to increase ethnic minority and female representation at senior levels:

"It is positive discrimination [the government's targets]. That's typical of this government, when they got into power, they positively discriminated because they needed women, they've put them in positions that they weren't prepared for and I think they were set up to fail and I think that's very discriminatory" (Daniel, White, Independent Reviewing Officer, CSB, 50)

The ethnic minority women themselves were often in a dilemma on whether they should be involved in the positive action schemes. They could see some of the benefits to be gained from them but at the same time, they did not want to be perceived negatively by white staff. Gurjit, was part of CSB's exclusive training for ethnic minority men and women and her quote is indicative of this dilemma:

"... at first I wasn't very happy [with going on an exclusive training course]. [...] I felt that it was for the Asian group [and] I was thinking am I giving the wrong message to people? That I'm Asian and want to develop. Is it giving negative vibes

to people around me, that I'm going on a management course which is only for ethnic minorities? The others could feel jealous and think why this course? Why not a course that anybody could access?" (Gurjit, Asian, Senior Nurse Manager, CSB, 46)

She went on to argue that she wanted to progress because of her skills and abilities and not because the organisation needed ethnic minorities to reach their targets:

"I didn't want any preferential treatment and I felt insecure about going on this course. If I'm not ready for that development or if I'm not the right person, if I haven't got the skills or the knowledge or the experience to do the job, am I going to fail? Are people setting me up to fail? These were the dilemmas that I went through. But as the modules went on, I saw why this course ... why I was selected ... because there were issues ... like how I'm talking to you now, that I would never have talked about in a mixed group. Because you can't bring out the whole purpose of the course and bring all these oppressions out so you could discuss them in the group. Whereas if there were people there from the Caucasian background, we could have never discussed them. Because a lot of us have gone through the years with these issues, that we have never been able to talk to anyone about. It was about discussing and healing and moving on. A lot of us were stuck in positions that we were not moving on. Because we weren't able to deal with the oppressions and things that have been going on around us, because we weren't dealing with them in the appropriate way. And it [the course] gave you strategies to deal with that, without being aggressive" (Gurjit, Asian, Senior Nurse Manager, CSB, 46)

Gurjit was obviously apprehensive of the positive action scheme and training, but argued that after she attended the seminars, she realised that there is a need for it and that she believed that ethnic minorities may need to discuss their experiences of racism in a safe environment and work together to find strategies to 'fit in' and progress.

A main concern of ethnic minority women stemming from the interview data was that they believed that positive action can cause resentment from white staff in their organisations who may feel that ethnic minorities benefited from reverse discrimination, incorporating career strategy support, leading to more opportunities for development and advancement than the white staff:

“They [white colleagues] have been resentful. I’m aware of that. They would say ‘why should there be a course for ethnic minorities and not for white?’” (Dorothy, Afro-Caribbean, Grade E nurse, CSB, 35).

Mary, in her role as training and development advisor for equal opportunities in her organisation, had to implement equality strategies to address the under-representation of ethnic minorities in the Trust. She argued that it was a very sensitive issue due to the resentment of white staff but also due to the objections of some of the ethnic minority staff who did not want to be seen as receiving preferential treatment:

“... I did a needs analysis when I first came in the post, to look at developing positive action [programmes] for black and ethnic minorities.. and that was a big no no from the study... From everybody, from all the groups I asked in the organisation. They thought it was not fair to develop black and ethnic minority people specifically... they didn’t see it as fair. [...] Some of the [ethnic minority] employees felt they would be picked out and it would indicate that if they did get promotion or if they did rise to a certain level, that it was not their own skill, that is was because of this action. [...] So the nearest I’ve got to it [developing a positive action programme] is my mentoring programme [...] So I had to bring this scheme on board to develop ... and call it mentorship and call it all kinds of things... but I can’t call it development of black staff” (Mary, Afro-Caribbean, Training and Development Advisor for Equal Opportunities in the Health Service, 52)

From the six ethnic minority women interviewed at shopfloor level in the CSA Store, four provided a discussion around positive action and the other two were either not aware of the initiatives or did not make any comments. From the four participants, two argued that positive action was needed but also raised their concerns about resentment of white staff and that “it doesn’t go down well”. Razwana, a Pakistani woman working as a checkout operator in the CSA Store, presented her views on resentment of white staff and the role of the EO policies:

“There could be problems with the white staff, they might resent the fact that [CSA] has initiatives and tries to promote ethnic minorities [...] I don’t feel it myself, but I still think it happens by some [white staff]. But no one said anything to me [...] Because of the EO policies no one dares to say anything, but they might still feel that” (Razwana, Pakistani, Checkout Operator, CSA Store, 22)

Indeed, more than half of the white staff in both case study organisations (four out of eight women and four out of six men) was against positive action initiatives for a number of reasons. Laura, expressed her concerns within CSB:

“I think it can be divisive sometimes... it’s a very difficult area. And yes I can see that if it’s done well, that it can be positive, but it can cause problems. I’m aware of training to increase awareness on ethnic minority issues [...] white staff were not happy with the way they were addressed. It was more of an accusation, that they [white staff] were being accused, that they did not recognise the issues and these were staff that were working in areas, working with ethnic minorities all the time” (Laura, White, Child Protection Health Visitor, CSB, 41)

CSA has been seen as a leader in diversity issues and is often quoted in equality research conducted for example, by consulting bodies and the CRE, for positively promoting diversity. As discussed in Chapter 5, there was great tension however, within the CSA Store, which adopted a number of initiatives such as multi-lingual signs and greeters and a wide range of ethnic minority products and services. The ethnic minority staff had to deal with racism from white customers, but white staff also appeared resentful of the opportunities given to ethnic minority staff:

“I don’t think there’s a problem in the first place, I don’t think it’s a need [for positive action] ... they employ ethnic minorities in the first place. When we first opened, it was at local news, they’ve got Asian signs, I can understand that. But they had Asian greeters, speaking in their language and it really didn’t go down very well with the customers... At the end of the day we speak English, we are in England and we’ve got a lot of British customers and it was frustrating because they were talking ... [pause] They stopped it after a while because they were so many complaints” (Anita, White, Produce Assistant, CSA Store, 22)

Anita contradicted herself by going on to argue that she could understand the need for some of the initiatives, but cautioned on “how far we go” with them:

“... from what I understand a lot of the Asian women don’t speak English and I can understand it from their point of view. But the Asian greeters didn’t speak to English people ... so it goes both ways. We have to be careful how far we go, don’t we? Equality includes everybody” (Anita, White, Produce Assistant, CSA Store, 22)

Anita argued that white customers were sometimes excluded from these initiatives and this could have increased the level of resentment from white staff. Simon, a white manager in the Store argued that there were problems with the implementation of the diversity initiatives:

“...they should pick the right person for the job. On their ability, not on ethnic ...I don't think we should positively discriminate [...] I don't feel left behind but I don't want to be... I can see it going down that road more and more. People should be given opportunities because of their ability not because of anything else. But looking into the future, I can see positive discrimination happening [...] Not necessarily without having the abilities but there might be other people with more abilities [pause] it might get a bit political” (Simon, White, Produce Manager, CSA Store, 30)

Simon and Anita felt that discrimination does exist in CSA, but it is positive in favour of ethnic minorities. They seemed frustrated, “left behind” in some ways from the organisation, where the focus, in their eyes, was merely on ethnic minority advancement:

“I don't think we would ever discriminate [against ethnic minorities]. I think [CSA] is so terrified of seen to be racist that they are going the other way... instead of going down the middle they are going the other way” (Simon, White, Produce Manager, CSA Store, 30)

“... we've always worked with Indians, Asians, ethnics and the foreign people but since this store's opened, I think they've gone a little bit too far. I think they are trying to make a point of it and I don't think there's any reason to make a point of it. I think they are almost scared to do anything about it” (Anita, White, Produce Assistant, CSA Store, 22)

Anita's views indicate the ignorance of white staff with regard to ethnic minority individuals, which can be inferred merely from her description of ethnic minority staff, “ethnics and all the foreign people”. At the same time however, this lack of awareness demonstrates an even deeper problem of organisations not going about introducing diversity the right way. White staff in CSA and CSB was not given detailed information on the positive action schemes and were felt excluded and “left behind”. These inadequacies at organisational level, may have intensified feelings of resentment and frustration of white staff.

It is important to note, however, that not all white staff was against positive action. Three out of the eight white women participants said they were neutral and argued that they could not comment or have strong views on positive action as they were not from an ethnic minority community and therefore could not know “how it’s like”. Two of the white men, Daniel and Andrew, believed that positive action is needed acknowledging the history of discrimination. Andrew, discussed the tensions with positive action schemes in the CSA Store:

“[CSA] is big on it. There are two groups: one that likes it [positive action] and one that doesn’t [...] People might think that if you are Asian you can do it. But I think there is a need to show Asian people that they can make it. [...] White customers weren’t happy. They didn’t want to shop here but you can’t exclude Asian people. We have to accept everyone. If white customers stop shopping [here], that’s fine!” (Andrew, White, Trainee Meat Manager, CSA Store, 30)

As an individual employee, Andrew, was of the view that customers should be welcomed regardless of their ethnicity, culture or religion and white customers’ racist views should not be taken on board by CSA. Chapter 5, however, indicated the tensions for management, which attempts to initiate change and promote diversity but at the same time, it focuses on bottom line and is desperate not to lose any customers.

Joanne, the Customer Service Manager, presented her views on positive action in CSA in her interview as a manager, discussed in Chapter 5. In her personal interview, for her own career experiences in CSA, she also raised her concerns with these initiatives:

“At the moment [CSA] while looking for female ethnic managers, because we don’t hit our diversity targets in senior management ... I really do think at the moment that the company is heading in the wrong direction. It wants to get a female store manager and I think...I sound like I am anti-women here, but I do think store managers need to be experienced people. I think just to be politically correct now, we are recruiting certain store managers. We have a fast track to management which is a great opportunity but you need to be capable of what you are doing, you need that credibility. To give someone a senior management position... you’ve got to have the experience to transfer. Not necessarily on the

retail business, but people who have seen some life and have the experience”
(Joanne, White, Customer Service Manager, CSA Store, 44)

Joanne’s view is similar to Daniel’s opinion in CSB, on the dangers of tokenism and placing people who are not capable or experienced enough in positions, in order to reach their targets. From her quote above, I had the distinct impression that Joanne was referring to a particular individual; Yasmin. There seemed to be issues of concern with Yasmin’s placement at senior management, stemming from suspicions that she was helped, as Nasim believed, or that she was not experienced enough and, in effect was simply seen as a token.

Joanne’s second point within this discussion, reinforced my impression, that she did not think Yasmin is capable enough:

“I was recruited by David [the previous Store Manager] and I had a great deal of respect for him [pause] Going forward, I don’t think I’ll have the same feeling”
(Joanne, White, Customer Service Manager, CSA Store, 44)

Yasmin, herself, once she progressed to Store Manager level, discussed dangers with positive action, which may have stemmed from her own concerns of how she is perceived:

“I don’t necessarily feel that we did it [implementing positive action] in the right way. [...] rather than saying it’s a way of life... anything we focus on to that extent it’s always going to cause some negativity. And with a topic so sensitive it now becomes the situation where people could perceive that you only get on because you are a minority. That will happen in every organisation. I understand why [CSA] has done that. They were brave enough to say ‘we don’t care of people’s perception. We are not fairly represented’. However, I think the way we did it could cause negativity and demean somebody’s actual ability” (Yasmin, Pakistani, Store Manager, CSA Store, 28)

Janet, a white woman in CSB, argued that positive action is needed but does not work effectively:

“I don’t think it [positive action initiative] works terribly well. I think one of the problems here... it needs to mature, it’s a little bit aggressive sometimes. [...] It’s a new idea, a new concept, it’s really just rolled out although it should have been

on ten years ago. I think one of the problems they do have here is that ethnically, or within the Asian community, nursing is not seen as high status, working women is not seen as high status. So if you want nurses, you are not going to get the recruitment. Or when they get pregnant they would leave. So investing £60,000-80,000 on a girl who would leave the minute her arranged marriage would come through... I think culturally it's got its own problems" (Janet, White, Health Visitor, CSB, 60)

Janet's emphasis was on the cultural factors of Asian women, which were very stereotypical, rather than on the role of the organisation in supporting their careers.

Adam, a white male manager also in CSB, provided similar views around ethnic minorities' culture:

"... I think people from ethnic minorities see the NHS as a low opportunity. There's this image of doing low paid job. [...] I think that they [ethnic minorities] probably do progress but that the numbers are low. I think also maybe that some people from ethnic minorities [coughing- seemed uncomfortable] might need additional support for other ... for a range of reasons. Cultural reasons, sometimes for educational reasons... just like anyone else would need that extra support. And I think that maybe sometimes people do ... it's a bit like expectations, what's expected and maybe some people think 'oh, I'm a nurse and I've made it' and that's great and that's as far as I could go. Maybe... maybe there are some people in that tier [ethnic minority] that could be supported. [...] I certainly know some Afro-Caribbean people who had a go to become a nurse and they achieved that and they thought great, that's it. They've seen that as [succeeding]. I don't know if that's because they are from an Afro-Caribbean family and they have slightly different approach to education... like a South Asian family which are very very keen on education and support the kids" (Adam, White, Business Operations Manager for Learning Disabilities, CSB, 48)

He argued that ethnicity can be a factor for ethnic minorities but he believed that their culture is what is holding them back and he seemed to imply that some ethnic minorities have low expectations, and in effect low ambition, with regard to their careers. He also contended that there is no racial discrimination present in CSB. Therefore, although he did not concentrate on issues of ability, as Stewart did in an earlier section, Adam also seemed to argue that if ethnic minorities do not progress is their 'fault' in some ways but he did believe that the organisation has responsibility to improve their image in order to recruit ethnic minorities.

Janet discussed her own views on presence of discrimination against ethnic minority staff:

“My feelings are they [ethnic minorities] are not discriminated against. Sometimes they feel they are discriminated against [but they are not]. [...] When you look at education and qualifications, you can see that they are not discriminated against. In fact I could say that they [ethnic minorities] go on more courses, and that does cause a slight resentment [from a white staff] saying ‘why is it that they can go on everything and we can’t?’” (Janet, White, Health Visitor, CSB, 60)

Janet obviously believed that in CSB, ethnic minorities are treated favourably in comparison to white staff and she implied that ethnic minorities may have lower qualifications and education but are still given more opportunities to develop their career.

Within this section, the dilemmas when implementing positive action initiatives were apparent. The data has indicated that the views towards positive action were split between ethnic minority participants, where one group was in favour of these initiatives, arguing that ethnic minorities who experience racism and disadvantage, require additional help, which in some cases is better provided within the security of their own social group, and where another group was not in support of positive action, believing that these initiatives reinforce stereotypes about ethnic minorities in that they “need a push” to get ahead and consequently, they are perceived as tokens. The majority of white participants were against positive action initiatives, which they viewed as reverse discrimination with ethnic minority staff favoured for positions and opportunities, with them being “left behind”.

The debates up to this point have dealt with broader organisational support mainly in terms of policies, practices and initiatives. The discussion will now divert to the importance of individual support for one’s career, which may be provided to, or withheld from, ethnic minority women.

7.5 Line managers and individual support: more important than policies?

In relation to opportunities for networking and more generally, for career development and advancement, an important issue that has arisen through the interviews with fifteen ethnic minority women was that having a supportive manager or a mentor is sometimes more important than the overall formal EO policies of their organisation. Ten of these women, however, argued that they had either found it hard at some point in their career, or they still do have difficulties in creating a positive working relationship with their line manager, or in identifying and approaching a mentor, who would positively support their career. They believed that their ethnicity and gender were determining factors to this; firstly, and in relation with the discussion in Chapter 6, some argued that they do not have the skills and confidence to identify supportive managers and mentors and secondly, a number of these women believed that racial and gender stereotypes and prejudices do not 'allow' other people to look beyond these irrelevant characteristics and identify these women's potential.

To intensify these concerns, some of the ethnic minority women argued that their line managers would undermine them, or even be the instigator of sexual or racial discrimination and harassment. If they were in this situation, the women believed there to be no opportunities for them to develop their career because the one individual who is supposed to be supporting and guiding them is blocking their career path.

One example of this was offered by Sarrah, whose views on how ethnic minority women are perceived were discussed in Chapter 6. She argued that she was racially harassed by her previous line manager for two years:

“... I don't know if that's because I'm a woman, an ambitious woman, and an Asian woman on top of that, who's ambitious, that I think people in senior positions often perceive me as a real threat. ... [The line manager] was in a powerful position, he had power over me, and the way he treated me was certainly different from the way he treated the other staff... it was constant bullying. Initially it was sort of comments about how wonderful [Northern town] used to be and it's now run-down, so indirectly saying that it's Asians' fault [pause] And then it came

to a point where he constantly monitored me and supervised me at work...”
(Sarrah, Pakistani, Community mental health nurse, CSB, 27)

Sarrah argued that she made management aware of the harassment she was facing but no action was taken against her manager. She stated that this could be because it was intangible and difficult to prove, but she also felt that she is perceived as a threat as an ambitious Asian woman. One reason for her being perceived as a threat by white senior staff may be that they feel that she, as an Asian woman, has more expertise in dealing with ethnic minority patients than them and that she may ‘expose’ them as incompetent in this area. Another related reason may be the overall reduced opportunities for career development and progression, with increased insecurities for one’s jobs.

