

**Is the Boundaryless Career Applicable to
all? An Investigation of Black Knowledge
Intensive Workers in the UK**

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
By

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January 2013

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AWKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Ruth Simpson and Dr Savita Kumra for their continuing support, encouragement and agreeing to supervise this project. Your flexibility, exceptional knowledge and counselling allowed me to thrive and finish this research with my sanity intact. You have coached me and steered this research to a successful direction. Also Brunel Business School who especially the support staff who have always been there to answer my questions and provide me with the materials needed to conduct this research and to feel comfortable in the research environment.

I would also like to thank all those who agreed to take part in my research investigation, including organisational gatekeepers, managers, employees and members of professional bodies. Your support for the research allowed me to complete it and the quality and thought of your responses very much shaped the research. Interviewees were full of praise for this research as you were ready with thoughtful and honest responses. Even criticisms were very welcome as they helped me to become a better researcher.

I would like to thank my family especially my parents Samuel and Esther and friends who have never stopped supporting, encouraging and developing me unconditionally. You have always been there for me in times of uneasiness.

PUBLICATIONS ARISING

Mansah-Owusu, G (2012) "Is a Boundaryless Career Applicable to All?" Division of Occupational Psychology Conference, Proceedings of the Occupational Psychology Conference, Chester pp 66, Poster Presentation

Mansah-Owusu, G (2011) "Is Boundaryless Career Applicable to All?" Diversity at Work Conference, Division of Occupational Psychology, Poster presentation

Mansah-Owusu, G (2011), An Exploration of Internal and External Barriers to Upward Career Progression of Black Professionals in the UK, Proceedings of the British Psychological Society Postgraduate Occupational Psychology Conference, Stratford Upon Avon, Presentation

ABSTRACT

This study explores protean and boundaryless career attitudes in a sample of black British knowledge intensive workers. Changes in the organisational climate to more flexible project based working have affected the way in which careers develop. It has been reported that employees need to possess certain skills to help them succeed in the modern employment climate (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). The main research theory that has attempted to explain such career changes and the acquisition of specialist skills include the boundaryless career which includes both intelligent and protean career competencies (Greenhaus et al 2004).

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the extent to which black African and black Caribbean workers careers are boundaryless and to investigate the nature and type of career boundaries and barriers faced. The current research addresses some of the criticisms of boundaryless career research highlighted by Sullivan *et al* (1998, 1999, 2009). These criticisms include an apparent exaggeration of the pervasiveness of boundaryless and protean careers and a lack of research investigating the applicability of these career theories to professional, minority group members. Thirty two knowledge workers were interviewed to understand the nature and type of career boundaries faced. A quantitative questionnaire developed by Briscoe *et al* (2006) was also used to investigate the extent to which black knowledge workers are protean and boundaryless in their career outlook.

The findings from the interviews highlight education and family as career enablers as they help participants navigate potential career barriers. The lack of career mentors, racial discrimination and inadequate career advice at an early age were perceived as career boundaries. Results also point to a perceptual difference between career boundaries and barriers which researchers such as Sullivan *et al* (2004) sought to clarify. The findings suggest that career boundaries are more flexible and less permeable and career barriers are more rigid and difficult to overcome. Briscoe *et al* (2006) boundaryless and protean scales and were completed by 187 participants. It was found that management consultants, those aged 41-50 and those with higher levels of education were found to be the most boundaryless. The main theoretical contribution is that “*attached boundaryless*” is displayed. Attached boundarylessness occurred as participants preferred the security of remaining in an organisation, but enjoyed being self directed and boundaryless within their organisations by working collaboratively.

GLOSSARY

BL	Boundaryless
OM	Organisational Mobility
VD	Values Driven
SD	Self Directed
UK	United Kingdom
KIF	Knowledge Intensive Firm
PR	Protean

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The career trajectories of individuals and theories that have attempted to explain careers have fascinated researchers for over 100 years. Many traditional career theories were developed by researchers who attempted to match individuals to careers based on their individual personalities, preferences and skills. In contrast, contemporary career theories attempt to explain careers within the modern employment environment. This contemporary career environment has been reported as becoming increasingly complex, dynamic and flexible with characteristics that have been highlighted in the development of contemporary career theories such as boundaryless and protean career theories (Arthur and Rousseau 1996).

Contemporary career theories also emphasize the changing nature of employment relationships such as: mergers, acquisitions, downsizing, technological advancements, globalization, expansion, outsourcing, and increased workforce diversity (Sullivan and Baruch. 2009). With the changing career landscape, contemporary career theories attempt to explain the career competencies needed to navigate such environmental changes.

Contemporary career theories include: boundaryless, protean, intelligent, post corporate and kaleidoscope careers. The current research investigation will focus on boundaryless career theories which include protean and intelligent career competencies (Greenhaus *et al* 2004).

The current research focuses on the boundaryless career due to the applicability of this theory to knowledge intensive workers. Knowledge intensive workers have been reported as having superior skills, knowledge and are more likely to navigate career landscapes with greater ease (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). Debates among researchers have focused on the applicability of the boundaryless career in relation to the current employment situation and whether the theory's pervasiveness has been exaggerated (Inkson *et al.* 2012, Sullivan and Baruch 2009). This research attempts to clarify the applicability of the boundaryless career theory, to diverse employees and occupational groups.

Knowledge intensive workers have been described as typical boundaryless career navigators due to the superior technical and industry skills and specific knowledge that knowledge intensive workers possess (Arthur *et al* 1999). These superior skills can lend themselves to a flexible, self managed career reflecting aspects of the boundaryless career theory (Arthur and

Rousseau 1996). The knowledge economy has been defined as work that includes an intellectual component; where well qualified, well educated employees form the core of the workforce (Alvesson, 2001). This occupational group has become increasingly important in the economic growth and development of intellectual property.

The current research will also focus on the ethnicity and the career patterns of black African and black Caribbean knowledge workers. This focus on specific ethnic groups reflects the increase in organisational diversity that is a consequence of globalization. Organisational diversity has affected the way in which individuals engage with work, as different organizations and occupations employ and interact with individuals from all over the globe. Evidence to suggest the diversity of the UK population has increased comes from the Office of National Statistics (2011), which states that the UK non white population is approximately 12 per cent. Inevitably, new ethnic groups have engaged in the labour market in the form of paid employment, but this relationship with employment is not always positive. Heath and Cheung (2006) found a higher proportion of unemployed black males in comparison to white males, and when employed, on average receiving a lower salary. Jones (1993) also states that black Africans and black Caribbeans are underrepresented in professional and managerial jobs, and that knowledge of the careers of these groups has been highlighted as lacking in career research (Kenny and Briner 2007). The Equality and Human Rights commission (2010) indicates that Indian and Chinese individuals in Britain are twice as likely to be employed as professionals as white British people. These statistics suggest that there are differences between ethnic groups and the occupations that they enter.

Kenny and Briner (2007) suggest that current published research tends to focus on the differences between ethnic groups and the adverse impact that selection and assessment methods have on these groups. This research focus on the adverse impact faced by some minorities may have eclipsed research into other aspects of minority career experiences. Research that investigates what happens to the careers of ethnic minorities after they secure employment within organisations, or research that explains the career progression of black workers has not adequately been addressed by the career research community. Additionally, the research context has been chosen due to the view that there has been an over-reliance of career research from a majority ethnic, American perspective and an overemphasis on the use of quantitative research methods (Murtagh *et al.* 2007). In response to this, the current

research investigation aims to use both quantitative and qualitative methods to research careers.

Based on a plethora of work that has investigated careers and the gaps highlighted, the current research has the following aims: first, to investigate the extent to which black knowledge intensive workers are boundaryless in their career and second to understand the experiences and nature of career boundaries that black African and black Caribbean knowledge intensive workers face. By addressing these issues and topics, the current study aims to provide a greater understanding of the career experiences of a neglected group and the extent to which a boundaryless career applies to this group. This research aims to add contemporary knowledge and to make boundaryless career theory more applicable to ethnic minority groups in the UK, as called for by Sullivan *et al.* (1998) Sullivan and Baruch (2009) and Atewologun and Singh (2010).

To allow career theories to be dynamic and relevant to the current employment environment and to reflect the ethnic diversity of the labour force, the research should reflect the careers of black African and black Caribbean knowledge intensive workers (Kenny and Briner 2007). The boundaryless career theory will be used in this thesis as it has been highlighted as the most appropriate theory to understand and conceptualise the careers of knowledge intensive workers in the UK due to the boundaryless career theory highlighting the individuality and skill based competencies needed to succeed in knowledge intensive careers. Additionally boundaryless career theory has been highlighted as a viable contemporary research theory (Arthur and Rousseau 1996) as it incorporates the acquisition of specialised skills and knowledge at its core. The next section will provide a historical background of career theories.

1.2 Traditional Career Theories

A plethora of research based on career choice and how careers are maintained throughout an individual's life have emerged. These career theories have been utilized since the beginning of the twentieth century and are still used today. Career theories can be categorized and include theories from the individual, developmental and organizational perspectives (Adamson, *et al.* 1998). The interaction between individuals and organisations can be said to be a central aspect in any individual's life, to this end, careers and career theories have been a well researched area.

Traditional descriptions of careers tend to focus on stable, linear and hierarchical career paths, with individuals remaining within one or two organisations throughout their lifetime; these perceptions have led to the development of career theories that reflect such working patterns (Sullivan *et al.* 1998). To this end, several theories have emerged to describe the development of careers in a traditional organisational setting. These theories include: person–environment fit models such as Holland’s Career Theory (1973, 1985, 1997) and developmental stage theories such as those of Super (1957) and Levinson (1978). Traditional careers, which can also be described as objective careers, typically chart a hierarchical, upward career progression and have been termed traditional by researchers such as Kanter (1989). Kanter (1989) describes organisational careers as consisting of logical, hierarchical advancement, which is defined by an individual’s craft or skill, and where an individual’s resources are reputation or knowledge. All responsibilities, challenges and influence are tied to the formal levels of the organisation rather than the individual. This assumes that individuals are encouraged to have strong attachments to the organisation and that career development is dependent on and within an organisation.

Models such as person–environment fit and developmental stage models portray careers in a similar way to Kanter (1989) and therefore emphasise hierarchy and focus on the person–environment fit in a one way, rigid interaction. These theories, which are based on bureaucratic careers, emerged from Parson’s vocational guidance centre, in 1909. Parson (1909) formulated psychometric tools to aid individual career choice. Emerging from this seminal work, person–environment fit models have permeated career counselling techniques from the early twentieth century to the present day. Person–environment fit models, such as Holland’s RIASEC model (1973, 1985, 1997), are primarily concerned with ensuring a match between an individual’s personality and preference to a particular occupation. Holland’s model proposes that individuals fall into six interest types which include: realistic, investigative, conventional, artistic, enterprising and social. The central proposition of this theory is that occupational satisfaction, stability and achievement depend on the amount of congruence between an individual’s personality and current or potential working environment (Kidd 2002). Those who experience congruence between their work and work environment will experience increased job satisfaction than those with less congruence or fit (Kidd 2002).

Therefore, person–environment fit models such as Holland’s (1973, 1985, 1997) have been used widely in Western society’s career counselling methods and thus have been widely accepted by career counselling practitioners (Hartung, 2010). However, person–environment fit models have been criticised for not accounting for the processes made after an occupation has been chosen, and later employment adjustments are thus seen as diagnostic models regarding career choice, rather than developmental theories of career choice (Weinrach, 1980).

Developmental Stage theories chart the developmental aspect of career choice and growth of work experiences. Dominating career stage theories include Super’s (1957) theory and Levinson’s theory of punctuated equilibrium, which emphasise how stages in life can trigger career behaviours and career thinking (Kidd 2002). Extensive research has been conducted to investigate the validity of stage theories. Kidd (2002) has stated that a vast amount of research has focused on the exploration stage of Super’s model (aged 15–24 years) and the role of self concept. Less research has focused on the establishment (25–44 years) and maintenance (45–64) phases of the career theory.

The aforementioned traditional career theories that have been highlighted focus on smooth hierarchical career progression. These traditional career theories have been incorporated into this thesis as they give context and background to the topic and provide a backdrop from which to describe the boundaryless career theory. In relation to traditional career theories, careers may not be smooth and hierarchical for all who may attempt to progress within them or move elsewhere. To this end, career barriers may form based on some individuals’ inability to have smooth and successful career progressions within organisations. These career barriers have been defined by Crites (1969) as “thwarting conditions” that may damage the career development process for some. The idea of a career barrier was originally developed to explain the inequalities of females in the labour market, but have now been used to highlight and describe inequalities and difficulties in an ethnic minority’s career progression (McWhirter 1997).