Saira presented her own story, where whilst she was being sexually harassed by another male member of staff, she requested the support of her team leader, who was positioned at a level below Saira’s line manager:

“I did experience sexual harassment once [...] I just started this job and this older man kept ...trying to arrange things [...] to go out with me ... he was a married man [...] He used to come behind me and put his hands on my shoulders... and I used to cringe, I used to hate it. Anyway, I told my team leader one day, who was a woman, a white woman, and I said ‘look, I’m really fed up with this, can you tell him to stop, otherwise I’m going to go and talk to my line manager’ [...], and she said ‘oh, it’s because you are a pretty thing and you just probably smile a lot and you encourage him’, so she blames me! [in angry tone]. So I was really angry because she didn’t support me, she didn’t say anything [to him]” (Saira, Pakistani, Education Welfare Officer, 35)

Saira was disappointed with the lack of support demonstrated by her team leader, where she perhaps believed that she should have been more sympathetic and supportive to her concerns, as a woman.

Denise discussed how she perceives organisational support and her relationship with her line manager in CSB:

“Support for me could be from one person not the whole organisation ...Sometimes I get the feeling that this organisation... they won’t speak to me for ages, if I want

something from her [her line manager], she makes me wait. If I go up to her she would tell me that she's busy. If I ring up, I get the same [...] She undermines you I think [frowns]" (Denise, Afro-Caribbean, Diversity manager, CSB, 48)

Denise's boss appointed her as a diversity manager to deal with EO and diversity issues in CSB but Denise felt that there was lack of support and encouragement and that, on the contrary sometimes, she felt that she was set up to fail by having important information withheld from her at important times, such as meetings.

Mahesh, also employed in CSB presented similar views on this issue:

"They've got the system and the structures... but to be effective in practice depends on the people [...] You might have a very good system but the people who operate it can operate it very discriminatory" (Mahesh, Indian, Consultant Psychiatrist, CSB, 52)

Subjectivity with regard to opportunities and who managers select to support can have detrimental effects on ethnic minorities careers, when their managers have stereotypical views of, or do not have confidence in, their ethnic minority staff. Denise, went on to argue that she felt that her boss is not comfortable with her because she is a black woman and this could have a detrimental effect on her career opportunities:

"They [issues with her boss] certainly block you, don't they? There's whole bunches of information that she is upholding. Part of my job is around recruitment [...] She is in charge of recruitment. I need to look at why it is that we are appointing the people we are etc. I take it to [her boss] and say this is what we need to do and she basically says do it on your own. I feel I can't do it on my own, I need people like her. I need co-operation! [in frustrated tone]" (Denise, Afro-Caribbean, Diversity manager, CSB, 48)

Gurjit discussed her earlier experiences in CSB with regard to approaching individuals who she believed they could help her progress into management:

"Every time I tried to talk to anybody, select mentors, they tried to put me off going into management, [by saying] 'what do you want to go into management for? There's nothing there anyway'. I don't know why [they did it] ... if they had

my own interests at heart... probably on reflection, they didn't" (Gurjit, Asian, Senior Nurse Manager, CSB, 46)

She believed that the CSB's culture has changed since that time she was seeking support and that the organisation is now more committed to equality and diversity.

Yasmin and Salma were the only two ethnic minority women who explicitly argued that they never faced discrimination in their organisations and that they had very supportive managers and mentors throughout their career. They acknowledged the immense benefits of this but had different views on how they acquired that support; Yasmin believed that confidence and strategy in identifying influential mentors and opportunities were crucial to her success, whereas Salma argued that people identified her as a protégé and supported her career, rather than her having a strategy and seeking influential connections.

This section has indicated that 'individual' support from line managers and mentors is a determining factor to ethnic minority women's development and success. The majority of these women, however, believed that this support was not present and that on the contrary, they felt, sometimes, that they were set up to fail by their managers, who blocked any opportunities for career development. Organisational structural and cultural constraints were identified as a central determinant to organisational support by the majority of ethnic minority women.

7.6 Summary

Chapter 7 primarily engaged with the organisational structure and culture dimensions of the theoretical framework. The focus was placed on organisational career support and equality policies and practices. Section 7.2 analysed the perceptions of participants with regard to their organisations' support for their career and opportunities available to them. The majority of ethnic minority female participants stated that, although they acknowledged that career support from their employing organisations was very important to their success, they did not believe this support was available to them. They argued that gender and racial/ethnic

stereotypes, often intensified by wrong perceptions of their culture and religion, were detrimental to the extent of support and opportunities they were offered. Ethnic minority men and women stated that they believed they had to “try extra hard” as ethnic minorities, with the female group arguing that this was particularly hard for them, as they had to prove themselves both as women and as ethnic minorities.

Section 7.3 presented and analysed participants’ perceptions of their organisational equality policies, with the focus placed on ethnic minority women’s views. With regard to these policies, the empirical data has indicated that the reality often fell short of the rhetoric of equality and fairness. Informal practices and an old white boys’ network culture were prevalent in organisations, with ethnic minority women generally excluded from powerful informal networks. Organisations advocated flexibility and support for employees’ family commitments but the perceptions of female participants, in particular, indicated that the situation was quite different in practice, where commitment was equated to long hours.

Section 7.4 engaged with the perceptions of participants in relation to positive action initiatives. Within ethnic minority employees, there were conflicting views with regard to these initiatives, with one group arguing that there is a real need for positive action, and another group being against the philosophy of these initiatives, stating that it reinforces stereotypical views of ethnic minorities and labels them as tokens. White staff was predominantly against these initiatives and seemed concerned that their organisations placed their needs as secondary, and advocated full commitment to equality to such an extent that, they thought, they were “left behind”.

Section 7.5 provided an analysis of participants’ views with regard to the importance of having supportive managers and mentors. Some of the ethnic minority women argued that this support was crucial for their careers, stating however, that they often found it difficult to create a positive working relationship

with their line managers and to identify and approach mentors. They believed that negative perceptions of them as ethnic minority women exacerbated these difficulties. Some also argued that they faced sexual or racial harassment and discrimination from their managers, which made it very difficult for them to challenge and address.

This thesis will now proceed to its final chapter where a number of issues which emerged from the empirical work are further analysed. This discussion is informed by the existing literature and methodological framework and the contribution of this study is presented.

CHAPTER 8

Discussion and Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter of the thesis, the two main research questions outlined in Chapter 3 are revisited, based on the findings of the study. Chapter 8 synthesises the theoretical framework and the literature review presented in Chapters 2 and 3, the methodological framework discussed in Chapter 4, together with the data analysis Chapters 5 to 7. The purpose of this is to discuss themes and issues emerging from the field research conducted in this study and place them in the context of existing literature and methodological philosophy.

The research questions of this study concern, firstly, the effect of structure, culture and agency on ethnic minority women's career experiences and opportunities; and secondly, the way in which these three dimensions interact with each other when examining ethnic minority women's careers. Several themes have emerged in this study, through which the thesis contributes to the area of equality and diversity research, utilising the aforementioned framework of structure, culture and agency.

In Section 8.2 a brief summary of the main arguments in the previous chapters is presented, before moving on to Section 8.3, where the contribution of this thesis is discussed. Within Section 8.3, an analysis is provided which connects the field research findings with existing literature, highlighting some of the central findings of the thesis. Implications for HR practice within organisations, specifically in relation to HRM, culture and diversity initiatives are discussed in Section 8.4 and a critical assessment of the study and reflections upon completion of the thesis are then presented in Section 8.5. This chapter then proceeds to offer recommendations for further research in Section 8.6 and a conclusion of the thesis in Section 8.7.

8.2 Summary of main arguments in previous chapters

Chapter 1 provided an overview of this study, stating its aims and objectives. The central aim and rationale of the thesis was to examine an under-researched

area and record ethnic minority women's career experiences and opportunities in a range of occupations in different sectors. An overview of race relations and migration history, followed by a discussion on the placing of ethnic minority women in feminist literature, in the labour market, and in standard career literature were presented. The chapter drew to a close with an introduction of the theoretical and methodological frameworks adopted for this study and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 presented and discussed the theoretical framework of structure, culture and agency. It was argued that there is an interaction of these three dimensions when examining ethnic minority women's experiences. After presenting the aforementioned framework, Chapter 2 moved on to its utilisation in analysing ethnic minority women's careers, acknowledging that organisational experiences cannot be viewed in isolation from personal life experiences, as domestic and community responsibilities and expectations may affect and be affected by work and careers.

Drawing on the framework presented in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 placed ethnic minority women's career experiences within the HRM and equality literature. It was argued that, with few exceptions, agency and social group culture are absent from the HRM literature and that most work on equality management has focused on gender experiences, with only limited work being produced on ethnicity in organisations. This chapter, and hence this thesis, contributes therefore by placing ethnic minority women's experiences in the HRM literature through a theoretical framework which acknowledges structure, culture and agency.

The study moved on to the methodological framework and implementation of the empirical work in Chapter 4. It was contended that it is important to link the theoretical framework with the methodological philosophy; the methodology adopted therefore acknowledges, through critical realism, that reality is internal to individual actors. The chapter justified the use of qualitative methodology and methods for the study, followed by an examination of feminist and 'race' and ethnicity in research literature. My own position in the research was

acknowledged and discussed and the chapter then proceeded to discuss the practical implementation of the empirical work, including issues of access, data collection, sampling and data analysis.

The thesis then progressed to the data analysis of the empirical work in Chapters 5 to 7. Chapter 5 dealt with organisational policies and practices and the perceptions of managers in CSA and CSB of their organisations' policies and initiatives and also, their views on opportunities their organisations provide to ethnic minority women's careers. Chapters 6 and 7 focused on ethnic minority women's perceptions of their careers and organisational policies and practices respectively. The views of ethnic minority men, white men and women were also recorded and used to place ethnic minority women's careers in the broader organisational context. In Chapter 6, the discussion focused on ethnic minority women's perceptions of work and personal life and their concerns around balancing the demands and responsibilities of their organisations and their community, religious and family expectations. Chapter 7 focused explicitly on perceptions with regard to organisational career support, policies and diversity initiatives, primarily presenting the views of ethnic minority women, accompanied by the perceptions of ethnic minority men, white men and women.

8.3 Contribution of thesis

By adopting a qualitative methodology, the participants were given visibility in a previously under-research area, where ethnic minority women's career experiences were rendered invisible. Through the data analysis chapters, the main factors and issues for ethnic minority women's careers emerged and were discussed. The purpose of this section is to highlight in more detail some central areas in relation to ethnic minority women's careers within the study that require further reflection at this final point, specifically in relation to HRM and equality/diversity literature. The section is thus divided in a number of sub-sections, where different but interrelated areas are critically analysed. The three dimensions of structure, culture and agency of the theoretical framework utilised for this study are woven throughout the sub-sections.

8.3.1 HRM: The rhetoric and reality

This section discusses pertinent issues emerging from the empirical work which, in essence, consolidate and progress the arguments around the rhetoric and the reality of HRM policies. This study extends previous research involving HR practices by recognising the agency of individual actors, managers and staff, and examining the effect of social group culture on career experiences and opportunities.

Chapter 3 discussed the HRM doctrine which advocates commitment, flexibility and equality within organisations (Guest, 1987,1989; Sisson, 1994). A critical assessment was presented where a number of writers have criticised HRM for falling short of its rhetoric, not addressing and perhaps even reproducing inequalities and inequities (for example, Legge, 1995; Dickens, 1998). It has also been argued that equal opportunities are often not in line with HRM (Dickens, 1994a, 1998, Collinson *et al.*, 1990; Cockburn, 1991) and that the business case can point away from EO, especially in the short-term (Dickens, 1994b).

Chapter 5 presented a background to CSA and CSB, focusing specifically on their equality and diversity policies. Both organisations claimed genuine commitment to equal opportunities and had a number of positive action initiatives to increase representation of women and ethnic minorities in their organisations, specifically at managerial level. The data has indicated that there was a range of, sometimes contrasting, views on policy effectiveness from the participants. Some of the managers interviewed in CSA, believed that their organisational policies were well developed and effectively implemented. However, there was scepticism from other managers in CSA Head Office and the Store and in CSB. The managers who took a more critical approach to the organisational policies and practices argued that, while on paper they had well developed formal policies, their company was “personality driven” where managers, who are in majority white and male, promote people who resemble themselves, reinforcing the “mirroring effect”. The majority of ethnic minority women participants argued that although their organisations had well developed equality policies, they “were just sitting in the shelves”. They believed that

organisational claims of career support, equality of opportunity and valuing their staff were not genuine, and as Nasim in the CSA Store, argued it was “just a PR exercise”. This situation is in line with the critical HRM literature, where it is contended that the rhetoric of equality and organisational support falls short of reality. Biased organisational cultures which are in favour of white men, informally determine who are the recipients of support and mentoring. As a result, ethnic minority women and men, and white women are typically adversely affected by such an implementation of practices.

There were arguments by managers and staff in CSA and CSB and by the ‘independent group’ of ethnic minority women and men, that there was an element of ‘fitting in’ in the organisational culture. It was acknowledged that penetrating influential networks and identifying mentors was very hard for women and ethnic minorities, as they were seen as different and not falling into the norm. Informal circles and a “who you know” culture can have a negative effect on ethnic minority women’s careers, as they are ostracised from the inner world of organisational practices since their “face doesn’t fit”.

A paramount issue of concern, which occurred in both CSA and CSB, was the situation where people were “slotted into positions”, as both managers and staff have argued. There was a great amount of disillusionment stemming from this practice, where predominantly women and ethnic minority staff, argued that they were not given a fair chance to demonstrate their skills and abilities, when white male managers’ protégés, were informally promised available positions. This is a clear indication of the rhetoric and the reality of an organisation claiming genuine commitment to equality, fairness and meritocracy but the staff witness a reality of favouritism and an old white boys network culture. As Mahesh, the Consultant Psychiatrist in CSB argued, it is the people not the systems that are important in how an organisation functions. Therefore, formal policies and advocated commitment to equality do not often occur in practice as this will depend on the agency of individuals who may have vested interests in recreating and reinforcing an organisational environment which works in their favour and goes against equality and diversity.

The empirical data has revealed that formal commitment to policies may not be fed down the organisational hierarchy, where line managers may not have the commitment or knowledge to implement these policies and worse, may be resistant to equality. A high number of participants from all groups and at all levels argued that line managers are central to the support and career opportunities an employee receives. Line managers may favour individuals and have protégés, who are pushed forward, are given influential assignments and sent on training, with other staff being excluded from these important opportunities. Fairness and sensitivity are not automatically present by virtue of being a manager, and, as Joanne the Customer Service Manager in the CSA Store argued, not all managers “can spot talent and push people” nor, I would argue, are they interested in doing so.

The organisational culture and structure is implicit in this discussion of formal policies and informal practices. Agency, however, appears to be fundamental in policy implementation and organisational practices. In this situation, it is the agency of managers that can influence the distribution of organisational resources and opportunities. Some of the ethnic minority women participants argued that they had non-supportive managers, who blocked their career opportunities and in some cases, were the instigators of sexual and racial harassment these women faced. Of course, ethnic minority women’s agency in dealing with these situations was also important. Some of these women attempted to address issues of harassment or discrimination they faced by reporting the individuals who harassed them to their own line managers or to senior managers in their organisations. However, they were not always listened to and were sometimes even accused of leading these individuals on, as was the case with Saira, who was blamed by her own line manager for the sexual harassment she experienced by a male colleague, telling her that she was “a pretty thing” and “you probably smile[d] a lot”. This is an indication of the power struggles present when the agency of managers is placed against the agency of ethnic minority women. As stated above, the organisational structures and cultures are often biased in favour of white males. If, at the same time, ethnic minority women’s managers are set in reinforcing these structures and

cultures, the effect of the ethnic minority women's agency may diminish when striving to develop and progress in their careers.

The HRM rhetoric of commitment also fell short of reality and the data confirmed Dickens's (1998) arguments that the notion of commitment is gendered. Both managers and staff stated that their organisations support a long hours culture, where it is important to "seem to be working", as Denise argued in Chapter 5. This culture of long hours and 'showing face' was particularly hard for women with family and domestic responsibilities. As Chapters 6 and 7 have indicated, there is an unequal distribution of domestic labour, with both white and ethnic minority women, bearing the burden of domestic demands and child care responsibilities. Therefore, these women were in a lose-lose situation where if they wanted to develop and progress in their organisation they had to demonstrate a specific form of commitment based on a male working model, but at the same time be the prime carer of their family.

CSA and CSB prided themselves in being Family Friendly organisations, with flexible working patterns and child care provisions. In practice, however, it was often very difficult to take advantage of the schemes available as there were limited resources and time. As Joanne in the CSA Store argued, the Family Friendly policies were as "less friendly" as anything she has seen, where staff were required to work long shifts and weekends. CSB also had to work within a specific budget and often limited resources and therefore the promoted flexibility could not often be adhered in practice. An important point made by Finola in the CSA Head Office, was that the extent of commitment to Family Friendly policies and flexibility, depends on whether the manager who is responsible for implementing these policies, is sensitive himself or herself to the issues of family responsibilities and commitments. The organisations therefore advocated the HRM rhetoric of commitment, flexibility and appreciating and valuing their staff, but in reality, the staff were often seen as another resource, another tool to attain organisational goals.