Social cognitive career theories such as Lent *et al’s* (1994) theory offer explanations of how career barriers can be formed by individuals. These theories stress how internal motivators such as career decision making, self efficacy and outcome expectations govern the expression of career choice. Career self efficacy concerns the extent to which an individual has the

confidence in their ability to choose a career and governs the level of career barriers which may affect an individual (Lent 1994). Outcome expectations are the extent to which an individual perceives that a career choice is likely, the lower the career expectation, the bigger the potential career barrier. Although career barriers have been used successfully in career literature to identify women's and minorities' difficulties in traditional organisations' career progression, the term "career barrier" is increasingly used interchangeably with the term "career boundary". Thus, there have been calls within career literature to clarify these terms (Sullivan and Arthur 2009). This thesis aims to further clarify the terms "career boundary" and "career barrier". Gunz *et al.* (2000) state that career boundaries are things that separate and surround things, are less rigid and more dynamic, and are linked to contemporary subjective careers. Contrastingly, career barriers can be perceived as limits to traditional career barriers, acting as limits to objective, traditional careers (Crites 1969).

1.3 Contemporary Career Theories

Sullivan *et al.* (1998), Sullivan and Baruch (2009), Adamson *et al.* (1998) and Baruch (2006) have stated that there has been a fundamental paradigm shift in the perspectives surrounding career theories of late. New perspectives of careers include working from a subjective, individual career level, which is more flexible, non hierarchical, portfolio and dynamic (Savikas *et al.* 2009). Boundaryless career theory is one such theory, which suggests that careers are less restricted by specific organisations, but grow through project based experiences and competencies that exist across firms (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). These less constrained career patterns have been conceptualised under the umbrella term of boundaryless careers, but include other career concepts and terms such as: intelligent and protean careers and have been highlighted as accurate metaphors to describe current employment patterns. This proposed career shift has been characterised by individuals who can move between and within organisations and vocations with a greater ease than ever before (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). This career metaphor has been used extensively by contemporary career theorists to describe modern employment patterns and career enactment.

The protean career (Hall, 1976) competencies emphasise a self-directed approach to careers that appear to be driven by an individual's own values as opposed to the values of the organisation. It can be seen that the boundaryless career theory and protean competencies attempt to describe new working styles. However, the boundaryless career theory has been

criticised lacking sufficient relevant or rigorous research into the pervasiveness of these new models (Sullivan *et al.* 1998, Sullivan and Baruch 2009).

Therefore, the background of career theories and research has highlighted a long affiliation with traditional, bureaucratic, objective and organisationally controlled careers. Theories that are affiliated with such career perspectives include person–environment fit models and developmental models of career fit. However, since the 1970s, researchers have tended to focus on theories that fit with the changing employment environment, centring on fluid, free career movement, where the individual is in charge of their career. The next section will describe the research issue within the boundaryless career theory..

1.4 Research Issues

Salient research issues with career theories will be highlighted in this section. Researchers have emphasized career investigations that focus on minority populations' career development is lacking in current research. Kenny and Briner's (2007) review suggests a distinct lack of research of the careers of minority groups in the UK, also echoed by Sullivan *et al.* (1998) Sullivan and Baruch, (2009). Additionally, there have been calls from scholars to research the broader societal dimension of careers, such as the individual dimensions that may impinge upon the career journeys. More specifically, research needs to be conducted on specific minority groups within countries, due to little research focusing on non white individuals' experiences at professional and management levels (Kenny and Briner, 2007, Atewologun and Singh, 2010).

Boundaryless careers and more contemporary career theories have also been criticized for focusing on male, middle class, white participants and there is an emerging view that research needs to, and should, focus on a rapidly changing, diverse labour market (Ituma and Simpson, 2007; Sullivan 1999, Sullivan and Baruch 2009, Humphreys and Gateby 1996). Diversity career management has become an important aspect of contemporary careers within organizations. Due to a global workforce, being seen as having a fair and inclusive career development process would aid organizational wellbeing and productivity. To this end, the current research aims to investigate career barriers in black African and black Caribbean professionals. Thus, investigating the extent of boundaryless career theory in a specific minority sample will increase boundaryless career theory and diversity career enactment.

The second research issue that will be addressed in this thesis is that many research studies of boundaryless careers tend to rely exclusively on quantitative research methods. Furthermore, research tends to focus on the inter-organisational career movements of workers (Greenhaus *et al.* 2004). Subsequently, there have been calls for research to investigate the psychological aspects of career boundaries, and qualitative research methods can do this more effectively than quantitative research methods alone (Sullivan and Baruch 2009, Greenhaus *et al.* 2004). Therefore use of quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews will be used to gain a holistic view of the career experiences and will be utilized in order to understand the psychological and subjective aspects of the boundaryless career. Although questionnaire methods in research have the benefit of being easy to administer, relatively cheap and prescriptive, some researchers have highlighted several failings of the positivist, reductionist research method (Griffiths 1999). Some researchers such as Griffiths (1999) highlight the problems with positivist research methods including an over emphasis on generalizability and ignoring nuances that may be important to the research question in hand. Therefore, a mixed methods design will be used to measure the extent of boundarylessness within the sample, and the career journeys of the sample.

The third research issue that will be addressed will be to clarify the term “boundaryless” and the distinction between a career boundary and a career barrier. Within the literature Gunz *et al.* (2000) and Sullivan and Mainiero (2007) have highlighted that both terms are frequently used interchangeably, but lack the necessary needed clarification. This research aims to clarify the terms further in order to aid other research into boundaryless careers and career barriers.

1.5 Research Context

Knowledge intensive workers have well developed technical, industry skills and specific knowledge. These skills suggest a more flexible, self managed career that may highlight additional aspects of a more boundaryless career (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). The knowledge economy has been defined as work that has an amount of intellectual work; where well qualified, well educated employees form a part of the workforce (Alvesson 2001). Typical examples of knowledge intensive organisations include: law firms, accounting organisations, management consultancies, engineering organisations, I.T. organisations, advertising, research and development units and other high technology firms (Alvesson 2001). The growth of the knowledge economy is due to an increase in information and

technology development, which began in the 1950s. It began with the increase of information technology and developed rapidly from the use of the Internet and email. Increased knowledge was measured by the increase of management services, consulting firms and the development of intellectual property, which traded in knowledge (Powell and Snellman 2004). Boundaryless career theory supports the knowledge intensive industry as it shows the dynamic and flexible skills that are needed to navigate such knowledge intensive firms.

Thus, the context of this research investigation will focus on the career trajectories and the extent to which black African and black Caribbean knowledge intensive careers adopt the boundaryless career. This is due to the lack of research based on cultures other than that of North America and within under researched ethnic minority groups (Kenny and Briner 2007, Sullivan and Baruch 2009). In the current investigation black African refers to black individuals from first generation migrants from countries in the continent of Africa. The term 'black Caribbean' will refer to black individuals from first generation migrants living and working in the UK who originate from the Caribbean Islands.