Sexism and racism were present in CSA, CSB and the employing organisations of the 'independent group', but as the majority of participants argued, they were

“more indirect” and covert and therefore more difficult to challenge. Ethnic minority women and men alike believed that organisations have stereotypical views regarding their ethnicity or culture, placing them in ‘boxes’ and viewing their behaviour as pre-determined based on perceptions organisations have of an ethnic or cultural group. Racial stereotypes of being seen as lazy and not ambitious for Afro-Caribbean groups, being ‘cliquey’ for Asian groups and gender stereotypes which view women as not committed, can affect opportunities within organisations. Institutional discrimination, which reinforced existing work patterns and biased assessments, was a reality for many of the ethnic minority women participants, who argued that the organisational structure and culture was ‘built’ in favour of white males. Other factors which affected opportunities, in the eyes of the participants was an elitist attitude to education; whether candidates attended public or state schools and hence, class differences were important for the extent of support received. Ethnic minority women and men alike argued that, due to the covert nature of discrimination, it was difficult for them to challenge it. The perception of these women and men was that they had to work harder merely due to the fact that they were of ethnic minority background and that they had to try not to make any mistakes, because as Gurjit who was employed in CSB argued, her faults would be “much more obvious” than those of white male staff. Mahesh also argued that he could not point to any direct disadvantage or overt discrimination. He was however, aware of the fact that he had to “work harder”, which may infer hidden or covert discrimination. Therefore, there was an unconscious element of constantly “being on your toes” as an ethnic minority, which can create enormous stress when one is attempting to ‘get the work done’.

This section has clearly demonstrated the reality of organisational practices within organisations and the negative effects it can have on ethnic minority women’s career opportunities. CSA and CSB, although they had the reputation of being leaders in equality and diversity policies and initiatives, faced problems of implementation, informal practices and an old white boys network culture, where ‘fitting in’ was crucial for mentoring, career development and advancement.

The following sections build on, and often refer to the HRM doctrine, discussed in this section. In Section 8.3.2, the above discussion is taken forward by analysing in more detail the equality and diversity policies and initiatives CSA and CSB implemented. There is a discussion on positive action and the business case for equality, where the perceptions of different groups of staff and management are presented and placed in the existing literature context.

8.3.2 Equality /diversity initiatives and culture management

A central aim of this study was to examine the effect of equality and diversity policies on the perceptions of ethnic minority women's career experiences and opportunities. A criterion for selecting CSA and CSB as the case study organisations was their formal commitment to equality and their extensive policies and initiatives for increasing representation of ethnic minorities and women (see Chapter 5).

CSA and CSB formulated and adopted both EO and MD type policies. There was an element of 'pick and mix' of traditional equality policies, such as the EO formal policy statements and diversity initiatives such as positive action schemes, which can fall within traditional EO but also within Liff's (1997) MD approach of "Valuing Differences", presented in Chapter 3. Therefore, the findings confirm Liff's (1997, 1999) statement that organisations can be eclectic in selecting EO and MD policies and that there has not been a fundamental shift away from EO towards a distinct philosophy of MD, which other writers (for example, Kandola and Fullerton, 1994) have advocated.

A central finding within this study, was the fact that there were two opposite 'camps' on attitudes regarding diversity initiatives and specifically positive action and exclusive training for ethnic minorities and women. There were dilemmas in organisations which acknowledged that some drastic changes, such as positive action, had to be adopted, but at the same time, they had to face resistance for these initiatives from some managers and staff. Some of the ethnic minority participants argued that, although they could see the benefits and the need for positive action, they would not want to be part of it, as they

were afraid they would be seen as having “special needs” and “needing a push”. Even more fundamentally, some did not agree with the philosophy of these schemes, arguing that it reinforces segregation and creates an unrealistic situation, not existent in a multi-cultural society. The vast majority of white staff in CSA and CSB were against positive action, which they viewed as reverse discrimination, favouring ethnic minorities and “leaving them behind”.

There were however, ethnic minority staff in CSA, CSB and from the ‘independent group’, who were in favour of positive action, because they believed that there was “a need to get the playing field level”, to use Anna’s words. Samina’s argument on positive action was also important, when contending that this type of action is necessary because the pursuit of equality was not genuine in organisations; if it was, she argued, there would be no need for any such initiatives. Some participants, such as Gurjit who was employed in CSB, were initially very concerned about attending the exclusive training schemes CSB was offering to ethnic minorities. She argued however, that after she attended the training seminars, her views changed as she realised there are areas ethnic minorities need to address within the security of their own group, such as learning to penetrate influential networks and identifying mentors.

There were indications that the equal opportunity policies in place may stop white staff from being directly racist or sexist towards ethnic minority staff, as Razwana in the CSA Store has argued, but this does not seem to imply that there is no tension or conflict between white and ethnic minority employees. This tension was prevalent in the Store, where a number of diversity initiatives, such as multi-lingual signs, female Pakistani greeters and the provision of ethnic minority products and services, apparently came under attack by white customers. As presented in Chapter 5, managers stated that these initiatives had to be scaled down, as the majority of the Store’s customers were white and they “have to keep them happy”. Joanne, the Customer Service Manager and David, the Store Manager, expressed their concerns with diversity and that “it has been a struggle”, a primary reason stated for the problems being the location of the Store in a deprived area with high unemployment, where racial tension was on the rise. This however, clearly demonstrates that the extent of genuine

commitment to equality does not travel far, if an organisation believes that these initiatives may have a negative effect on the organisational profits. This argument relates to Dickens's (1994b) statement that the business case may not be in line with equality and this has been confirmed in the instances within the Store. It is pertinent however, to argue that no hard evidence was given to me by management, of the number of white customers raising complaints about the Store and threatening to shop elsewhere. This fact may be an indication of the lack of concrete proof of the effect of this on CSA's overall profits. It seems that at the first sign of difficulty with the diversity initiatives at the Store, everything crumbled, demonstrating a lack of genuine understanding or commitment to equality issues. By this practice, I believe that CSA demonstrated the reality of its values and the fact that the focus was placed on bottom line and that the internal issues of racism, sexism, resistance and unfairness within the staff and management were not a priority.

Within CSB there were also issues of resentment by white staff, who felt that positive action equated to reverse discrimination and that the organisation focuses explicitly on "getting the numbers in", at the expense of qualified, competent staff. Tokenism was discussed from both white and ethnic minority staff, where white staff argued that ethnic minorities are placed in position as tokens, to demonstrate commitment to equality and where ethnic minority employees feared that if they progressed or were promoted, they would be seen as "part of the positive action scheme" and therefore be perceived as incapable of effectively performing in their job.

Although both organisations, advocated commitment to equality and the diversity initiatives were strongly supported from senior management, their implementation fell short of expectations. As illustrated through the empirical work, positive action initiatives, is a very sensitive area to implement, which needs careful planning and continuous communication with all staff. The empirical data has demonstrated that in both organisations, there were problems with resentment, resistance and accusations of tokenism. It can be deduced that both CSA and CSB may not have "gone about it the right way", as Yasmin in CSA argued, primarily by not providing sufficient information to staff on the

reasons and the need for positive action initiatives in their organisation. White staff, felt excluded from these initiatives and by not receiving adequate information on the schemes, adopted a resistance to them viewing them more as positive discrimination rather than positive action. Laura, a white female staff member in CSB, argued that white staff were portrayed negatively through these initiatives and were implicitly accused of not understanding the issues regarding ethnic minority staff and patients. In effect, this created more resentment and divisions among white and ethnic minority groups.

It has to be argued however, that organisations can find it particularly difficult to develop and implement policies in a manner where everybody is satisfied; as the data has indicated, ethnic minorities who were part of positive action schemes were either seen as tokens and therefore incompetent, or criticised by other ethnic minority staff for “selling out” by wanting to progress in mainstream organisations. Accusations were also aimed at the organisations, who were seen by some as delivering these initiatives as a “PR exercise” or because “they are forced to do so”. Therefore, it seems that organisations may be damned if they do attempt to implement diversity and positive action initiatives and, damned if they do not engage in such practices.

In line with the discussion in Chapter 3 on organisational culture, the empirical work in this study confirmed that there are pertinent issues when organisations try to change or manipulate culture. As argued above, CSA and CSB advocated genuine commitment to equality, arguing that one part of their priorities was the creation of a diverse organisation by increasing representation of ethnic minorities and women through their diversity policies and initiatives. This, in effect, would require a change in the present organisational culture, where white males occupied the positions of power and where nepotism was a widespread phenomenon. At the same time, however, there was no strategic attempt to understand organisational culture; organisations focused on formulating initiatives and therefore attempted in some ways to change organisational structures, without fundamentally understanding the culture of their organisations. There may have been an implicit belief that culture would change to follow structural transformations but this was not the case. This argument

illustrates the interconnection of structure and culture, which although distinct, are affected by each other. Primarily however, it seems that a change in culture needs to come first or at least at the same time as a structural change. As the empirical work has demonstrated, organisational attempts to increase representation of ethnic minorities and women and therefore restructure existing hierarchies did not occur smoothly, as the biased organisational cultures were not effectively challenged.

In formulating and attempting to implement diversity initiatives therefore, it appears that CSA and CSB did not think through the importance of “getting it right” as it was argued above, in terms of understanding that this fundamental change could create tension and resistance. As discussed in Chapter 5, some of the managers acknowledged that it is difficult to change attitudes or values of employees and the focus was therefore placed on controlling behaviour at work. Although, it was realistic to assume that people’s values are very difficult to challenge, organisations did not seem to realise that any initiatives they would implement would fail if their staff were not well informed and advised. Both organisations, but CSA specifically, seemed to believe that they could ‘wave a magic wand’ and their organisations would miraculously transform to egalitarian workplaces with no power struggles or accusation of unfairness. This is not to argue that managers were not sceptical, since as it was argued above, a number of them were critical of the organisational policies. However, regardless of this scepticism, there was a lack of in-depth understanding of the problems and issues created by organisational attempts to manipulate organisational culture. The research data has therefore confirmed the position, presented in Chapter 3, which views culture as a metaphor, as “something an organisation is” rather than as a variable, “something an organisation has” (Smircich, 1983).

As the empirical data has indicated, the organisational culture is difficult to manipulate or transform. This provides evidence for the view, presented in Chapter 3, that culture can be seen as a root metaphor. People within organisations therefore are required to fit into the existing culture if they want to penetrate influential networks or be given opportunities for career development and advancement. This relates back to Jenkins’s (1986) distinction of

acceptability versus suitability, discussed in Chapter 3, where acceptability and 'fitting in' in terms of behaviour, dressing and conducting oneself were more important than being suitable and qualified for the job. Women may be excluded because they cannot demonstrate the type of commitment which is deemed as appropriate of "seem to be working" at all times, due to family responsibilities, and ethnic minorities with community or religious responsibilities cannot, and do not want to, be part of the "pub culture" present in a number of organisations, where informal networks are created and important decisions take place. The organisational culture may hinder the opportunities of ethnic minority women who may be perceived as different in terms of their ethnicity, culture and religion, unless they are accepted as "one of us", as some of the participants argued. This discussion on acceptability and 'fitting in' is extended in the following section.

8.3.3 Living in two worlds

This section takes further some of the issues addressed in Chapter 6, with regard to ethnic minority women's perceptions of living in two worlds, with conflicting expectations and demands. Although such duality of experiences has been recognised by different writers (Bell, 1986, 1990; Denton, 1990; Davidson, 1997), this study has taken this work further by placing these experiences within the HRM and organisational culture literature, concentrating on organisational equality and diversity policies and practices and the effect of these on the perceptions of ethnic minority women living in two worlds. The effects of social group and organisational culture and ethnic minority women's agency are central in this discussion.

The data has indicated that ethnic minority women's career experiences need to be viewed in relation to their personal, family and community life experiences, as there is an interaction and interrelation among them. One of the most important findings of this study, is the tension between organisational culture and social group culture and the effects of this on ethnic minority women's careers. The interviews with some ethnic minority women shed light on the bi-cultural stress these women experience when they attempt to satisfy family, community or religious expectations, as components of their social group

culture, and also adhere to the organisational norms of commitment, pub culture and western appearance and behaviour. A number of these women used the same terminology in discussing this situation, in arguing that they live in two worlds, the white world at work and their world within their home and sometimes within their community. It is important to state however that not all ethnic minority women had to face this issue; it was central to the women who were committed to their cultural and religious responsibilities and who were actively involved within their ethnic community. Dressing and overall appearance seemed to be central to some ethnic minority women's experiences within their organisations and their views on how they were perceived by their white western colleagues. As indicated within the empirical data, a number of Asian and Afro-Caribbean women, expressed their belief that their organisations would not accept them had they been dressed in ethnic or religious clothing, or had ethnic hairstyles, such as afros and plaits. Therefore, it can be argued that this was an issue for women whose appearance made them identifiable to a specific cultural, ethnic or religious group, but also to those women who believed they had to downplay their identity in order to fit into the organisational culture. Another group of ethnic minority women participants argued that this was not an issue of concern to them personally since they saw themselves as "westernised", as Yasmin stated. These women believed they were effectively assimilated to the western culture and behaviour of organisations and were not close to their cultural or religious communities.

It can be argued that the behaviour adopted by the ethnic minority women who downplayed their social group identity is, in part, a strategy, as Mary stated, to get them "from a to b", in the same manner that Denise argued that black women need to "tone down" their ethnic hairstyles in order to 'fit in'. These women recognised that appropriate behaviours and appearance were required if they wanted to penetrate organisations and assimilate in the dominant culture. A central issue indicated by the data is that this group of ethnic minority women found it easier to work and develop in organisations as they had the agency to develop strategies to help them assimilate. This is not to generalise and argue that the ethnic minority women who were close to their cultural and religious communities and were dressed in ethnic clothing, such as Samina and Farrah,

lacked agency. However, there seemed to be more tension and frustration among the latter group who tried to remain loyal to their communities' expectations but also assimilate into their organisations' norms.

This situation created disillusionment among some of the participants falling within the latter group, who did not believe they could actually change the *status quo*. Comments by Salimah and Rekha in CSB, who stated that they have no faith in their organisation and argued that they are “automatically worse off” by being ethnic minorities, and by Richard in CSB and Nasim in CSA, two ethnic minority male participants, who argued that they are viewed in “typecast ways” and organisations will not change, indicates a defeated attitude where these participants viewed themselves as victims with no control over their careers and lives. It is important however, not to downplay the effect of racism or sexism on someone's ambition and determination, but the empirical data has demonstrated that participants dealt with these problems in different ways. For example, Anna, who argued that strategy and determination is crucial for career success, stated that she is aware of discrimination but she views it as a challenge, “as an alternative way to approach” what she wants. There is therefore a case for arguing that in some respects there were two groups of participants; those who emphasised agency over structure and culture, and those, who placed the focus on the latter, viewing themselves to a great extent as passive, with no control or power over organisational and cultural constraints. This point however, should not diminish in any way the stress and tension ethnic minority women face when they want to maintain their cultural identity and traditions but also have successful careers in westernised organisations. It is pertinent to restate here however that it is not argued that the group of participants who had agency and developed career strategies and the group who lacked agency and determination, respectively correspond to the “westernised” ethnic minority women and to the ethnic minority women who were active members of their cultural or religious group. As the data has indicated, some of the ethnic minority women who were close to their community, had agency and perceived themselves as successful, as was the case with Samina, whereas more “westernised” women, such as Elizabeth in CSB,

had a defeated attitude and saw herself as a victim, with no control over her career.

It was argued, through the data analysis chapters, that there are similarities between white and ethnic minority women, with regard to the fact that they bear the burden of domestic and family responsibilities. In some respects, therefore, both ethnic minority and white women live in two worlds, with conflicting demands and expectations. It is contended here, however, that for ethnic minority women with community or religious responsibilities, the distance between the western organisational world and their private world is greater than for white women. As the data has indicated ethnic minority women from different ethnic groups argued that they experienced tension by trying to balance their work and personal/community life. However, this issue was more prominent for Pakistani Muslim women, who were committed to their religious and community responsibilities and expectations, and had to deal with the stereotypical views of their white or western colleagues, who often perceived them as “passive and submissive”, as Saira has argued. There is evidence therefore, to argue that the distance between work and personal life is greater for ethnic minority women than for white women, but at the same time, ethnic minority women’s experiences are not homogeneous, as they often depend on their social group. Hence, there may be an argument that there are different ‘lengths’ of this distance between organisational and personal life, with white women and ethnic minority women having some similar but also some different experiences, and different groups of ethnic minority women, experiencing same barriers in terms of their ‘race’ and ethnicity, but with these experiences being accentuated by religion and culture.

As also examined within the empirical work, perceptions of success seemed to vary greatly among participants. Definitions of success ranged from the more traditional ones of vertical progression and financial rewards, to effectively balancing work and family life, to being satisfied with one’s job and maintaining links with their community and adhering to their cultural and religious expectations. This sheds a different light in the discussion above in some ways, in that ethnic minority women who valued their community’s

beliefs and perceptions of themselves, perceived success in different ways from ethnic minority women who related success to vertical progression in their organisations. For example, Samina saw herself as successful, where she equated success with working within an organisation she was happy and comfortable in and also adhering and maintaining the respect of her Muslim community. Samina consciously exercised agency, but it can be argued that her agency took a different manner than the agency of other ethnic minority women, who believed that the only way to succeed in organisations, would be to downplay one's social group identity, and 'fit in'. It should be stated again, that Samina was employed within a voluntary organisation, which, as she asserted herself, made her feel more comfortable and "cushioned", but she still viewed herself as successful. A contrasting view would be that of Yasmin's whose agency had different meanings and took different forms.

The above discussion illustrates the interaction of agency with organisational and family structures and organisational and social group cultures; the form agency took for different participants depended to some extent on their world and their reality within the organisational structures and cultures they inhabited and their family responsibilities, demands and cultural/religious expectations. The results of this interaction were that some ethnic minority women viewed biased organisational cultures and personal life demands as a challenge and strived to develop strategies and plans to address problems and concerns, whereas other women adopted a defeated attitude, assuming that they had no control over their careers and lives. In addition, as argued above, success was viewed in different ways by different women, again indicating that agency and hence perceptions of success cannot be viewed in isolation from the social world they inhabit.

After presenting and discussing the contribution this study has provided to different areas of HRM and equality, the chapter moves on to present implications for HR practice within organisations.

8.4 Implications for HR practice

The findings presented in this study and the discussions in the previous sections, suggest important implications for HR practice within organisations which aim to create a diverse organisational environment of fairness and appreciation of its staff.

The discussion above, has indicated that equality policies were often ineffective in the participants' employing organisations, in that they were not implemented in practice and a system of favouritism and an old white boys network culture existed. It is important however to state, that this situation should not be taken to assume that EO and MD policies are not necessary. They provide the framework, the 'base', necessary for organisations to build on. Organisations should recognise that implementation of these policies needs considerable attention and commitment, where all organisational members are included and consulted. As the data has indicated, it is the people who have the power to make the policies work and organisations should therefore, train their managers and staff effectively, providing necessary knowledge and skills to aid them in being committed to, and effectively using and applying, the policies.

The empirical findings have suggested that the business case may not always be in line with equality, as was apparently the case in CSA. Nevertheless, organisations should look for hard evidence when deciding whether a policy is non-profitable for their organisation before panic sets in and it hurriedly reverts to the previous *status quo*. If organisations are to claim to be equal opportunities employers and they adopt a number of diversity initiatives, they need to realise that genuine, sustained commitment and patience is crucial for the successful implementation of these initiatives. It is not sufficient to formulate these policies and initiatives and be seen to be doing enough; well planned actions and strategies are important for long term success.

In situations where equal opportunities have proven to be conflicting with an organisation's business case, organisations need to decide if they are willing to forego short term profits for long term benefits, by building a reputation for being genuinely committed to their ostensible philosophy of equality and hence,

attracting more ethnic minority customers and staff in the long run. Not to do so suggests that their stance in this regard is rhetoric rather than reality. In today's organisations, with changing demographics, where more and more women and ethnic minorities are within the working age population, organisations will soon not be able to afford to restrict their employee, and customer, base to white males. There is a pursuit for the best people and talent should become the primary concern for organisational survival. Therefore, a more strategic, long term approach is necessary for their success. The public relations image organisations build today, is crucial for their own successful and profitable development.

As stated in Chapter 3, existing anti-discrimination legislation in the form of the Race Relations Act and the Sex Discrimination Act, has not been successful in eradicating inequalities. However, European anti-discrimination legislation which is coming into effect across Europe in 2003, constitutes an important implication for organisations, where the responsibility of proving that an employee has not been discriminated against, shifts from the employee to the employer. This recent development suggests that organisations have more responsibility in making sure that their structures and cultures provide a positive, fair environment for all, where institutional racism and sexism become non-existent in the near future.

As argued through the literature and the empirical work, culture change is extremely hard and it is only through sustained efforts and commitment over a period of time, that fundamental restructuring can occur. Merely having a policy does not equate to having a workable strategy and organisations need to adopt a strategic approach if they are genuinely committed to change, accompanied by strong leadership and reciprocity of commitment. Organisations also need to recognise the agency of their managers and staff and acknowledge that organisational members can have a great effect on the success of organisational policies by ascribing and being supportive to the organisational goals or on the contrary, being resistant and sabotaging the organisational process.

If organisations realise the positive effects of employing women and ethnic minorities, especially due to demographic changes, the business case and positive public image, and the negative sanctions of breaking the law, they may be ready to acknowledge that they are the ones who have to change instead of expecting or even demanding organisational members to 'fit in' on a number of different grounds within the pre-existing, often discriminatory organisational culture.

Empirical findings, specifically in relation to diversity initiatives and positive action have also indicated a need for organisations to implement policies that are beneficial to all its members, rather than excluding some in favour of others. This is not to argue that positive action is not necessary in certain circumstances, but there is an urgent need for including all staff when implementing these policies, by providing sufficient information and consulting with all groups before and during implementation for their views and concerns. A useful strategy for organisations may be to offer a number of general courses which all members of staff can attend, regardless of ethnicity and gender, rather than segregating people and ascribing to them stereotypical needs and characteristics. For example, it may be better to have assertiveness training open to everyone and organisational members who are lacking in assertiveness and confidence can then have access to it, rather than presenting this as "women's training" or "ethnic minorities' training". Some women and ethnic minorities may not need assertiveness training, in the same manner that men and white staff may find this beneficial. Another suggestion would be to assign a mentor to each employee and then everyone can identify and address their own personal strengths and shortcomings in a more private and secure environment. Therefore, this takes us back to the idea that organisations need to develop good policies for all rather than excluding certain groups and creating feelings of inadequacy or resentment. These arguments directly relate to some approaches of MD, such as the "Dissolving Differences" approach, where the focus is placed on individual rather than social group differences, which EO and other MD approaches (for example, "Valuing Differences") concentrate on.

However, it is not the argument here that social group differences do not matter. As discussed in Chapter 3, differences based on social groups are important in that they are *seen* as important by organisations and society. It is not therefore, argued that positive action should be abolished; nevertheless, organisations may need to weigh the costs and benefits of implementing positive action initiatives and they need to accept that in specific circumstances, positive action is necessary, for example, where groups who have been disadvantaged, would want to address their concerns within the security of their own group, as Gurjit argued. However, it may be useful for organisations to conduct attitude surveys in order to assess whether a positive action scheme would cause resentments and divisions among social groups, which may outweigh the benefits of such a programme. In addition, as suggested above, there are situations where organisational schemes which focus on individuals rather than social groups, are more useful and more acceptable to organisational members.

After presenting a number of implications for HR practice, the chapter moves on to a critical evaluation of this study.

8.5 Critical assessments and reflections upon completion

In the very early stages of this study, I believed that it would be interesting to conduct a comparative study of ethnic minority women's organisational experiences in the UK and the USA. However, I realised early on that for me to collect the kind of in-depth information on experiences and perceptions of ethnic minority women I envisaged, the scale of the study would have to be limited to fewer organisations within the UK. Therefore, by virtue of the case study approach, I traded the generalisability that a larger study would provide, for in-depth investigation of the issues. Thus, although this study does not claim to be generalisable to other samples or organisations, it does offer insight to ethnic minority women's experiences in a range of organisations and industries in England and can therefore shed light to a previously under-researched area.

I investigated the effect of policies and practices on ethnic minority women's careers in two organisations, and also conducted interviews with an 'independent group' of ethnic minority women and men. As stated above, in the

latter case, I did not have access to the participants' organisational policies and initiatives nor could I interview managers or other staff within the participants' organisations. I did not therefore have the broader picture that the two case study organisations have provided. Acknowledging this, there were nevertheless benefits of interviewing the 'independent group' in that I had the opportunity to talk to individuals in a range of industries, professions and levels that perhaps I would not have been able to, if I had attempted to gain access through their organisations. Also, there is a possibility that these individuals might have felt more at ease talking to me, knowing that I had no links to their organisation and I had contacted them directly.

I reflected extensively on my research design and my decision to involve staff at all levels of the organisational hierarchy within CSA and CSB. Partly, this was inevitable, as the majority of the ethnic minority staff were at lower organisational levels. There were some initial concerns with the data I was collecting, especially from shopfloor level staff at CSA. Firstly, I could sense some apprehension from some of these staff, which I believe stemmed from the fact that they were not informed about this study, although I consistently requested from management that they inform their staff of my research and provide them with the choice of being interviewed. They therefore would meet me with the only information given to them being that "there is a person from a university who wants to talk to you". As a result, they were thrown in a situation they were not prepared for and given the fact that this study dealt with sensitive areas, they were, I believe, apprehensive. This is a clear indication of the divide that sometimes exists between management and staff, and some of the managers' attitude towards their junior level employees, where the latter are treated as resources with no views, feelings or attitudes. This situation, I believed, accentuated their apprehension in talking to me.

An additional and related concern was that I felt that these staff were not as forthcoming in their discussion of their experiences, which sometimes left me with very short interviews and limited information. However, this was a finding in itself, in that it indicated that managers rarely ask lower level staff for their opinions or involve them in organisational decisions. Therefore, shopfloor level

staff do not typically find themselves in situations where they have to critically reflect on their experiences and opportunities, or even in situations where they are *asked* for their views and perceptions. Staff in professional and managerial levels are probably more accustomed to discussing issues such as their attitudes to organisational policies, their perceptions of their careers and questioning the *status quo*. This is not to argue that the interviews with the junior staff were not useful, as they provided different insights into, and perspectives on, their concerns and frustrations. However, I believe that if management in the CSA Store was as genuinely interested in the attitudes of their staff on their diversity initiatives, as they had claimed, more information would have been given to them before they found themselves in an interview room with a university researcher. I contend that the interviews with staff at junior levels, although useful as they stand, could have been more fruitful if these participants were more informed and advised prior to the interview.

Upon reflection, I would argue that, if time limitations were not of concern, observation would have been a useful research tool, especially on the shopfloor level at CSA. I recognise that this would be almost impossible within CSB and with the 'independent group'. However, within the CSA Store, it may have been useful to observe or even conduct participant observation, where I could work with the ethnic minority women as a checkout operator and gain a deeper insight into their experiences and into the organisational context and setting. Also upon reflection, I realised that the interviews with shopfloor level staff may have been more fruitful, if I was not using a tape recorder. As I mentioned above, these staff were quite apprehensive and not as forthcoming and perhaps the use of a tape recorder could have made them more uneasy as they may have felt that their views would be traced back to them, or that management would have access to the tapes.

A different approach to this study, if again time and resources were not limited, would be to conduct a longitudinal study in organisations, where ethnic minority women's career history was tracked over a number of years. Paired sample comparisons would have been useful in identifying similarities and differences with other groups; for example, the career of an ethnic minority

woman would be examined in comparison to that of a white woman. Therefore, the effects of organisational policies and practices, extent of support and opportunities for development, would be investigated and compared for different social groups.

A last point in this section concerns the issue of identity. In line with the methodological framework, reality is regarded as internal to individual actors. As a white female researcher conducting research involving ethnic minority and white participants, I have identified “one reality” and therefore one way of interpreting and analysing data. I have presented in Chapter 4 a step by step discussion of how I conducted this research, including a discussion on reflexivity. Therefore, I would argue that this study is valid, but at the same time I acknowledge that this research could have been conducted in different ways and produce different findings, or realities, depending on the researcher, the participants, the organisations and the time of the research. I therefore, do not make claims of one ultimate truth as this would go against my methodological framework and philosophy.

The next section extends some of the discussions presented here in that it outlines possible areas for further research.

8.6 Further research

Further studies could be carried out to explore and shed light on the invisibility of ethnic minority women’s careers. An outline of suggestions for further research is presented within this section:

8.6.1 Longitudinal study

Research examining the careers of ethnic minority women over a number of years would be very useful, in providing a detailed account of their career history. Their career opportunities and experiences could be examined in more detail, perhaps within the structure, culture and agency framework, where the effects of each dimension could be investigated within a fixed period of time. Conducting a longitudinal study would allow an in-depth examination of the organisational support ethnic minority women receive, the effects of mentoring

and networking, and also the long-term effects of family and community responsibilities or support on their career. In addition, the effects of their agency, in having strategies and career plans, would be more prominent when examined over a period of time.

8.6.2 Paired samples

Perhaps in conjunction with the above study, a paired samples approach could be useful in placing ethnic minority women's careers in a broader context by 'linking' them to another organisational member of different ethnicity or gender and tracking their career history and opportunities through a longitudinal study. Differences in terms of organisational support, personal life responsibilities and family/community support, and organisational members' agency and determination would be illuminated through this approach.

8.6.3 A study of best practice

This thesis has focused its attention in two organisations, which were seen, and which presented themselves, as leaders in diversity and hence examining best practice. However, a larger scale study within a number of organisations could be fruitful in effectively exploring policies and practices which are beneficial to ethnic minority women's careers and also identifying problems and constraints these organisations faced. In this manner, a broader picture of organisational experiences would be produced, perhaps also identifying best practice policies and practices, which may have produced positive results for ethnic minority women's careers.

8.6.4 Comparative study

Another exciting avenue would be to conduct a comparative study between UK and US organisations. Although it was acknowledged in this thesis that these two countries have different contexts and histories, lessons could be learned from the US in that it has been addressing and dealing with diversity issues for a longer time than the UK and statistics show that ethnic minority groups, as a whole, have progressed further in the US than the UK (Davidson, 1997; Morrison and von Glinow, 1990), although they still face "glass ceilings" (Morrison and von Glinow, 1990). The experiences of ethnic minorities in US

organisations would be highlighted, perhaps offering some insights into their support mechanisms and the strategies they adopted in developing and progressing in their careers, which may be useful in the UK context.

8.6.5 Participant observation

As argued in the previous section, if time limitations are not present, or are less restrictive, participant observation would be a useful research method in investigating ethnic minority women's career experiences. The researcher could participate in the everyday work activities and therefore, become closer to the staff and gain a valuable insight into their everyday work experiences, the concerns and barriers they may face at work and within their home and community life, and again, the possible plans and strategies adopted by them to deal with their concerns and perhaps to develop in their careers.

8.6.6 HRM policies

Further research could explore equality in a broader HRM context by investigating not only the equal opportunities and diversity initiatives organisations have in place, but also conduct a detailed examination of other HR policies such as performance appraisals and training and analyse how different groups are supported and evaluated and how they perform within the organisational context. An important aspect of such research would therefore be to examine whether equality is present within HR policies, in line with the HRM philosophy of integrating equality within HR practices.

The next section provides a conclusion to this chapter and this thesis, where some final thoughts and views are presented.

8.7 Conclusion

A main personal aim for conducting this study was my own interest in the area of racism and sexism in employment and society. Although this work has been immensely fulfilling and rewarding in that respect, I also wanted to contribute to this under-researched field by investigating organisational policies and practices and their effect on ethnic minority women's career experiences and opportunities, with the aim of offering some answers and suggestions. I adopted

a qualitative methodology, where participants could speak in their own words and share their experiences within organisational structures and cultures, balancing work and family responsibilities, whether they adhered to cultural and religious expectations, whether they had career plans and strategies, and the effect of these on their career.

Through this study, two main research questions were investigated, namely the effect of structure, culture and agency, and their interaction on ethnic minority women's careers. Through the empirical work, it has been found that the majority of ethnic minority women participants are employed in lower levels of the hierarchy, with very few breaking through to managerial levels, they face racial and gender stereotypes, they have problems identifying mentors and are excluded from powerful informal networks. These women acknowledged that their organisations had, in general, well developed formal policies, but they were not implemented in practice, because a system of nepotism and an old white boys network culture were in operation. They believed that the responsibility of career development should be shared between employees and organisations, but in reality, they argued, their organisations were not supportive of their careers.

The data has indicated that for ethnic minority women who adhered to cultural and religious responsibilities, and dressed in their ethnic or religious clothing, there were more tensions between their work and private life. These women argued that they lived in two worlds, the organisational white and westernised world and their private world with their families and communities. This experience created stress and tension among these women, as the demands and expectations from these two worlds were often very conflicting. If they wanted to fit into the organisational culture in order to develop their career, they would have to give up their traditional clothing and appearance and quoting some of the participants, become "more westernised" and seen as "one of us". In doing so, however, their community would see them as "acting white" or "selling out" and giving up on their religious and cultural lives.

Ethnic minority women participants who saw themselves as “more westernised” or not close to their ethnic communities, argued that appearance and social group responsibilities were not an issue of concern as they could ‘fit in’ the organisational culture more readily. This is not to argue however, that these women did not face institutional barriers as they were often stereotyped on the basis of their colour or ‘race’ and faced racism or sexism within their organisations. What their claims might imply however is that they did not have to experience the bi-cultural tension, the ethnic minority women who were close to their culture and religion experienced.

Through the course of this study, it was argued that there were similarities among white and ethnic minority women, with regard to the unequal distribution of domestic labour, with women bearing the burden over men. It was suggested therefore that white and ethnic minority women alike, might live in two worlds, but for the ethnic minority women who were part of their community, therefore facing additional responsibilities, the distance between the two worlds is greater. As discussed in Section 8.3.3, there may be different ‘lengths’ of this distance, depending on the ethnic group of the ethnic minority women and on whether these women ascribe to their culture and religion.