1.6 Research Objectives

Therefore, the main objectives of this study are to increase the research on boundaryless careers within the UK, using specific ethnic minorities as a sample. Current and past research highlights the shifting of the career experience from the organisational perspective to the individual perspective. In response to this, the research aims to investigate the extent of the boundaryless career and experience of the careers of black knowledge intensive workers in a UK context. The current research also aims to provide information on diversity management practices in the UK, in order for organizations to be aware of any potential challenges to the career progression of black professionals in the UK, and to better manage the careers of black workers within their organizations.

Research on the careers of ethnic minorities often focuses on ethnic minorities as one homogenous group, leading to problems when it comes to drawing conclusions or generalising findings. Also, using a diverse group of participants potentially leads to particular nuances of a group being ignored (Atewologun and Singh, 2010). The results of this investigation are expected to further add information about the boundaryless career phenomenon in a UK context and comparisons will be made with research studies that have been based on North American populations in order to tease out differences and similarities.

The research methodology employed, a mixed method approach using both semi structured interviews followed by a questionnaire, will be able to answer research questions more holistically. Based on these objectives, the current research questions will be answered using both quantitative and qualitative research methods:

- 1. To what extent are black African and black Caribbean workers careers boundaryless?**
- 2. What are the experiences and nature of the boundaries that black Africans and black Caribbeans face?**

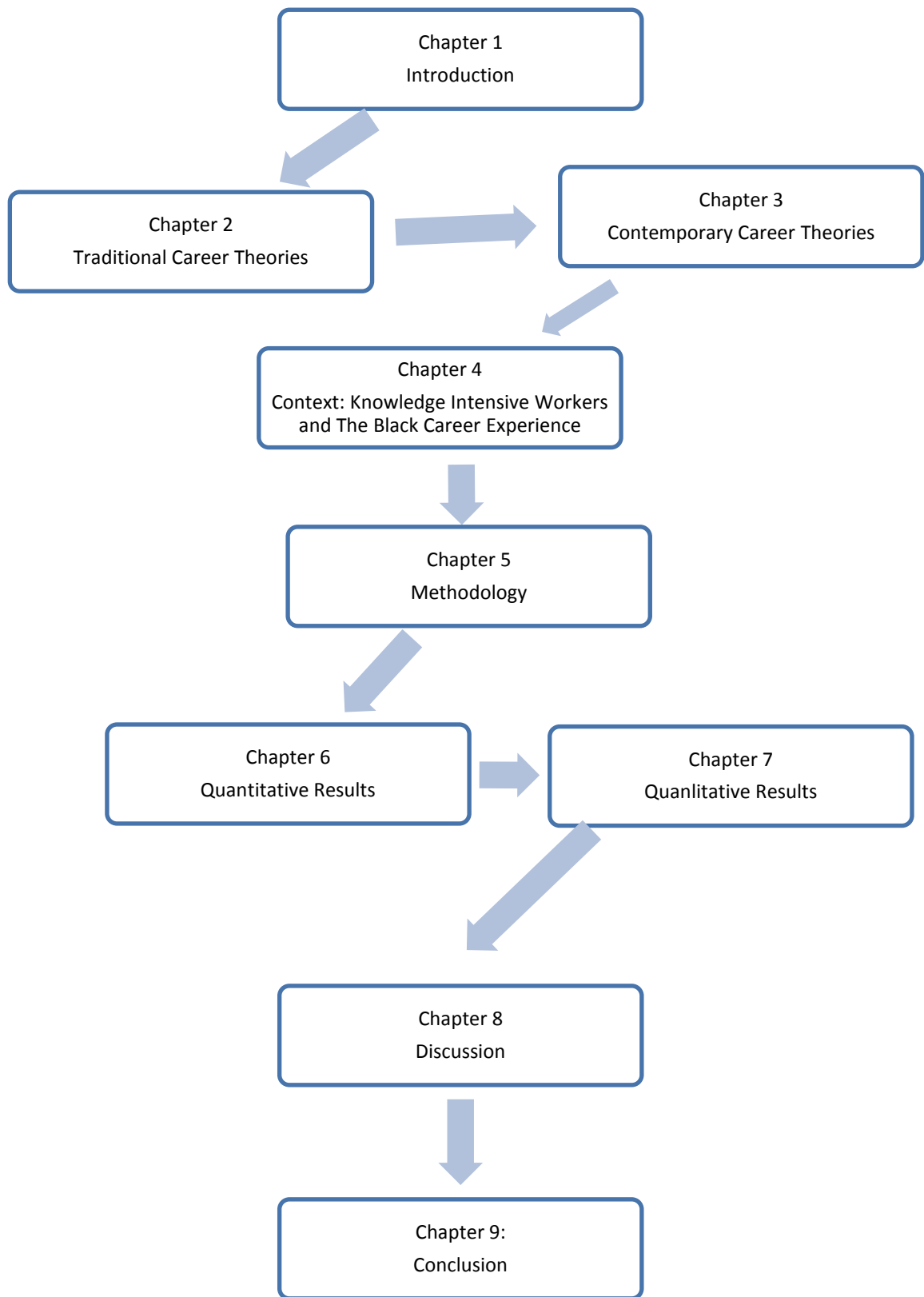


Figure 1.1 Thesis structure

The above figure shows the structure of this thesis, Chapter 1, which is the current chapter, introduces the topic of the thesis, the aims, and research questions. Chapter 2 reviews the literature and the research into traditional career theories. Chapter 3 reviews more contemporary career theories, including boundaryless career theory. Chapter 4 examines the literature and theories concerned with the research context, including The Knowledge Economy and The Black Career. Chapter 5 covers the methodology and theoretical aspects, as well as the nature of the participants of both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research. Chapters 6 and 7 consider the quantitative and qualitative results, and Chapter 8 presents the discussion. Lastly, Chapter 9 discusses implications and limitations.

2 Literature Review: Traditional Career Theories

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the literature concerned with the historical development of career theories from the early 1900s to contemporary theories from the present day. Chapter 2 will include an analysis of the history of career research, perspectives and definitions of careers, and an evaluation and an explanation of the applicability of traditional career theories.

Traditional career theories include matching models such as person–environment fit models including: Holland’s (1973, 1985, 1997) career theory and developmental stage theories such as those of Super (1957) and Levinson (1978). This section will discuss traditional career theories in order to provide a background and historical context of the development of career research. Understanding historical and contextual background can allow scholars to be aware of salient themes and trends in the development of these theories

Traditional career theories are linked to bureaucratic, organisationally based, hierarchical and linear patterns. Traditional theories are concerned with career development within the confines of a single or very few organisational settings throughout an individual’s lifetime. Within this section, the terms bureaucratic, organisational, hierarchical and linear careers will refer to traditional career theories.