Although white women, may have faced some similar issues to ethnic minority women, the empirical study in CSA and CSB, has demonstrated a lack of awareness of ethnic and cultural issues by white staff. This partly suggests a failure of equality and diversity policies and the manner in which they are implemented. As argued above, the diversity initiatives, specifically positive action, were faced with a great deal of apprehension and resentment from white staff and a possible cause of this could be the fact that white groups felt excluded and “left behind”. Although, this is based solely on the perceptions of white staff and cannot be readily verified, it is important for organisations to be aware of how they are perceived and to acknowledge that they need to address these policies more sensitively, creating an environment where everyone feels included and valued.

Agency was a crucial component of ethnic minority women's career experiences. As argued above, the data demonstrated that in some respects, there were two groups of ethnic minority women; those who viewed themselves as passive agents, with a pre-determined fate, having no control over their careers or lives, and those who placed agency before structure and culture and although acknowledging constraints, they saw them as challenges and as indicating that they had to develop strategies in order to achieve their goals.

At the same time, the agency of managers is an important factor, which may have an effect on ethnic minority women's careers. As illustrated through existing literature and empirical data, managers may not be interested in, or at worse, may be resistant to, equality and diversity. This makes it extremely difficult for ethnic minority women, in that it diminishes the much needed organisational support for their careers. Locating this in the discussion above, it is not argued that ethnic minority women's careers are 'doomed' if they have an unsupportive manager, as they may work through different alternatives, perhaps even seeking employment in a different organisation, in order to succeed. This is a clear illustration of the interaction between agency, structure and culture and also between agencies of different groups, in that it indicates that although discriminatory structures and cultures are present and are often very difficult to challenge, individuals have agency which helps them to strategically assess their situations and develop alternative plans to achieve their goals. Some of the ethnic minority women in this study have pushed the boundaries, challenged the *status quo* and cracked the concrete ceiling, by attaining higher organisational positions and rewards. This is not to argue however, that organisational support, in the form of effective equality policies, supportive managers and opportunities for mentoring, is not important; it is nevertheless contended, that for the ethnic minority female participants who exercised agency, the lack of organisational support would not overpower their ambitions and career goals in perhaps the way it defeated some of the participants, who adopted a victimised attitude.

This study has demonstrated that the three dimensions of the theoretical framework may sometimes be mutually supportive and at other times be in contention with one another. For example, line managers' agency of resisting

equality reinforces discriminatory structures and biased cultures in organisations. On the other hand, ethnic minority women's agency and determination to succeed, may be set against organisational barriers, but also community or family demands. However, the community and family, should not always be seen as a barrier, as they can offer important support to ethnic minority women's careers, in terms of emotional encouragement, but also more instrumental help, as providers of child care support. It is also pertinent to restate at this point that perceptions of success differ, with agency itself taking different forms. What is important is that individuals achieved the goals they have set for themselves, regarding their situations and how they viewed success, rather than assuming that career success equates with vertical progression and financial rewards. It could be argued however, that it would be potentially useful for them to be able to achieve decision-making levels in organisations and therefore be in a position to redress the balance.

The discussion above suggests, that there are different permutations between the three dimensions of structure, culture and agency which verify their interaction with regard to ethnic minority women's career experiences and opportunities. All three dimensions are central to ethnic minority women's experiences but they cannot be viewed in isolation as they affect and are affected by each other in different times and circumstances. Structural and cultural constraints are impossible to deny; it is however, the agency of individuals that can push boundaries and perhaps even recreate more supportive structures and cultures. It is not argued that one individual can transform society, but each person has the agency to implement some changes, make choices and work through alternatives to achieve their goals. This is not to say that individuals never fail in the plans they make or that they never face barriers, but this can be seen as a component of agency, in that they can re-assess their strategies and evaluate their career and life plans in a manner which acknowledges the constraints they face but also drives them to achieve their goals.

This study has shed light in an area which has generally received very limited attention, especially in the UK. This thesis therefore, although contributing to this under-researched field and filling some gaps identified in existing literature,

provides answers to specific questions and as argued above, provides one reality among many. There is a real need for more work in this area if a broader picture of the experiences of ethnic minority women is to emerge and perhaps this study can be used as a springboard to explore other perspectives or realities.

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Appendix 1

Letter to organisations inviting them to participate

Addressee
(TO HR Director/Manager)

Date

Dear ...

Re: The career development and progression of ethnic minority women in organisations

There is increased awareness of the benefits management of diversity can bring to organisations which have to deal with an increasingly diverse workforce and to compete in a globalised market place. Management of diversity refers to the management of a diverse workforce so that individuals in that workforce perform at their maximum potential by using all their skills, competencies, talents and added values. Managing diversity in organisations encompasses gender, racial and ethnic differences, age, disability, religion etc.

Race, ethnicity and gender are important components of the management of diversity in organisations, but they have typically been examined independently. There is however, an interaction of the dynamics of race, ethnicity and gender in employment, which is directly present in the situation of ethnic minority women. Ethnic minority women, and specifically their career development and career progression in English organisations, has been an under-researched area. Research on the experiences and attitudes regarding the career development and progression of these women is quite limited.

There is a possible number of factors which can contribute to the career development and progression of ethnic minority women, i.e. effective organisational policies, training opportunities etc., and also factors related to the individual employee, i.e. academic and professional qualifications, family responsibilities etc.

I am currently undertaking doctoral research in the Business School at the University of Leeds, where I am investigating the career development and

progression of ethnic minority women in English organisations. I wish to examine factors which can contribute to career development and progression in organisations, focusing on organisational policies and practices, in addition to individual perceptions and experiences of the careers of different groups of employees, concentrating specifically on ethnic minority women.

In order to generate useful information on the issues above, organisations who have been engaged with the management of diversity in their workplace and who have a reputation of being an Equal Opportunities employer, should be involved. I would therefore, like to invite your organisation to participate in this study. X (name of organisation) being a member of the Race for Opportunity initiative (and/ or) a signatory of the Leadership Challenge (and Opportunity 2000- if applicable), is clearly committed to promoting racial (and gender-if applicable) equality in the organisation. By participating in this study, your organisation can provide valuable insights on issues of career development and progression, specifically in relation to gender, race and ethnicity. In addition, the results of this study, may be of benefit to X, through the provision of information on the career patterns and experiences of a section of its workforce.

If X has a proportion of female ethnic minority employees, I would be pleased to discuss this study in more detail. I will be contacting you by phone shortly to arrange an appointment with you, or with a member of your organisation. Should you require further information in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me either by phone or at my home address as follows:

Tel. No.:

E-mail:

Yours sincerely,

Nicolina Kamenou

Appendix 2

'Information pack' sent to organisations which expressed interest in participating in the study

Dear ...

Re: Proposed requirements of organisations participating in the research project:
The career development and progression of ethnic minority women in organisations.

Following our meeting on X date at Y place (*or phone conversation on X date*). I am presenting the proposed requirements for your organisation if you agree (*if organisation had not agreed by that time*) to participate in my research project.

Organisational Case Study

Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews will be conducted at three "levels".

- (a) Initially with top level management, the Human Resource Director and the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Managers.
- (b) With a sample of ethnic minority women employed across the board.
- (c) With a smaller sample of the other three groups of employees, i.e. ethnic minority men, white men and white women.

The interviews will be divided into four main areas:

- (a) Background information (will vary depending on which "level" I am conducting interviews with).
- (b) Career development and progression (depending on "level": perceptions and experiences, attitudes and feelings regarding the career of ethnic minority women).
- (c) Factors contributing to or hindering the career development and progression of ethnic minority women.
- (d) Organisational role and policies regarding ethnic minority women's careers.

Approximate duration of interviews:

- (a) With top level management: ½ hour.
- (b) With the Human Resource Director and the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Managers: 1 ½ -2 hours.
- (c) With ethnic minority women employees: 1- 1 ½ hours.
- (d) With ethnic minority men, white women and white men: ½ to 1 hour.

NOTE: If ethnic minority women are present in top level management, or if they are the HR Director or the Equal Opportunities / Diversity Manager, I would like to interview them twice: (i) As individual ethnic minority women, where I will investigate individual perceptions and experiences of their careers, and (ii) As management, where they will be representing their organisation and discussing the organisation's formal policies.

Focus groups

Focus groups to be conducted with:

A sample of ethnic minority women.

Time of focus groups:

At the end of the individual interviews, as a means of providing "closing" and discussing issues that might arise after the interviews.

Approximate duration of focus groups meetings:

30 minutes to one hour.

Documentation on organisational formal policies

Equal Opportunities and diversity policies, career development, training policies, and background information on the organisation.

Documentation on employee records, monitoring of ethnicity, grades and promotion.

Selection of Sample

Since my main group of employees is ethnic minority women, I believe that the total number of ethnic minority women in the organisation should be invited to participate in my project. And, since the number of ethnic minority employees in organisations is typically a small proportion of the total workforce, this is another reason that all ethnic minority women and also ethnic minority men are targeted. As far as the white groups are selected, I am requesting a random sample of white men and women at jobs across the board (non-managers, junior managers, middle and senior managers). I suggest that the random sample is "drawn" from the payroll, e.g. every 10th/ 15th person in the list.

I am proposing to write a standard letter which the management of the organisation can forward to all ethnic minority women and men, and to the random sample of white men and women (*the number of the random sample depends on the size of the company and total number of employees, but on average I would like to talk to about 5 in each organisation. But this again depends on the number of companies I am conducting research* In the letter I will introduce myself and my research and invite employees to participate. I will provide my contact details where they may contact me if they are interested in participating.

Recording of interviews

My research methodology is qualitative and I will be conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews. Therefore, I feel it would be important to audio-tape the interviews, in order to be able to have an interactive discussion with the interviewees. I will ask all interviewees before I commence the interviews if they object to them being audio-taped.

Interview facilities

I would appreciate it if, for those employees who do not have their own office, a room could be provided in which the interviews can take place in a quiet and confidential environment.

Confidentiality and anonymity

The organisation and all interviewees will be guaranteed complete confidentiality and anonymity. The positions/ job titles of employees may be stated (unless otherwise agreed with each interviewee), but there will be no naming of individuals.

Feedback

I would be very pleased to provide feedback at the completion of my research to participating organisations. The extent and format of the feedback can be negotiated and I would be interested in discussing this with you in more detail.

Yours sincerely

Nicolina Kamenou

Appendix 3

Biographical information of participants¹

Managers (9)

- **CSA Head Office**

1. Miranda	White British ²	33	Divisional Advisor on Employee Relations
2. Donna	White British	40	Employee Relations Manager
3. Finola	White Irish/German	40	HR Project manager on Diversity
4. Crystal	White British	30s	HR Manager
5. Ashwin	Indian British	30s	Deputy Retail Managing Director

CSA Store

1. Joanne ³	White British	44	Customer Service Manager Manager
2. David	White British	30s	Store Manager

- **CSB**

1. Denise ⁴	Afro-Caribbean	48	Diversity Manager
2. Monica	White British	40s	HR Director

¹ The majority of the participants were on full-time contracts. The part-time (p-t) employees will be indicated.

² The ethnic origin of all participants is stated as they stated it to me. Some of them said white or Asian and others were more specific, for example, stating: white British, white Irish or British Asian/ Indian.

³ Interviewed twice: as manager and staff (for her experiences as white woman)

⁴ Interviewed twice: as manager and staff (for her experiences as ethnic minority woman)

Ethnic minority women (26⁵)

- **‘Independent group’**

1. Saira	Pakistani ⁶	35	Education Welfare Officer Single, no children
2. Samina	Pakistani	30	Project worker in voluntary sector Married, 2 children
3. Mary	Afro-Caribbean	52	Training and Development Advisor for EO in Health Trust Separated, 2 children
4. Anna	Afro-Caribbean	59	Senior Officer in the Health Service Widowed, 2 children
5. Jane	Afro-Caribbean	34	Solicitor Single, no children
6. Caroline	African	45	Law firm partner Single, no children
7. Emma	Afro-Caribbean	39	Equality action team member in voluntary organisation Cohabiting, 2 children

- **CSA**

Head Office

1. Yasmin	Pakistani	28	Training Advisor Single, no children
2. Salma	Pakistani	28	Retail Commercial Assistant Single, 1 child

⁵ Yasmin was interviewed twice: In her role as Training Advisor in CSA Head Office and as Store Manager in CSA Store.

⁶ All Pakistani interviewees were Muslim.

CSA Store

1. Fatimah	Pakistani	34	Checkout operator (p-t) Married, no children
2. Tahirah	Pakistani	25	Checkout operator Single, no children
3. Razwana	Pakistani	22	Checkout operator (p-t) Married, 1 child
4. Farrah	Pakistani	21	Checkout operator Married, 1 child
5. Narinder	Indian	35	Security/ CCTV operator Married, 2 children
6. Yasmin	Pakistani	28	Store Manager (Replaced David -see white men) ⁷ Single, no children
• CSB			
1. Diane	Afro-Caribbean	33	Community Psychiatric Nurse Has partner, 1 child
2. Saeda	Pakistani	28	Clinical Child Psychologist Married, no children
3. Elizabeth	Afro-Caribbean	42	Staff Nurse, Grade E (p-t) Single, 2 children
4. Harpal	Indian	43	Dentist Married, 2 children
5. Salimah	Pakistani	32	Liaison Officer Married, 1 child
6. Helen	Afro-Caribbean	51	House Leader Single, 1 child

⁷ Interviewed twice: in her position in CSA's Head Office and this was then followed up by a brief interview when she moved to Store manager position in CSA Store.

7. Sarrah	Pakistani	27	Community Mental Health Nurse Single, no children
8. Ruth	Asian (Mauritius)	48	Community Psychiatric Nurse/ Sister Married, 3 children
9. Denise	Afro-Caribbean	48	Diversity Manager Married, 2 children
10. Dorothy	Afro-Caribbean	35	Staff Nurse, Grade E Divorced, 2 children
11. Gurjit	Asian	46	Senior Nurse manager Married, 4 children
12. Rekha	Indian	49	Health Visitor and Community Practice Teacher Married, 2 children

Ethnic minority men (15)

- **‘Independent group’**

1. Steven	Asian (Mauritius)	53	Senior Charge Nurse Married, 3 children
2. Ravinder	Indian	37	Chief Executive of voluntary organisation Single, no children

- **CSA**

Head Office

1. Balvinder	Indian	48	Process Improvement Manager Married, 1 child
2. Barry	Afro-Caribbean	46	Sector Manager Married, no children

CSA Store

1. Ali	Pakistani	22	Grocery Shop Assistant Single, no children
2. Adnan	Pakistani	23	Grocery Shop Assistant (p-t) Single, no children
3. Adil	Pakistani	19	Grocery Assistant (p-t) Single, no children
4. Sharif	Pakistani	22	Administrator Clerk Single, no children
5. Nasim	Pakistani	30	Provisions Manager Married, no children
• CSB			
1. John	Afro-Caribbean	34	Applications Manager Cohabiting, 1 child
2. Sabur	Bangladeshi	23	Health Care Apprentice Single, no children
3. Jason	African	32	Staff Nurse, Grade D Single, no children
4. Mahesh	Asian (Kenyan)	52	Consultant Psychiatrist Married, 2 children
5. Richard	African	54	Senior Staff Nurse, Grade E Married, 3 children
6. Abdul	Pakistani	44	Staff Nurse, Grade E Married, 5 children

White women (8)

- **CSA**

Head Office

1. Jenny	White British	41	Training Advisor Single, no children
2. Pamela	White, Scottish	27	Training Advisor Single, no children

CSA Store

1. Anita	White British	22	Produce Assistant (p-t) Single, no children
2. Joanne	White	44	Customer Service Manager Divorced, 2 children

- **CSB**

1. Laura	White British	41	Child Protection Health Visitor Married, 3 children
2. Janet	White	60	Health Visitor Divorced, 3 children
3. Brenda	White British	37	Finance Manager Married, 2 children
4. Kathleen	White Irish	39	Staff pool Married, 2 children

White men (6)

- **CSA**

Head office

1. Robert	White British	24	Category training advisor Single, no children
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CSA Store

1. Simon	White British	30	Produce manager Married, 1 child
2. Andrew	White British	30	Trainee meat manager Married, 1 child
• CSB			
1. Stewart	White British	32	Co-ordinator for special care Married, 1 child
2. Daniel	White British	50	Independent Reviewing Officer Married, 3 children
3. Adam	White British	48	Business Operations manager for learning disability Married, 2 children

Enquiries on this matter should be made

Ref:

Thursday, July 06, 2000

Dear Colleague

Re: **PHd Study:
The career development & progression of ethnic minority women in
organisations**

You have been randomly selected to be part of the control sample in the above study, i.e. white male sample, white female sample.

The study is being conducted by Nicolina Kamenou, a Phd student from Leeds Business School, University of Leeds.

You will be required to attend an individual interview lasting 30-60 minutes, held on the Hospital site. The interview will be divided into four main area:

- a) Background information
- b) Career development and progression
- c) Factors contributory to or hindering the career development and progression of ethnic minority women
- d) Organisational role and policies regarding ethnic minority women's careers

Interviews will be semi-structure and recorded on audio-tape.

I require confirmation of receipt of this letter and your permission to forward your name to Ms Kamenou by Monday 24th July 2000, so that she may arrange a date and time of your interview.

May I thank you in anticipation of your co-operation. Your comments are confidential to the researcher. Any information gained from her end report will be anonymous. The study should help us to identify if there are any issues, what they are and how they may be addressed. We also have an opportunity to share good practice with both private and public organisations.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 5

List of policies and documentation given by CSA and CSB

CSA

- Booklet providing information and background to CSA
- Employees handbook, including formal guidelines on equality
- Employee relations guidelines
- Progress report on diversity initiatives
- Booklet on learning and development opportunities
- Booklet on development programmes
- Information on steps employees need to take if they want to apply for a Personnel or Store Manager position
- Video tape distributed to ethnic minority groups attending open days at CSA (this tape advertises CSA as an equal opportunity employer, valuing diversity and inviting ethnic minorities to apply)
- Leaflet on CSA's initiatives to increase ethnic minority representation distributed to ethnic minority groups attending open days at CSA

CSB

- Equality of Opportunity in Employment Policy Statement and Requirements
- Personnel and Development Annual Report, 1999-2000
- Staff handbook including information on Family Friendly Policies
- Performance and development planning process document
- Disputes procedure document
- Complaints policy and procedure document
- Policy and procedure on individual access to health records
- Progress report on positive action initiatives
- Challenging harassment in the workplace
- Self assessment and feedback tool for staff
- Staff training prospectus (2000-1)
- Annual reports (1998-1999; 1999-2000)

Appendix 6

Ethnic minority staff within CSA Head Office by function, ethnic origin, gender, job title, grade⁸ and age.

	ETHNIC ORIGIN	GENDER	JOB TITLE	GRADE	AGE
Depots	African	Male	Line manager	C	31
Customer service	African	Female	Customer relations adviser	D	42
Finance	African	Female	Personal assistant	D	29
Depots	Asian	Male	Administration manager	C	40
Trading	Asian	Female	Business development manager	C	28
Marketing	Asian	Female	Market research manager	C	34
Personnel	Asian	Female	Training advisor	C	28
Productivity	Asian	Male	Process improvement manager	A	48
Distribution	Asian	Male	Industrial placement	D	22
Finance	Asian	Female	Accounts assistant	D	25
Management	Asian	Female	IT help desk operator	D	25
Store development	Asian	Female	Buying assistant	D	33
Customer service	Caribbean	Male	Customer relations adviser	D	21
Marketing	Caribbean	Male	Marketing assistant	D	19
Trading	Other countries	Male	Buyer	C	28
Customer service	Other countries	Male	General manager technical	A	40
Distribution	Other countries	Female	Administrator	D	28
Finance	Other countries	Male	Accounts assistant	D	52
Store development	Other countries	Male	Parking attendant	D	51
Property	Other European	Female	Assistant PR manager	C	29
Store development	Other European	Male	Security officer	C	32
Finance	Other European	Female	Accounts Assistant	C	46
Personnel	Other European	Male	GSM designate	B	30
Distribution	Other European	Male	Replenishment analyst	D	22
Store development	Unclassified	Male	Security officer	D	55

⁸ Grade A is the highest, at senior managers, senior executives and board directors. Grade B is middle managers, Grade C is junior managers and D is at Officer/ Assistant level.

Appendix 7

Staff breakdown by ethnic origin, gender and salary band in CSB

£5,000- £11,000

	PA	BA	B-A	B-C	B-O	CH	IND	NOT KNOWN	OTHER
MALE	18 (67%)	6 (86%)	2 (33%)	7 (58%)	1 (25%)	0	5 (45%)	1 (100%)	7 (71%)
FEMALE	34 (50%)	4 (57%)	2 (67%)	15 (39%)	5 (36%)	0	8 (26%)	4 (50%)	4 (44.4%)

£11,000- £15,000

	PA	BA	B-A	B-C	B-O	CH	IND	NOT KNOWN	OTHER
MALE	4 (15%)	0	0	2 (16%)	0	0	2 (18%)	0	0
FEMALE	22 (32%)	1 (14%)	0	4 (11%)	0	0	12 (39%)	0	1 (11.2%)

£15,000- £20,000

	PA	BA	B-A	B-C	B-O	CH	IND	NOT KNOWN	OTHER
MALE	1 (4%)	1 (14%)	4 (67%)	1 (8%)	0	0	0	0	0
FEMALE	5 (7%)	0	0	8 (67%)	3 (21%)	0	5 (16%)	0	44.4 (50%)

£20,000-£25,000

	PA	BA	B-A	B-C	B-O	CH	IND	NOT KNOWN	OTHER
MALE	1 (4%)	0	0	1 (8%)	2 (50%)	1 (100%)	3 (27%)	0	1 (14%)
FEMALE	5 (7%)	1 (14%)	1 (33%)	6 (16%)	4 (29%)	2 (100%)	4 (13%)	2 (25%)	0

£25,000-£30,000

	PA	BA	B-A	B-C	B-O	CH	IND	NOT KNOWN	OTHER
MALE	1 (4%)	0	0	1 (8%)	0	0	0	0	0
FEMALE	1 (1%)	1 (14%)	0	0	0	0	1 (3%)	1 (13%)	0

£30,000-£35,000

	PA	BA	B-A	B-C	B-O	CH	IND	NOT KNOWN	OTHER
MALE	1 (4%)	0	0	1 (8%)	0	0	0	0	0
FEMALE	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 (3%)	1 (13%)	0

£45,000- £60,000

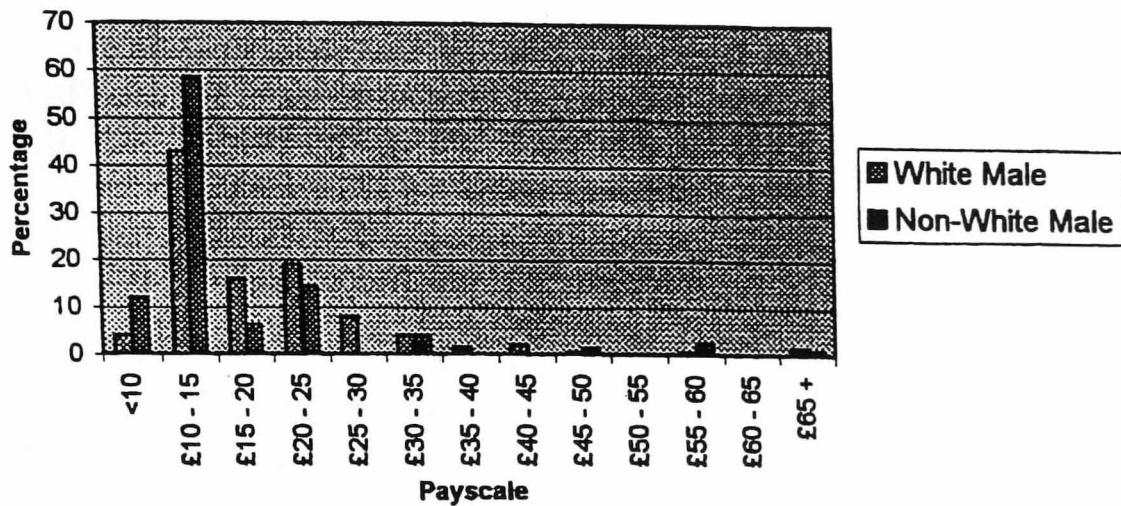
	PA	BA	B-A	B-C	B-O	CH	IND	NOT KNOWN	OTHER
MALE	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 (9%)	0	1 (14%)
FEMALE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

£60,000-£70,000

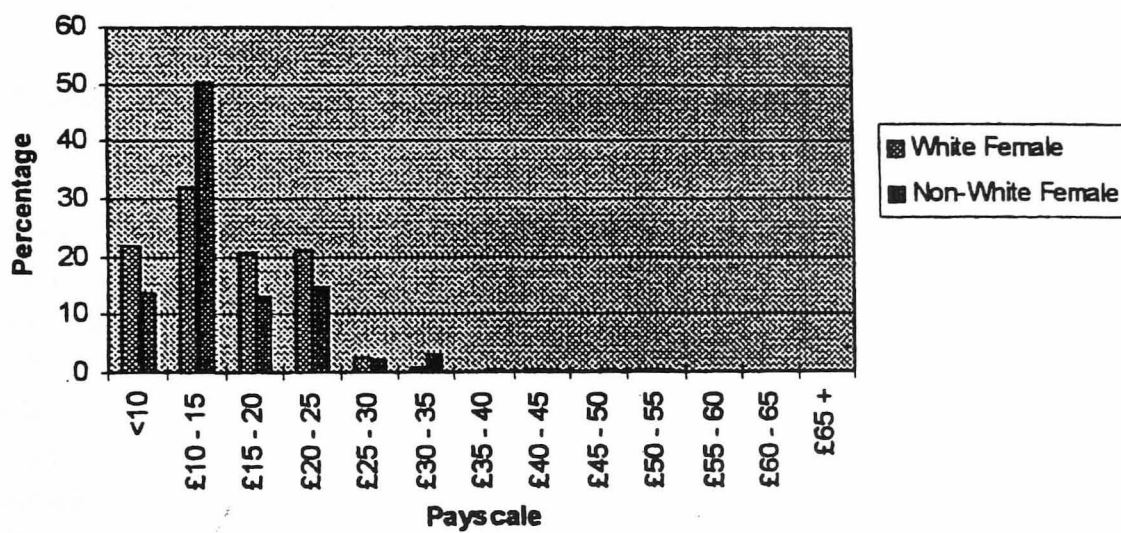
	PA	BA	B-A	B-C	B-O	CH	IND	NOT KNOWN	OTHER
MALE	1 (4%)	0	0	0	0	0	1 (9%)	0	0
FEMALE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

PA: Pakistani
 BA: Bangladeshi
 B-A: Black African
 B-C: Black Caribbean
 B-O: Black Other
 CH: Chinese
 IND: Indian

Male employees by ethnicity and salary band in CSB



Female employees by ethnicity and salary band in CSB



Appendix 9

Interview questions for HR managers and EO/Diversity Managers in CSA and CSB

1. NAME
2. AGE
3. ETHNIC ORIGIN (**SHOW LIST 1**): Do you identify with any of the categories in this list? **IF NO**: How do you define yourself?
4. FORMAL JOB TITLE / POSITION IN ORGANISATION
5. HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN IN THIS POSITION?
6. HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU WORKED IN HR &/OR EO (For experience in recruitment, promotion, training of staff, EO etc.)
7. WHAT ARE YOUR JOB RESPONSIBILITIES IN YOUR ROLE AS HR/ EO/ DIVERSITY MANAGER?
8. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE CAREER DEVELOPMENT? HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE CAREER PROGRESSION?

• **ORGANISATION'S BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

9. Could you give me some background information on the organisation? (I.e. When was it established? What is the main line of work? Where is the Head Office based?)
10. Who 'owns' the organisation? (Probe: Have there been any recent changes, i.e. take overs, merges etc.)? How do you think has this affected the organisation? (in terms of policies, structure, culture etc.)
11. Organisational structure and organisational chart.
12. What is the total number of staff employed across the board?
13. Number of ethnic minority employees.
14. Number of ethnic minority women employees.
15. Do you know whether the proportion of ethnic minority women employees roughly reflects the local population?
16. Ask for employment records: (If available):

Ethnic Data by:

- Ethnic origin
- Gender
- Age
- Grade/ position
- Pay

(Is the data used for monitoring? IF YES: In what way? IF NO: Are they planning to improve their information collection and monitoring records? **** IF data I need not available: any other way of having some data?? I.e. approximate %s)**

• **ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES**

17. Does the organisation have an official policy on Equal Opportunities? (*ASK to have a copy of it!)
18. **IF YES**: When was it adopted? Implemented?

19. What does the policy cover/ include? (Probe: Gender, race/ ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation etc.)
20. [IN NOT ADDRESSED ABOVE: Within the EO policy, are there clear gender and race discrimination policies?]
21. Within the EO Policy: Are there clear sexual harassment policies? Are there clear racial harassment policies?
22. Are there then any formal procedures for handling allegations of gender *discrimination*? What about racial *discrimination*?
23. Are there any formal procedures for handling allegations of sexual and racial *harassment* in your organisation?
24. Is the EO policy monitored? IF YES: How? (Probe: CRE's recommendations⁹)
IF YES: How are the findings of the monitoring used? "What happens next?"
IF NO: How can you then assess its effectiveness?
25. How is the policy disseminated to line managers and supervisors? Do you think this is done effectively?
26. How is the policy communicated/ circulated to employees? (Prompt: In contracts of employment, notice boards etc.)
27. Does a member of senior management have overall responsibility for the EO policy? (IF YES: Which member? What is his/ her role?)
28. Does the organisation have Family Friendly Policies? IF YES: Please give details. (Ask for career breaks, maternity and paternity leave etc.) Does the employee have to be working in the organisation for a specified period to be "eligible" for these policies?
29. Does the organisation provide childcare facilities for employees with children (i.e. crèche)?
30. Does the organisation offer flexible working arrangements? (Prompt: flexible hours [flexi-time], job-sharing, working part-time etc.)
31. Does the organisation have any policies related to the career development and progression of staff? IF YES: Please expand (Prompt: Training seminars, appraisal schemes, policies for promotion, i.e. internal promotion, etc.).
32. IF YES: How are these policies circulated to line management and staff?
33. [IF NOT ADDRESSED IN QN. 31: Are there any policies in place in regard to promotion? (Prompt: Internal/ external recruitment, linked to performance appraisal, linked to tenure, advertising openings etc.)?]
34. What are the opportunities in X for promotion? (Probe: Flat hierarchy or very hierarchical organisation?)

⁹ CRE'S CODE OF PRACTICE: recommended method for monitoring (ask organisations if aware of it or if they followed it—may have to go through it with them):

The following is the comprehensive method recommended by the CRE (in "Monitoring on Equal Opportunity Policy"). Analyses should be carried out of: (a) The ethnic composition of the workforce of each plant, department, section, shift and job category, and changes in distribution over periods of time and (b) Selection decisions for recruitment, promotion, transfer and training, according to the racial group of candidates, and reasons for these decisions. [From CRE Code of Practice (1996: 24)].

35. Is there any monitoring policy for promotion? (Probe: To be able to examine whether some groups seem to be advantaged or disadvantaged when it comes to promotion opportunities). IF YES: Please explain. IF NO: Do you think it will be useful/ beneficial?
36. Do you believe that promotions are only based on merit? IF YES: Where do you base that? IF NO: Why? What do you consider other factors to be?
37. What are the organisational policies on Performance Appraisal? Is P. Appr. linked to promotion and instrumental benefits or does it have a more 'developmental' role?
38. How do you ensure that assessment criteria in PA are not discriminatory?
39. How do you ensure that staff responsible for PA do not discriminate on any grounds?
40. Do you regularly review existing policies and procedures? (Probe: to examine if for e.g., they can be indirectly discriminatory against a group of employees).
41. Does the organisation provide any form of Positive Action? (*May need to define!*) (Probe: On recruitment, training, promotion? *Especially for CD & CP? To increase opportunities for promotion for underrepresented groups?)
42. What are your feelings towards PA? (Probe: Do you think it serves its purpose? Is it effective?)
43. Does the organisation provide training exclusively for ethnic minority staff? For women? For ethnic minority women?
44. IF YES: How is this decided? (Probe: Is training for e.g. provided to underrepresented racial groups of employees)? Do you think it is useful? (What are your feelings around "special training"?)
45. Has there ever been race and cultural awareness training for management and staff (IF need to clarify: understanding and respecting different cultures, values etc. and also more instrumental: allow employees to wear traditional ethnic costumes, pray etc.).
46. Have you ever received any training related to above? IF YES: Do you think it was useful/ important?
47. Have you trained others on race and cultural awareness?
48. IF member of Race for Opportunity/ Leadership Challenge: What does it mean for your organisation? What are your aims? What goals have you set?
49. Have you specified a time period to achieve at least some of these goals?
50. IF Champion for Race for Opportunity: What makes you a champion?
51. IF member for Opportunity 2000? What does it mean for your organisation?
52. What are your aims regarding Opportunity 2000? What goals have you set?
53. Related to Opp2000: Do you acknowledge diversity of women when implementing/ improving policies for women? (i.e. ethnic diversity).
54. Have you specified a time period to achieve at least some of these goals?
55. Are you aware of the CRE's Code of Practice? IF YES: Have you adopted it? In what way? (Adopting all recommendations as policies of organisation? As guideline?)
56. Are you aware of the CRE Standard for Racial Equality for Employers? Are you using it? IF YES: In what way?

57. What are your feelings towards Positive Discrimination? (Where quotas are used – US Affirmative Action). Do you think it would be useful in the UK (In improving situation, position of ems, re-distributing power etc.)?

• **CAREERS OF ETHNIC MINORITY WOMEN**

58. What are the current positions/ job levels of emw? (Probe: status, responsibilities, employment contracts: full-time/ part-time, temporary, flexible working etc.).

59. Are they concentrated in specific jobs or are they spread across the board? (Probe: IF CONCENTRATED: Why do you think that is the case? Are there any policies to address that? IF SPREAD: Have you developed and implemented any policies to achieve that? What policies?)

60. Does the organisation have any policies or initiatives which can provide support for ethnic minority women's careers? (Probe: Training, career counselling, support groups, networks etc.)

61. Are there any goals/ aims for increased representation of ethnic minority women in the organisation? (Probe: At what levels?)

62. Are there people acting as mentors/ sponsors in the organisation?

63. IF yes: How are they selected?

64. IF yes: Can every employee have a mentor/ sponsor?

65. IF yes: How are they allocated? (Probe: Selected by organisation or self selection?)

66. What role do you think mentors/ sponsors play in career development and progression of employees?

67. What role...for ethnic minority women's CD & CP?

68. Do you think the race and gender of mentor is important? (Probe: Do you think it is beneficial for the mentor to be the same gender/ race as employee being mentored? Why/ Why not?)