The interaction between an individual and work is a constant and inevitable part of many individuals’ lives. Subsequently, the development of an individual’s career has been a well researched area. Traditional notions of careers tend to characterise them as a stable, linear, hierarchical phenomenon, typically progressing within one or two organisations throughout a lifetime. This has led to the development of career theories that reflect these traditional working patterns (Sullivan *et al.* 1998). To this end, several theories have emerged to encompass the study of careers and career counselling such as: person–environment fit models like Holland’s theory (1973, 1985, 1997) and developmental stage theories such as those of Levinson (1978) and Super (1957).

Traditional career theories have been described as hierarchically based, where organisational growth is perceived as a series of promotions that bring higher benefits. Progress within a traditional career relates to upward progression within one or two organisations in a lifetime

(Kanter 1989). A career within the boundaries of an organisation is characterised by formal, upward changes, and all responsibilities, development and training are closely tied to the organisational setting, with managers developing knowledge of a particular company, its traditions and culture (Kanter, 1989: 305–306). Thus, what is defined as a traditional, corporate or organisational career is characterised by upward progression throughout one or two organisations in a lifetime.

Contrastingly, contemporary career theories such as the boundaryless career theory developed by Arthur and Rousseau (1996), suggest that there have been significant shifts in modern employment patterns and the working environment in recent times. Research has also highlighted that such changes have been encouraged by the increase in job choice, which has become one of the most revealing consequences of the industrialised world (Savikas *et al.* 2009). The changing vocational environment has led academics to investigate the applicability of traditional career theories to the increasingly varied non- traditional working environment, such as: globalisation, the decrease of the lifelong career, the increase of the use of contract and temporary workers, down-sizing, mergers, globalisation and acquisitions (Heckscher and Donellon, 1994). Therefore, the aims of this chapter are to: introduce and evaluate traditional career research and theories and highlight the applicability of these theories to the modern employment situation. In order to do this, a definition of career must be discussed.

2.2 Definitions of Career

The use of the word “career” has become a common aspect of our daily vocabulary. The word career emerged from the French word, *carriere*, which refers to a road or a race course. *Carriere* was then expanded to symbolise “a swift course, as of the sun in the sky” and an individual’s “progress through life in a particular vocation” (Guralnik 1978: 214). The original meaning of career, “a journey”, is also relevant to the career development and experiences of individuals today. For example in the current changing vocational environment, individuals may have many different careers experiences, including unique twists and turns that can be described as a journey. Table 2.1 shows six definitions of careers, each of which will be discussed in the section below.

Author	Definitions
Guralnik 1978: 214	Progress through life in a particular vocation.
Arthur et al. 1989	An evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time.
Nicholson 1996: 162	The steady ascent of a hierarchy, the accumulation of expertise in a profession or movement through positions towards mature stability.
Arnold 1997: 11	The sequence of employment related positions, roles, activities and experiences encountered by a person.
Savickas 2001: 311	The sequence of occupational positions that a person holds during their life.
Olsson 2003	A set of occupational experiences and roles that makes up a person's working life.

Table 2.1 Career definitions

Collin and Young (2000) identify that there are a large number of career definitions and the above table (Table 2.1) highlights several definitions. The six explanations highlighted show differing perspectives. Guralbik's (1978) explanation of careers "**Progress through life in a particular vocation**" can be interpreted as the broad suggestion that careers mirror an individual's progress through life. This image of careers progressing through life is something that can also be observed from the original meaning of the word career, *carriere*, which refers to a road or a race course. The last aspect of Guralbik's (1978) definition "in a particular vocation" suggests that careers are concerned with progress in a particular occupation. This would suggest an affiliation with a more traditional and organisationally focussed career, similar to the explanation discussed by Kanter (1989).

Another career definition that has been used in the literature is based on a psychological perspective: "**An evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time**" (Arthur *et al.* 1989: 8). This definition can be extended to include more than one job over a person's lifetime, highlighting an evolution or progression of career. This provides a more specific and defined description compared to Guralbik's (1978) definition. Additionally, Arthur *et al.*'s (1989) definition includes an ever-changing element, which is a distinct characteristic of contemporary careers, which have been defined as more flexible and less indicative of constraining boundaries.

Nicholson's career definition (1996) "**The steady ascent of a hierarchy, the accumulation of expertise in a profession or movement through positions towards mature stability**", suggests that a career includes a steady element that is related to hierarchical progression within a single or few bureaucratic organisations. The definition highlights the accumulation of expertise and a movement to mature stability within a firm. The gathering of expertise in a steady and upwardly mobile direction is similar to the accumulation of human and social capital, which are both elements of both contemporary and more traditional career paths. Additionally, the phrase "towards a mature stability" can be linked to the developmental stage theories of career development that chart the changing elements and development of a career through an individual's life. Nicholson's (1996) definition of career is linked to developmental stage theories as they highlight the existence of distinct career stages; the latter of which include career maturity, where individuals settle into their career roles and fully utilise their skills (Levinson 1957). Therefore this definition charts careers with an organisational focus, linked to one or two organisations, more linked to traditional career concepts which may not reflect modern working experiences.

Arnold's (1997) definition of career: "The sequence of employment related positions, roles, activities and experiences encountered by a person", highlights the view that the career includes a series of work related positions, roles, experiences and activities encountered by an individual. This definition is holistic, highlighting positions, roles, experiences and activities that are related to work and employment. This can include training, work experience and also includes the upward and lateral career movements that are highlighted in Arthur and Rousseau's (1996) seminal work on the boundaryless career. This definition can be used to explain traditional hierarchical, bureaucratic careers and also more contemporary, free flowing, boundaryless careers.

Savikas's (2001: 311) definition is: "**the sequence of occupational positions that a person holds during his or her life-span**". This definition can be said to be more restrictive than the previous definition, as it includes a "**sequence of occupational positions**", which may not include education or training. Education and training are aspects of the modern occupational environment and comprise an increasing part of an individual's vocational journey over a lifetime. Thus the omission of these aspects in this definition, would suggest that it does not encompass the current aspects of an individual's career. Additionally, a sequential career

progression would suggest a form of upward or hierarchical career progression, usually only related to a few organisations.

Olsson's (2003) definition "**a set of occupational experiences and roles that makes up a person's working life**" embraces education and training, and does not relate only to traditional careers, but also to contemporary careers. Due to this definition being broad enough to include different working experiences such as education and training, it seems to be more appropriate to the current research investigation and effectively captures careers in a contemporary context.

Therefore, the current definitions described have common factors, including the word "sequence", suggesting that careers involve an ordered and logical element. However, there are discrepancies in some of the definitions, as some do not seem to include the notion of work related, or occupational experiences and peripheral experiences such as: training and development or educational experiences that may lead to occupational experiences.