69. Do you personally think that emw are given the same opportunities as other groups (i.e. white men, white women and emm) to develop and advance in their careers? IF YES: Where do you base that? IF NO: Why do you think this is the case? What can be done?

70. What role do you think organisational policies and structures play in the situation/ position of emw in this organisation? (Probe: Access to training, opportunities for advancement, organisational culture etc.).

71. What role do you think personal circumstances of emw employees play in their situation/ position in the organisation? (Probe: Family responsibilities, ambition of emw etc.)

72. Is there an issue of retention for ethnic minority women? (Probe: Are they generally 'loyal' to organisation? Do you have high turnover rate of emw? IF YES: What do you think are the reasons for that?)

73. Do you think there is clear communication of the needs of ethnic minority women to management? (Probe: Do you provide room for discussions with emw, are there any feedback mechanisms where emw can express their views around policies and practices?)

74. What do you think the relationship among different groups of employees is?

75. How do you think ethnic minority women fare in comparison to ethnic minority men (Probe: Do you think they have similar experiences due to racism or differences due to sexism?)
 76. ...in comparison to white women (Similar experiences due to sexism or differences due to racism?)
 77. ... in comparison to white men?
 78. Any reasons/ explanations for the above?
 79. Do you believe that the organisation achieves its aims of being an EO employer and managing diversity ?
 80. Do you think there is genuine commitment to racial and gender equality? (Probe: Commitment at the top, commitment by few individuals etc.)
 81. How do you perceive the culture of the organisation? (Probe: Accepting, focused on results? Conducive to good employment relationships among staff and management, etc. Do you think it values diversity of staff and cultural differences? Why do you think that?)
 82. [IF NOT ADDRESSED: Do you think that the organisation has a white male culture? IF YES: Where do you base that? IF NO: Where do you base that?]
 83. Do you think the EO policies, especially in relation to emw, are effective?
 84. Do you think the policies related to career development and progression are effective for ethnic minority women?
 85. Do you believe there is racial discrimination in the organisation? Do you believe there is gender discrimination? (Probe: Why do you think that? Please explain. I.e. What form does the discrimination take? Is it individual discrimination OR organisational practices/culture? Is it subtle or direct?)
 86. Have you ever had to deal with a complaint from an ethnic minority woman employee regarding discrimination or harassment? IF YES: please give more details. What was the result? Who was involved? Did the employee appear to be satisfied with the outcome?
 87. Has the organisation ever been involved in a tribunal case in relation to race or gender discrimination? Please give details: What was the case about? How was it dealt with? Who won?
 88. Has it ever come to your attention that emw employees experience discrimination and harassment (even if there was no formal complaint)? IF YES: Was this followed up? How?
 89. What improvements/ changes would you like to see in terms of policies and practices? In terms of position and opportunities for ethnic minority women employees?
- CONCLUDE INTERVIEW, ASK IF THEY WANT TO DISCUSS/ BRING UP SOMETHING THAT WAS NOT DISCUSSED
 - THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.
 - Repeat that this will be treated in complete confidentiality

Appendix 10

Interview questions for ethnic minority women from 'independent group'

1. NAME
 2. OCCUPATION/ PROFESSION
 3. ETHNIC ORIGIN (**SHOW LIST 1**): Do you identify with any of the categories in this list? IF NO: how do you define yourself?
 4. AGE
 5. STATUS (single / married/ cohabiting/ widowed/ divorced/ separated)
 6. CHILDREN (number and ages)
- **CAREER HISTORY:**
7. Do you have any of the qualifications in this list? (**SHOW LIST 2**) (*Probe: Where did you obtain them?*) Can you give me some background on your education?
 8. Can you give me a *brief* description of your "career history"? (*Probe: How many employers have you worked for? Have you had a range of jobs or have you had a stable progression in one organisation? Where did you start from? Have you moved around in a number of jobs/ occupations? Have you had promotions?*)
 9. Were any of your qualifications required, as a prerequisite for any positions you held up to now?
 10. What are your present job responsibilities? (*Prompt: Job specification. Do you supervise other employees? IF yes: How many? Do you report back to a supervisor or manager?*)
 11. What is your present employment contract? (*Prompt: Full or part time, temporary or permanent, flexible hours, job sharing etc.*)
 12. How long have you been in this position?
 13. How did you gain (get to) this position? (*Prompt: Internal promotion? Externally recruited? [How did you get to know about it?] Qualifications? 'Internal' training [to prepare you for promotion]?*)
 14. Do you see yourself as someone who has a career? (*Probe: In what way?*) IF NO: Would you like to have a career? (*Probe: Do you see what you do as just a job or as a career?*)
 15. How do you define career development and career progression? (*Probe: Do you think the concepts mean approximately the same thing or do you see them as different? AND THEN: Give my own definition and ask if they would agree.*)
 16. Do you think you have opportunities for career development and/or progression in your job?
 17. Have you had any career breaks through your working life? IF have children: Maternity leave?
 18. IF have children under 16 years old: What are your childcare arrangements? (*Nursery/ school, present employer providing child care facilities, working part time, family members looking after them etc.*)

19. IF have children: Did having children have any effect on your career and your career aspirations? IF YES: In what way? (If necessary, probe: additional responsibilities, different way of seeing life etc.).
20. Have you ever had difficulties combining your family life (children, family commitments) with your work life? IF YES: What difficulties? IF NO: How do you combine both?
21. What do you see as your priorities in your life? (Probe: Your job, your career development, your career advancement, your self-enhancement, relationships, family and children?) *Is there an order of priority?*
22. Are you satisfied with your job? (Prompt: Challenging, stimulating, financial benefits etc.) (Probe: What aspects are you satisfied with and what aspects would you like to be different?)
23. At present, are you working where you were always aspiring to? Is that your 'ideal' job? (Probe: Why did you think of entering this profession/ of engaging in this line of work? (Probe: Childhood dream, "guided" into by family, teachers, financial reasons?)
24. Do you see yourself as successful in your career (OR your job)? (Probe: In what way? *May probe: How do you perceive career success?: Is it personal development and achievement that is important? Or is it financial security? Flexibility? Being intellectually stretched, developing knowledge and skills? Opportunity to be a leader, freedom, influence? High status, job security? Financial rewards?*).
25. Do you think you have clear goals for your career, clear plans for the future? (Probe: Would you mind telling me what they are? I.e. to progress higher in organisation, career move etc.)
26. Do you have high expectations of yourself regarding your career and success?
27. Do you feel you place the responsibility for you career development and progression on yourself or more on external factors, i.e. your organisation: support, training etc.?

- **(CAREER) EXPERIENCES AT WORK**

28. In the organisations you worked for/ occupations you had up to now, where you aware of their policies on Equal Opportunities? (Probe: Were they clearly stated and was information disseminated effectively to staff? Were some employers better than others in providing more information and clearly stated policies?)
29. Were you aware of policies on the career development of staff in organisations you worked for? (Probe: I.e. provision of training, performance appraisals and career counselling) IF YES: What is your view on their effectiveness?
30. Have you ever received any training or career counselling with the aim of improving your career development and progression in this job or previous positions you held? IF YES: Was it helpful? IF NO: Would you welcome it?
31. Have you ever had a Performance Appraisal session? IF YES: Do you think it was useful? In what way? IF NO: Would you welcome it?
32. Have you ever received training which was aimed specifically at ethnic minority groups OR emw OR women? IF YES: What are your views towards this kind of training? Do you think it is effective? IF NO: Would you welcome it? [* (Do you think it is important to have exclusive minority/ exclusive ethnic

minority women's training courses OR do you think it is more valuable to have all groups trained together?]

(* We will now divert a bit and move on to a slightly different area)

33. Are you aware of the idea of mentor or sponsor?
34. Do you have a mentor/ sponsor? IF YES: Is it someone from present or previous job/ organisation or someone external?
35. What do you see as the role of a mentor/sponsor?
36. IF YES AND IF related to job: Were you assigned that person or did you select him/her to be your mentor? IF NO MENTOR: Why don't you have a mentor/ sponsor? Do you think having a mentor/ sponsor would be of value to you?
37. IF MENTOR: Is the mentor the same gender and ethnicity as you? IF you selected your mentor, why did you decide on that particular person? IF you were assigned the person, would you pick someone else yourself? What are your opinions on assignment of mentor: is gender and race of the mentor important? Or, is position/ power of mentor more important?
38. IF MENTOR: What is your relationship with your mentor? (Probe: Supportive? And in what way: instrumental or emotional or both?)
39. Do you have any role models in the organisation (colleagues, supervisors, mentors) OR are your role models external? (i.e. family members, past teachers etc.). Do you think having a role model provides support for your career?
40. Do you feel you receive support in relation to your job or career in the organisation you are presently employed (i.e. by your boss/ superior, colleagues)?
41. Do you believe your achievements are recognised and rewarded? In what way?
42. Do you think that your race/ ethnicity is important to how much support you get from the organisation in relation to the opportunities provided?
43. Do you think your gender is important? (Probe: What do you see as more important: your race or gender?)
44. Is there a Black employees Network in your organisation? Is there a Women's Network? OR is there a Black Women's Network? OR Have you even been employed in an organisation where any of these networks were present?
45. IF YES: What do you see as their purpose/ role? Do you think they are effective? (IF Black employees and Women's network: Where do you think you fit in more?)
46. How did you perceive the organisational culture in organisations you worked for? (Probe: What was the typical profile of the people in top positions? Do you think that this has an effect on the culture of the organisation? In what way? *Do you think organisations accept or understand differences in culture and background of its employees (* for e.g. by providing race/cultural awareness seminars)? Do they value diversity? ** Do you view the organisational culture, in organisations you worked for, as beneficial or detrimental to emw?)
47. [IF STILL NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED AFTER ABOVE QN: Would you say that the organisations you worked for were EO employers and valued diversity? Do you think they were providing equality of opportunity for emw? Were some better than others? What made them better?]

48. Do you believe there is racism in organisations? Do you believe there is sexism? (Probe: Why do you think that? Please explain. I.e. What form does discrimination take? Is it discrimination by individuals OR organisational practices/ culture? Is it subtle or direct?)
49. Have you personally ever experienced racial discrimination in this or other organisations? (**What was the form of the discrimination? I.e. Open or Perceived?*) Have you experienced gender discrimination? (**What was the form of the discrimination*) **IF YES:** How have you dealt with it? Did you report it? (How has the organisation dealt with it?)
50. Have you experienced racial harassment in this or other organisations? (**What was the form of the discrimination?*). Sexual harassment? (**What was the form of the discrimination?*) **IF YES:** How have you dealt with it? Did you report it? (How has the organisation dealt with it?)
51. Overall, what do you think makes an organisation a good employer? (Probe: In terms of providing opportunities for all, developing its staff, valuing diversity etc.)

- **RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES**

52. What is your relationship with other women? (women of same ethnic group as the person I am interviewing). Do you feel you receive support from them? Do you provide support? Do you feel a special bond towards other women of the same ethnic group as you?
53. What is your relationship with different groups of emw? (i.e. if person African: ask for Asian and so on). (Probe: Do you feel there are a lot of similarities in experiences and attitudes or differences due to culture?) Do you have good relationships/ any close relationships with them? How do you think you and other..women fare in comparison with women from different em groups in regard to career opportunities and experiences?
54. What is your relationship with white women? (Probe: Do you feel there is a bond due to sexism or divisions due to racism? Do you have good relationships/ any close relationships with them? Do you feel you communicate well with white women?) How do you think you fare in comparison to them?
55. Relationship with em men? Does it depend on whether they are from the same ethnic group as you? (Probe: Is there a bond due to racism? Do you experience sexism from them?)
56. Do you feel that emw and emm are in similar situations regarding their employment/ career opportunities? Or, do you think that gender discrimination is an additional disadvantage for emw? (Be direct and mention that there are arguments that emw are “better off” than emm, because emm – specifically Afro-Caribbean- are seen as threatening; arguments that emw find it easier to penetrate in organisations than emm).
57. Relationships with white men? (Probe: Communication, support). Comparison of opportunities? Do you have good relationships/ any close relationships with them?

- **WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE: EXPERIENCES, BALANCE, STRESS.**

58. Do you feel you are the same person at work and at home? (Probe: How? I.e. At work, do you feel you have to act very professional/ keep distance with colleagues etc.) { *Do you think ethnicity or religion is a factor? }
59. Do you experience stress at work? Where do you think it stems from? (Probe: Work overload, tight deadlines, discrimination, trying to balance work and family life). { *Probe: Do you think there are differences in relation to family life for emw in contrast to white women? }
60. How do you think people in your *own* (*change for each ethnic group) community view your career [and success]?
61. Do you seek support from your own community? Do you seek acceptance from your community? In what way? Do you think you are receiving the support and acceptance?
62. Do you think the X community has expectations from you? What kind of expectations? Do you think you can fulfil them? (Do you try to?)
63. Do you feel you need to fulfil both expectations at work and expectations from your own community? Does that have any effect on you? (Probe: stress, dilemmas etc.).

- CONCLUDE INTERVIEW, ASK IF THEY WANT TO DISCUSS/ BRING UP SOMETHING THAT WAS NOT DISCUSSED
- THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.
- Repeat that this will be treated in complete confidentiality

Appendix 11

Interview questions for ethnic minority men in CSA and CSB

1. NAME
 2. JOB TITLE/POSITION IN ORGANISATION
 3. ETHNIC ORIGIN (**SHOW LIST 1**): Which ethnic category do you identify with from this list? IF NO: how do you define yourself?
 4. AGE
 5. STATUS (single / married/ cohabiting/ widowed/ divorced/ separated)
 6. CHILDREN (number and ages)
- **CAREER HISTORY:**
7. Do you have any of the qualifications in this list? (**SHOW LIST 2**) (*Probe: Where did you obtain them?*) Can you give me some background on your education?
 8. Can you give me a *brief* description of your “career history”? (*Probe: How many employers have you worked for? Have you had a range of jobs or have you had a stable progression in one organisation? Where did you start from? Have you moved around in a number of jobs/ occupations? Have you had promotions?*)
 9. Were any of your qualifications required, as a prerequisite for any positions you held up to now?
 10. What are your present job responsibilities? (*Prompt: Job specification. Do you supervise other employees? IF yes: How many? Do you report back to a supervisor or manager?*)
 11. What is your present employment contract? (*Prompt: Full or part time, temporary or permanent, flexible hours, job sharing etc.*)
 12. How long have you been in this position?
 13. How did you gain (get to) this position? (*Prompt: Internal promotion? Externally recruited? [How did you get to know about it?] Qualifications? ‘Internal’ training [to prepare you for promotion]?*)
 14. Do you see yourself as someone who has a career? (*Probe: In what way?*) IF NO: Would you like to have a career? (*Probe: Do you see what you do as just a job or as a career?*)
 15. How do you define career development and career progression? (*Probe: Do you think the concepts mean approximately the same thing or do you see them as different? AND THEN: Give my own definition and ask if they would agree.*)
 16. Do you think you have opportunities for career development and/or progression in your job?
 17. Have you had any career breaks through your working life? (*Probe: For what reason?*)
 18. IF have children under 16 years old: What are your childcare arrangements? (*Nursery/ school, present employer providing child care facilities, working part time, family members looking after them etc.*).

19. IF have children: Did having children have any effect on your career and your career aspirations? IF YES: In what way? (If necessary, probe: additional responsibilities, different way of seeing life etc.).
20. Have you ever had difficulties combining your family life (children, family commitments) with your work life? IF YES: What difficulties? IF NO: How do you combine both?
21. What do you see as your priorities in your life? (Probe: Your job, your career development, your career advancement, your self-enhancement, relationships, family and children?) *Is there an order of priority?*
22. Are you satisfied with your job? (Prompt: Challenging, stimulating, financial benefits etc.) (Probe: What aspects are you satisfied with and what aspects would you like to be different?)
23. At present, are you working where you were always aspiring to? Is that your 'ideal' job? (Probe: Why did you think of entering this profession/ of engaging in this line of work? (Probe: Childhood dream, "guided" into by family, teachers, financial reasons?)
24. Do you see yourself as successful in your career (OR your job)? (Probe: In what way? *May probe: How do you perceive career success?: Is it personal development and achievement that is important? Or is it financial security? Flexibility? Being intellectually stretched, developing knowledge and skills? Opportunity to be a leader, freedom, influence? High status, job security? Financial rewards?*).
25. Do you think you have clear goals for your career, clear plans for the future? (Probe: Would you mind telling me what they are? I.e. to progress higher in organisation, career move etc.)
26. Do you have high expectations of yourself regarding your career and success?
27. Do you feel you place the responsibility for you career development and progression on yourself or more on external factors, i.e. your organisation: support, training etc.?

- **(CAREER) EXPERIENCES AT WORK**

28. Are you aware of the organisation's formal policies on Equal Opportunities? (May need to probe: What do you know about it? How did you acquire the information? I.e. policies given to you when you were recruited, notice boards etc.)
29. Are you aware of any organisational policies on issues of career development and progression (i.e. training, performance appraisal, career counselling etc.)?
30. Have you ever received any training or career counselling with the aim of improving your career development and progression in this job or previous positions you held? IF YES: Was it helpful? IF NO: Would you welcome it?
31. Have you ever had a Performance Appraisal session? IF YES: Do you think it was useful? In what way? IF NO: Would you welcome it?
32. Are you aware of the organisation's policies on Promotion? (Probe: Please expand.) IF aware: Do you think they are fair? Do you think they are based on merit?