Therefore, in this thesis, the definition of career that will be used will be the Olsson (2003) definition, "**a set of occupational experiences and roles that makes up a person's working life**". The preferred definition is more holistic and can include a process of a career over a person's lifetime. Additionally this definition can capture elements of boundarylessness in a modern career context.

According to Adamson *et al.* (1998) the concept of career at an organisational level is a useful and invaluable tool, as the concept of a "career" allows organisations to plan management succession and create structures to develop its employees. This view is very much related to Kanter's (1989) perception of an organisational, objective career, often rooted within one or two organisations in a lifetime. Thus the career concept can allow organisations to utilise and manage talent. At a subjective level, the meaning of the career has a large array of definitions, depending on an individual's cultural, social, historical and economic background (Blustein *et al.* 2004). Careers can range from, for some, being an economic exercise, and for others, a measure of social status and self worth (Adamson *et al.* 1998). Therefore this section has highlighted differing definitions of the career and highlighted that the definition to be used will be one that encompasses both work and peripheral experiences related to work, such as education. The next section will highlight the historical origins of career research, the Chicago School of Sociology.

The Chicago School of Sociology

The origins of careers and the change from work to sustainable careers stem from the industrial revolution, which led to increased manufacturing and a decline in agricultural work. Prior to this, organisations were small, family orientated and home based, thus the industrial revolution precipitated the change to an organisational focus on careers and work, leading to a contrasting organisational context for small family led businesses (Grint 2000). Such societal changes were investigated by the Chicago School of Sociology, which performed important pioneering work into the nature of careers in the early twentieth century.

The Chicago School of Sociology has been reported as the earliest school of sociology in the world and is also famed for researching career paths. Beginning in the 1920s, the school studied life histories of the local community. The school's interests focused on the areas of: demography, urbanisation and social deviances of the urban population of Chicago. The ultimate aims of the research exercises were to understand how individuals constructed their lives (Barley 1989). In referring to the term "career", the Chicago sociologists referred to a more holistic definition, applicable to a wide range of situations than is commonly used today. Hughes (1928) has been credited with pioneering the systematic research of organised institutions such as hospitals, schools and airlines. Hughes (1928) began his research on the Chicago real estate board and it was during his tenure that sociological research developed at the school. Research also included Hall (1944) and Solomon's (1952) studies of medical careers, Becker's (1951) analysis of the career problems of teachers and Wagner's (1959) work on airline pilots. This research fostered a modern rhetoric of career discourse, including developmental theories (Barley 1989).

Based on this research, Hughes (1971) incorporated four related themes when referring to careers. These themes included: a) that careers combine the objective and subjective, for example, careers including institutionalised forms of participation and a stream of positions offices and statuses. Contrastingly the notion highlights the individual aspect of career. These aspects of career are also linked to both traditional and contemporary parts of career theories. b) That careers include: status passages, similar to rites of passage, such as births, deaths and marriage; however, the Chicago School loosened the term to refer to job transitions. c) That careers are rightful properties or collectives that highlight individuals as social beings, and that career lines can only be referred to as such when a number of individuals follow the same path. d) That careers link individuals to the social structure – this refers to how

individuals are influenced by their social class and the social backgrounds of the individuals' lives (Barley 1989). The aforementioned views, defined by Hughes (1971), highlight the objective and subjective perspectives of career – careers are rites of passage, which is something that developmental stage theories focus on (Levinson 1978; Super, 1957). This insightful criterion includes aspects of traditional and contemporary careers, institutional involvement in career development and the social aspect of careers. Based on these views, Hughes researched different organisations to understand the dynamism of careers further.

Thus, it can be argued that the Chicago legacy was responsible for locating three aspects of career research, including: situational and organisational based career experiences; relational and social experiences of career and chronological lifespan aspects of careers (Hughes 1937). The Chicago School used and refined the use of a unique research methodology in life histories and used a diverse range of occupations in their research. Additionally the research focused on research participants at the periphery of mainstream society, who may have otherwise been ignored at the time.

Therefore, the Chicago School has given an effective conceptual platform for other researchers investigating vocational career trends. The methods such as lifespan methods, and concepts such as individual and organisational aspects of careers, are still used today to define careers. These methods will be used and adapted to form the qualitative research interviews. The next section will discuss the ideas that originated from the Chicago School investigations and how they permeated traditional career theories. Taken from these investigations of different perspectives and concepts of thinking about “career”, differing areas of careers will be discussed.

2.3 Perspectives on Career

The study of careers largely depends on the perspective that is taken, including: individual versus organisational, and sociological versus psychological perspectives. Sociologists often take the view that careers are the unfolding social roles that focus on individual contributions to maintain social order within an organisation (Van Maanen and Barley 1984).

Contrastingly, psychologists tend to focus on personal development in careers, personal motivation and internal processes of careers. The psychological perspective of careers is that an individual can sometimes view the career as a process for individual growth (Shepherd

1984) and the career is perceived as an aspect of an individual’s life structure (Levinson 1986).

Before the 1970s, researchers, including psychologists and sociologists, viewed careers in the traditional manner, focusing mainly on the person–environment fit model and how well it could predict individual success within an organisation (Adamson *et al.* 1998). Since the 1970s, there has been an effort to include other perspectives to the study of career management, such as individual or self development perspectives on careers. Contemporary career research tends to focus on a shift in the perspective of careers, developing career theories that highlight decreasing organisational boundaries, careers that are more permeable, as opposed to traditional, hierarchical and bureaucratic careers.

Internal career	External career
People make careers	Careers make people
Examines careers from a psychological point of view	Examines careers from a sociological and organisational point of view.
Focus on self development within career, career motivation, career orientation and the psychological transitions that take place.	Focuses on career paths and occupation steams, career stages within organisations and the nature of occupations in society.
Key question: What do I want from work given my perceptions of who I am and what is possible?	Key question: What is possible and realistic in my organisation and occupation, given my perceptions of the world of work?
Boundaryless/protean/ intelligent/kaleidoscope/portfolio/socio cognitive/post corporate careers	P–E–Fit theories, Holland/ Schein/Super/ Levinson
Subjective career stance	Objective career stance
Individually defined	Organisationally defined

Table 2.2 Adapted from Derr and Laurent (1989) Internal vs. external career

Table 2.2 links internal and external career definitions, objective and subjective perspectives and psychological and sociological views. External careers are mainly concerned with how organisations perceive careers. Evaluating career success is more objective, achieved by looking into the hierarchy level, pace of progress, qualifications and financial successes (Gunz *et al.* 2000). External careers also focus on bureaucratic, hierarchical careers, where the individual gains promotion and success in a more structured setting. The main question being asked by the individual is “What is possible and realistic in my organisation and

occupation, given my perceptions of the world of work?”. Career progression is being developed by the working environment and the organisational culture. External careers are defined by Schein (1975) as the progression or position or jobs that refer to the actual sequence of work (Marshall and Bonner 2003). Based on this, the career theories that are most closely related to external careers include person–environment fit models such as Holland (1973, 1985, 1997), and Schein’s career anchor model (1975). Therefore, external careers are more concerned with an objective, sociological perspective of careers.