33. If you weren't satisfied with your career progression and promotion opportunities in this organisation, are you aware of any policies/practices in place that could deal with that? (Prompt: Feedback mechanism to senior management, to EO Officer OR if it's part of Performance Appraisal etc.)
34. Are you familiar with the idea of Positive Action? (IF NO: Explain: on recruitment, training to help with promotion opportunities etc.)
35. Are you aware of Positive Action in your organisation (*Ask only if management said they have PA. IF not, ask what their general opinions towards it are: What is your opinion towards it? Do you think it can be beneficial to underrepresented/disadvantaged groups? (*TRY AND PROBE FOR THE OPINIONS ON POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION – US AFFIRMATIVE ACTION – may need to clarify differences between PA and AA-)*)
36. Have you ever received training which was aimed specifically at ethnic minority groups OR em men? IF YES: What are your views towards this kind of training? Do you think it is effective? IF NO: Would you welcome it? [*(Do you think it is important to have exclusive minority/ exclusive ethnic minority men's training courses OR do you think it is more valuable to have all groups trained together?)]
37. Are you aware of family friendly policies in the organisation? (Prompt: Maternity and paternity leave, career break schemes etc.) IF YES: Do you think they are effective?
38. Overall, do you think that information on organisational policies is disseminated effectively to staff at all levels? (or at least at your own level?)

(* We will now divert a bit and move on to a slightly different area away from organisational policies)

39. Are you aware of the idea of mentor or sponsor?
40. Do you have a mentor/ sponsor in the organisation? OR Do you have a mentor outside the organisation?
41. What do you see as the role of a mentor/sponsor?
42. IF YES AND IF related to job: Were you assigned that person or did you select him/her to be your mentor? IF NO MENTOR: Why don't you have a mentor/ sponsor? Do you think having a mentor/ sponsor would be of value to you?
43. IF MENTOR: Is the mentor the same gender and ethnicity as you? IF you selected your mentor, why did you decide on that particular person? IF you were assigned the person, would you pick someone else yourself? What are your opinions on assignment of mentor: is gender and race of the mentor important? Or, is position/ power of mentor more important?
44. IF MENTOR: What is your relationship with your mentor? (Probe: Supportive? And in what way: instrumental or emotional or both?)
45. Do you have any role models in the organisation (colleagues, supervisors, mentors) OR are your role models external? (i.e. family members, past teachers etc.). Do you think having a role model provides support for your career?
46. Do you feel you receive support in relation to your job or career in the organisation you are presently employed (i.e. by your boss/ superior, colleagues)?

47. Do you believe your achievements are recognised and rewarded? In what way?
48. IF aspiring to progress: Overall, do you think that opportunities are provided in this organisation for your career development and advancement? (Probe: Are you satisfied with your career prospects/ opportunities in this organisation? *Do you see yourself progressing here?)
49. Do you think that your race/ ethnicity is important to how much support you get from the organisation in relation to the opportunities provided?
50. Do you think your gender is important? (Probe: Being an em man: how do you think you are perceived?)
51. Is there a Black employees Network in your organisation?
52. IF YES: What do you see as their purpose/ role? Do you think they are effective?
53. How did you perceive the organisational culture? (Probe: What is the profile of the people in top positions? Do you think that this has an effect on the culture of the organisation? In what way?)
54. Do you think the organisations accepts or understands differences in culture and background of its employees (*for e.g. by providing race/cultural awareness seminars)? Does it value diversity? ** Do you view the organisational culture, in the organisation, as beneficial or detrimental to emw?
55. Do you believe there is racism in the organisation? Do you believe there is sexism? (Probe: Why do you think that? Please explain. I.e. What form does discrimination take? Is it discrimination by individuals OR organisational practices/ culture? Is it subtle or direct?)
56. Have you personally ever experienced racial discrimination in your organisation? (*What was the form of the discrimination? I.e. Open or Perceived?) IF YES: How have you dealt with it? Did you report it? (How has the organisation dealt with it?)
57. Have you ever experienced racial harassment in this organisation? (*What was the form of the harassment) IF YES: How have you dealt with it? Did you report it? (How has the organisation dealt with it?)
58. What changes would you like to see in your organisation? (Prompt: in terms of policies, practices, culture etc.)
59. Have you ever considered leaving the organisation? (Probe: Considering stopping work altogether? OR moving to another organisation? IF YES: Why?)
60. Overall, what do you think makes an organisation a good employer? (Probe: In terms of providing opportunities for all, developing its staff, valuing diversity etc.)

- **RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES**

61. What is your relationship with other ethnic minority men in the organisation? (men of same and different ethnic group). Do you feel you receive support from them? Do you provide support? Do you feel a special bond towards men of the same ethnic group as you?
62. What is your relationship with ethnic minority women? (Probe: Do you feels there is a bond due to racism?)

63. How do you feel you fare in comparison to ethnic minority women in terms of your position in the organisation and your career opportunities? (Probe: Do you feel you share a lot of similar experiences? What are the differences?)
64. Do you think that gender discrimination is an additional disadvantage for emw? (Be direct and mention that there are arguments that emw are “better off” than emm, because emm – specifically Afro-Caribbean- are seen as threatening; arguments that emw find it easier to penetrate in organisations than emm).
65. Are your feelings on the above different towards different groups of ethnic minority women?

- **WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE: EXPERIENCES, BALANCE, STRESS.**

66. Do you feel you are the same person at work and at home? (Probe: How? I.e. At work, do you feel you have to act very professional/ keep distance with colleagues etc.) {*Do you think ethnicity or religion is a factor?}
67. Do you experience stress at work? Where do you think it stems from? (Probe: Work overload, tight deadlines, discrimination, trying to balance work and family life).
68. How do you think people in your *own* (*change for each ethnic group!) community view your career [and success]?
69. Do you seek support from your own community? Do you seek acceptance from your community? In what way? Do you think you are receiving the support and acceptance?
70. Do you think the X community has expectations from you? What kind of expectations? Do you think you can fulfil them? (Do you try to?)
71. Do you feel you need to fulfil both expectations at work and expectations from your own community? Does that have any effect on you? (Probe: stress, dilemmas etc.).

- CONCLUDE INTERVIEW, ASK IF THEY WANT TO DISCUSS/ BRING UP SOMETHING THAT WAS NOT DISCUSSED
- THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.
- Repeat that this will be treated in complete confidentiality

Appendix 12

Interview questions for white women in CSA and CSB

1. NAME
 2. JOB TITLE/POSITION IN ORGANISATION
 3. ETHNIC ORIGIN (**SHOW LIST 1**): Which ethnic category do you identify with from this list? IF NO: how do you define yourself?
 4. AGE
 5. STATUS (single / married/ cohabiting/ widowed/ divorced/ separated)
 6. CHILDREN (number and ages)
- **CAREER HISTORY:**
7. Do you have any of the qualifications in this list? (**SHOW LIST 2**) (*Probe: Where did you obtain them?*) Can you give me some background on your education?
 8. Can you give me a *brief* description of your “career history”? (*Probe: How many employers have you worked for? Have you had a range of jobs or have you had a stable progression in one organisation? Where did you start from? Have you moved around in a number of jobs/ occupations? Have you had promotions?*)
 9. Were any of your qualifications required, as a prerequisite for any positions you held up to now?
 10. What are your present job responsibilities? (*Prompt: Job specification. Do you supervise other employees? IF yes: How many? Do you report back to a supervisor or manager?*)
 11. What is your present employment contract? (*Prompt: Full or part time, temporary or permanent, flexible hours, job sharing etc.*)
 12. How long have you been in this position?
 13. How did you gain (get to) this position? (*Prompt: Internal promotion? Externally recruited? [How did you get to know about it?] Qualifications? ‘Internal’ training [to prepare you for promotion]?*)
 14. Do you see yourself as someone who has a career? (*Probe: In what way?*) IF NO: Would you like to have a career? (*Probe: Do you see what you do as just a job or as a career?*)
 15. How do you define career development and career progression? (*Probe: Do you think the concepts mean approximately the same thing or do you see them as different? AND THEN: Give my own definition and ask if they would agree.*)
 16. Do you think you have opportunities for career development and/or progression in your job?
 17. Have you had any career breaks through your working life? IF have children: Maternity leave?
 18. IF have children under 16 years old: What are your childcare arrangements? (*Nursery/ school, present employer providing child care facilities, working part time, family members looking after them etc.*).

19. IF have children: Did having children have any effect on your career and your career aspirations? IF YES: In what way? (If necessary, probe: additional responsibilities, different way of seeing life etc.).
20. Have you ever had difficulties combining your family life (children, family commitments) with your work life? IF YES: What difficulties? IF NO: How do you combine both?
21. What do you see as your priorities in your life? (Probe: Your job, your career development, your career advancement, your self-enhancement, relationships, family and children?) *Is there an order of priority?*
22. Are you satisfied with your job? (Prompt: Challenging, stimulating, financial benefits etc.) (Probe: What aspects are you satisfied with and what aspects would you like to be different?)
23. At present, are you working where you were always aspiring to? Is that your 'ideal' job? (Probe: Why did you think of entering this profession/ of engaging in this line of work? (Probe: Childhood dream, "guided" into by family, teachers, financial reasons?))
24. Do you see yourself as successful in your career (OR your job)? (Probe: In what way? *May probe: How do you perceive career success?: Is it personal development and achievement that is important? Or is it financial security? Flexibility? Being intellectually stretched, developing knowledge and skills? Opportunity to be a leader, freedom, influence? High status, job security? Financial rewards?*).
25. Do you think you have clear goals for your career, clear plans for the future? (Probe: Would you mind telling me what they are? I.e. to progress higher in organisation, career move etc.)
26. Do you have high expectations of yourself regarding your career and success?
27. Do you feel you place the responsibility for you career development and progression on yourself or more on external factors, i.e. your organisation: support, training etc.?

- **(CAREER) EXPERIENCES AT WORK**

28. Are you aware of the organisation's formal policies on Equal Opportunities? (May need to probe: What do you know about it? How did you acquire the information? I.e. policies given to you when you were recruited, notice boards etc.)
29. Are you aware of any organisational policies on issues of career development and progression (i.e. training, performance appraisal, career counselling etc.)?
30. Have you ever received any training or career counselling with the aim of improving your career development and progression in this job or previous positions you held? IF YES: Was it helpful? IF NO: Would you welcome it?
31. Have you ever had a Performance Appraisal session? IF YES: Do you think it was useful? In what way? IF NO: Would you welcome it?
32. Are you aware of the organisation's policies on Promotion? (Probe: Please expand.) IF aware: Do you think they are fair? Do you think they are based on merit?
33. If you weren't satisfied with you career progression and promotion opportunities in this organisation, are you aware of any policies/practices in

- place that could deal with that? (Prompt: Feedback mechanism to senior management, to EO Officer OR if it's part of Performance Appraisal etc.)
34. Are you familiar with the idea of Positive Action? (IF NO: Explain: on recruitment, training to help with promotion opportunities etc.)
 35. Are you aware of Positive Action in your organisation (*Ask only if management said they have PA. IF not*, ask what their general opinions towards it are: What is your opinion towards it? Do you think it can be beneficial to women and underrepresented/disadvantaged groups? (*TRY AND PROBE FOR THE OPINIONS ON POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION – US AFFIRMATIVE ACTION – may need to clarify differences between PA and AA-)
 36. Have you ever received training which was aimed specifically at women? IF YES: What are your views towards this kind of training? Do you think it is effective? IF NO: Would you welcome it? [*(Do you think it is important to have exclusive women's training courses OR do you think it is more valuable to have all groups trained together?)]
 37. What are your views on exclusive training on ems?
 38. Are you aware of family friendly policies in the organisation? (Prompt: Maternity and paternity leave, career break schemes etc.) IF YES: Do you think they are effective?
 39. If have children: Do you think the organisation gives you the same support and opportunities to progress as before you had children/ took maternity leave? (Please expand. Why do you think that is the case?)
 40. Overall, do you think that information on organisational policies is disseminated effectively to staff at all levels? (or at least at your own level?)

(* We will now divert a bit and move on to a slightly different area away from organisational policies)

41. Are you aware of the idea of mentor or sponsor?
42. Do you have a mentor/ sponsor in the organisation? OR Do you have a mentor outside the organisation?
43. What do you see as the role of a mentor/sponsor?
44. IF YES AND IF related to job: Were you assigned that person or did you select him/her to be your mentor? IF NO MENTOR: Why don't you have a mentor/ sponsor? Do you think having a mentor/ sponsor would be of value to you?
45. IF MENTOR: Is the mentor the same gender and ethnicity as you? IF you selected your mentor, why did you decide on that particular person? IF you were assigned the person, would you pick someone else yourself? What are your opinions on assignment of mentor: is gender and race of the mentor important? Or, is position/ power of mentor more important?
46. IF MENTOR: What is your relationship with your mentor? (Probe: Supportive? And in what way: instrumental or emotional or both?)
47. Do you have any role models in the organisation (colleagues, supervisors, mentors) OR are your role models external? (i.e. family members, past teachers etc.). Do you think having a role model provides support for your career?
48. Do you feel you receive support in relation to your job or career in the organisation you are presently employed (i.e. by your boss/ superior, colleagues)?

49. Do you believe your achievements are recognised and rewarded? In what way?
50. IF aspiring to progress: Overall, do you think that opportunities are provided in this organisation for your career development and advancement? (Probe: Are you satisfied with your career prospects/ opportunities in this organisation? *Do you see yourself progressing here?)
51. Do you think your gender is important? (Probe: What do you see as more important: your race or gender?)
52. Is there a Women's Network in the organisation?
53. IF YES: What do you see as their purpose/ role? Do you think they are effective?
54. How did you perceive the organisational culture? (Probe: What is the profile of the people in top positions? Do you think that this has an effect on the culture of the organisation? In what way?)
55. Do you think the organisations accepts or understands differences in culture and background of its employees (*for e.g. by providing race/cultural awareness seminars)? Does it value diversity?
56. Do you believe there is sexism in the organisation? Do you believe there is racism? (Probe: Why do you think that? Please explain. I.e. What form does discrimination take? Is it discrimination by individuals OR organisational practices/ culture? Is it subtle or direct?)
57. Have you personally ever experienced gender discrimination in this organisation? (**What was the form of the discrimination?*) IF YES: How have you dealt with it? Did you report it? (How has the organisation dealt with it?)
58. Have you ever experienced sexual harassment in the organisation? (**What was the form of the harassment?*) IF YES: How have you dealt with it? Did you report it? (How has the organisation dealt with it?)
59. What changes would you like to see in your organisation? (Prompt: in terms of policies, practices, culture etc.)
60. Have you ever considered leaving the organisation? (Probe: Considering stopping work altogether? OR moving to another organisation? IF YES: Why?)
61. Overall, what do you think makes an organisation a good employer? (Probe: In terms of providing opportunities for all, developing its staff, valuing diversity etc.)

- **RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES**

62. What is your relationship with other women in the organisation? (women of same ethnic group as the person I am interviewing). Do you feel you receive support from them? Do you provide support?
63. What is your relationship with ethnic minority women? (Probe: Do you feel there is a bond due to sexism?) Do you have good relationships/ any close relationships with them?
64. How do you feel you fare in comparison to ethnic minority women in terms of your position in the organisation and your career opportunities? (Probe: Do you feel you share a lot of similar experiences? What are the differences?)
65. Are your feelings on this different towards different groups of ethnic minority women?

- **WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE: EXPERIENCES, BALANCE, STRESS.**
- 66. Do you feel you are the same person at work and at home? (Probe: How? I.e. At work, do you feel you have to act very professional/ keep distance with colleagues etc.)
- 67. Do you experience stress at work? Where do you think it stems from? (Probe: Work overload, tight deadlines, discrimination, trying to balance work and family life).
- 68. Do you feel you receive support from your family in relation to your work and career?

- CONCLUDE INTERVIEW, ASK IF THEY WANT TO DISCUSS/ BRING UP SOMETHING THAT WAS NOT DISCUSSED
- THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.
- (may repeat that this will be treated in complete confidentiality)

Appendix 13

Lists 1 and 2 shown to participants

LIST 1

ETHNIC ORIGIN

1. Black or Black British:
African / Afro-Caribbean / Any other Black background (Please specify)
2. Asian or British Asian:
Indian / Pakistani / Bangladeshi / Any other Asian background (Please specify)
3. Mixed origin:
White & Black Caribbean / White & Black African / White & Asian / Any other mixed background (Please specify)
4. White:
British / Irish / Any other white background (Please specify)
5. Arab / Middle Eastern
6. Chinese / Japanese
7. Any other ethnic background (Please specify)

LIST 2

QUALIFICATIONS

1. O / GSE / GCSE (please state number)
2. A-Level (please state number and subject[s])
3. ONC / OND / HNC (please state subject[s])
4. HND (please state subject and grade)
5. Degree (please state subject and class)
6. Higher Degree, i.e. MA / PhD (please state subject)
7. Professional qualification[s] (please specify)
8. Other (please specify)