External careers are represented by organisational careers and are paths regarding positions and roles that individuals fill during their working life. The traditional career perspective is easily measurable in terms of using qualifications or human capital and hierarchy to measure success. However, career success may become harder to conceptualise when individuals have more dynamic changes within their careers, such as what is reported in more modern forms of work such as the boundaryless career model. Organisations manage individuals’ careers through planned career systems; individuals may manage their careers irrespective of the way that organisations do (Baruch 2004).

Conversely, the internal career emphasises an individual’s perspective about their own career in terms of development, advancement and goal fulfilment. This includes: individual subjective goal setting, evaluating achievements and career success depending on the feelings and values of the individual. The internal career can be linked to the psychological perspective of the career due to its focus on the development of an individual, their motivation to pursue and continue their career and the psychological processes that may be involved in the career, or “what do I want from work?”. Thus, theories most related to the internal career include: boundaryless, protean and intelligent career competencies that identify the subjectivity of career enactment. Internal careers are individually structured and defined and are not constrained by organisations (Derr and Laurent, 1989). Internal careers are those that include the individual’s subjective opinions and activities to develop a more defined self concept around work and vocational activities (Schein 1975).

Therefore, traditional concepts of the career that emphasise hierarchical progressions have had a pervasive effect on the research on careers, from their inception in the early twentieth century, to the present day. This can be seen in the career counselling models that are used, and the most pervasive models are Holland’s theory (1973, 1985, 1997) and Super’s career

stage theory (1957). The benefits of using such theories are that they are simple to understand by organisations and individuals. However, in a constantly changing society, the applicability of traditional theories to a postmodern and more varied working style is questionable. The current research will mainly focus on the internal career, which includes contemporary career theories and addresses careers from a personal, individual and subjective level, but may occasionally refer to aspects of the external career. Therefore the current chapter will analyse and evaluate the applicability of traditional, external, objective career theories and how applicable these are to modern changing work environments.

2.4 Traditional Career Theories

The preceding sections have introduced the historical perspective and background of careers. Career literature has many conceptual models, which Milward (2005) has categorised into many different perspectives including: developmental, behaviourist, differentialist, decision making, structural and organisational based careers. Based on this categorisation, this thesis has grouped career theories into: matching models, developmental stage theories, socio-cognitive career theories and contemporary career theories, as can be seen in Table 2.3. The current includes: matching models and developmental stage theories will be discussed. These include person–environment fit models, Schein’s career anchor model, and Super (1957) and Levinson’s (1978) stage theories. Traditional career theories are conceptualised as theories where an individual’s relationship with an organisation develops through linear, stable, hierarchical paths, usually bound to one or few organisations (Levinson, 1978, Sullivan, 2009).

Matching models (Traditional career Theory)	Developmental stage models (Traditional career Theory)	Socio -cognitive careers (New career theories)	Contemporary careers (New career theories)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person–Environment –Fit (Holland 1959) • Schein's Career Anchor Model (1975) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super (1957) • Levinson (1978) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lent (1994) • Gottfredson (1981) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protean Hall (1996) • Boundaryless (Arthur 1994) • Intelligent (1995) • Portfolio

Table 2.3 Career Theory Categories

Kanter (1989) states that traditional or bureaucratic careers tend to follow linear paths, bound to one or few organisations in a lifetime. Kanter (1989) defined three career forms including: the bureaucratic career, consisting of logical advancement through hierarchical positions; professional careers, defined by an individual’s craft or skill and resources that are reputation

or knowledge based; and entrepreneurial careers, where the person producing key inputs is valued. Kanter (1989) also states traditional or bureaucratic careers are identified by sequential development, with formally defined positions and promotions. All responsibilities, challenges and influence are tied to the formal levels of the organisation, assuming that individuals are encouraged to have strong attachments to organisations.

Kanter (1989) suggests that there has been a pervasive decline of traditional or bureaucratic careers and an increase in professional and entrepreneurial careers. Models such as person–environment fit and developmental stage models express careers in a hierarchical nature, emphasising the fit of the individual to the organisation as a one-way, rigid interaction. Traditional career theories also tend to de-emphasise the effect of the organisational context, individual intrinsic motivation to work that affects an individual. This section of the literature review will outline and evaluate traditional career theories such as person–environment fit, developmental stage theories and Schein’s career anchor theory. The applicability of these theories to the changing world of work will also be assessed and how they link to the current research questions.

2.5 Matching Models

Matching models or person–environment fit models are concerned with the degree to which an individual matches the potential working environment. Other models that remain under the umbrella of person–environment fit include the Minnesota theory of work adjustment (Dawis and Lofquist 1984), which focuses on rewards sought and abilities used, and Schneider’s attraction–selection and attrition model, which suggests that fit is a result of individual recruitment and the selection of limited kinds of people and their adjustment to the organisation (Kidd 2002). These theories will be discussed in this thesis due to their pervasiveness in the literature and sustained use for career counselling purposes. These theories are still used today and it is important to evaluate them in order to observe whether they are applicable to both ethnic minorities and women.

One of the earliest matching models was developed by Parson (1909) in his publication: “Choosing a Vocation”. The seminal work introduced and discussed a dynamic and empirical approach to vocational guidance and Parson (1909) founded a vocational bureau that aimed to help young people to find vocations, primarily using the model of fit. Parson (1909) postulated that career choices require three steps: knowledge of the self, knowledge of work

environments, and a method of matching these characteristics; therefore using these insights, an individual can be matched to a potential working environment. Parson's (1909) model of fit is still used today in the majority of career counselling interventions (McIlveen and Patton 2006).

Parson's (1909) work emerged at the same time as Galton and the concept of General Mental Ability (GMA) and the use of psychometric measurements for selection purposes (Betz *et al.* 1996). The permeation of the use of psychometrics in career choice was spurred by the world wars, which required the vast selection and placement of recruits to the armed forces. In between the wars, the great depression of the 1930s led to an economic crisis and unemployment. This unemployment in turn, stimulated programmes to assist the unemployed, such as the Minnesota Employment Stabilisation Research Institute, which developed aptitude tests to assess the unemployed. Their main method of research was the trait measurement of individuals and use of factor analysis to develop psychometric measurements (Betz *et al.* 1996). This led to Strong's (1927) use of first interest inventories for measuring individual differences in psychological characteristics and to match these differences to vocational careers. Therefore matching models emerged from the idea of matching individuals to vocations.

The work of Parson led to one of the most popular and widely used examples of a person–environment fit model: Holland's RIASEC model (1973, 1985, 1997), which proposes that people fall into six interest types including: realistic, investigative, conventional, artistic, enterprising and social (see Figure 2.1). It identifies occupational choices and is used to find a match between characteristics and organisational characteristics. This model is most commonly portrayed in hexagonal form, (see Figure 2.1) and is said to follow Parson's (1909) work into career decision making (Baruch 2004). The central proposition of Holland's theory is that occupational satisfaction, stability and achievement depends on the amount of congruence between an individual's personality and their current or potential working environment (Holland 1973, 1985, 1997). Individuals who experience congruence between their work and their work environment will therefore experience greater job satisfaction than those with less congruence or fit (Kidd 2002).

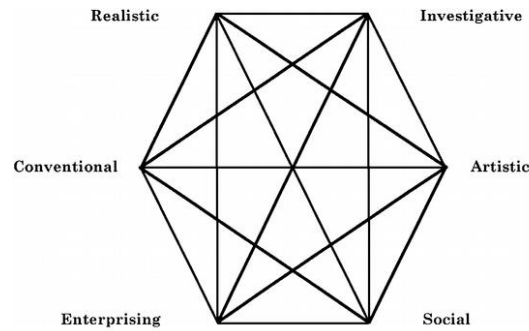


Figure 2.1- The Holland Hexagon, adapted from Holland (1997) theory.

The popularity of Holland’s model led to the development of instruments to assess the model in relation to career counselling, such as Holland’s (1985) self directed search and strong interest inventory (Harmon *et al.* 1994). The table below (Table 2.4) depicts Holland’s model (1973, 1985, 1997) showing that the theory highlights how an individual’s personality type is closely linked to their career choices.

Type	Personality	Occupations
Realistic	Shy, stable, practical	Mechanic, farmer, factory worker
Investigative	Analytical, independent	Economist, mathematician, biologist
Social	Sociable, cooperative	Social worker, teacher, counsellor
Conventional	Practical, efficient	Accountant, manager
Enterprising	Ambitious, energetic	Lawyer
Artistic	Imaginative, idealistic	Painter, writer, musician

Table 2.4- Holland’s job fit theory. Baruch (2004)

Research as to whether congruence does achieve long term occupational satisfaction has been conducted, to test the validity of the model. A systematic review by Tinsley (2000) on Holland’s person–environment fit model shows that the model is valid to a large extent, because fit is related to employee well-being and negatively related to employer discontent. However, other meta analyses have shown that the relationship between congruence and job outcomes is weak at best, in the case of job satisfaction, correlations are usually around 0.21 (Kidd 2002). Spokane (1985) has suggested that the low correlations may be due to different measures of congruence in differing research investigations and the lack of universal standardised measurements (Tinsley 2000).

Additional criticisms of the theory suggest that Holland’s model oversimplifies the notion of fit and has been criticised as simplistic, as an individual is categorised as being either

congruent with their working environment or incongruent. A minority of research has investigated what happens to individuals in occupations where there is incongruence, resulting in a static one dimensional view of career choice. The theory has also been criticised for only applying to individuals at the entry stage of their careers, therefore the model is not applicable for those who want to investigate their careers even if there is an element of incongruence (Betz *et al.* 1996).

Criticisms also highlight that the model is “static trait” research and like trait research this person–environment fit model cannot infer cause and effect. Thus the extent to which traits can develop after congruence, or if traits only manifest themselves fully before the matching occurs, is difficult to establish. An individual who has an occupation once deemed incongruent and unsuitable may develop experiences, skills and traits allowing them to be congruent with the occupation. This limitation was also expressed by Holland himself in an interview with Weinvah (1980) when he stated that the theory does not explain the development of careers over time or how they may change in the future. Another criticism of person–environment fit is that there seems to be a lack of focus on gender and socio-economic status in Holland’s development of the model, therefore it does not account for lifestyle, work life balance or any other contextual issues that may affect career choice.

Holland’s (1973, 1985, 1997) theory does not address the processes leading up to making an occupational choice or later employment adjustment, and thus is seen as a diagnostic model regarding career choice, rather than a developmental theory regarding career choice. Thus, the person–environment fit models seem to offer an intelligent choice for practitioners working with practical problems. However after closer inspection their low predictive validity and poor theory development shows that Holland’s (1973, 1985, 1997) RIASEC dimensions are not useful predictors of vocational outcomes.

However, the models have encouraged further research into the applicability of person–environment fit theories. For example, Muchinsky and Monahan (1987) highlighted a difference between “supplementary” and “complementary” congruence. In supplementary congruence, fit is characterised by individuals who are matched to environments in which there are people who also have similar characteristics. This view is the main characteristic of Holland’s (1973, 1985, 1997) model of fit (Betz *et al.* 1996).

Research into the applicability of person–environment fit models to minority groups has been conducted. Lovelace and Rosen (1996) found that black managers reported poor organisational fit compared to white or Hispanic managers. Additionally poor fit was also associated with job dissatisfaction, and increased stress levels. Therefore, to conclude, these models may not provide a total view of career fit in organisations and do not show a developmental description of how career choice develops whilst in adulthood. Therefore, it is important for black knowledge intensive workers to be congruent with their working environment. Research which has tested Holland’s (1973, 1985, 1997) on other cultures has been conducted.

Du Toit and de Bruin (2002) tested the validity of Holland’s model in South Africa. The results showed that the validity of the model was not supported within the sample. They explained this due to the collectivist culture in South Africa which may have affected vocational interests. This popular model of matching individuals to their careers although useful has not been found to translate to an African sample. The authors du Toit and de Bruin (2002) highlight that more African research needs to be conducted in relation to Holland’s (1973, 1985, 1997) theory. An additional criticism of Holland’s (1973, 1985, 1997) theory is that it is concerned with the initial early stage of career choices, but does not explicitly deal with what happens to individuals as they progress through their careers. The reason why this theory has been highlighted is that it is one of the most common theories used in career counselling and laid the foundation for other career theories to be developed. Contemporary career theories which will be discussed in the next chapter provide an alternative view of careers. The next type of traditional career theory that will be assessed will be one developed by Schein (1974).

Schein’s Career Anchor Theory

Schein’s (1974, 1978) career anchor model is concerned with why and how individuals make career decisions and can also be considered a matching model of careers. A longitudinal research study from 1961 to 1973 informed career theory and involved observing career motivations, occupational and educational histories, work values, work attitudes, future plans, ambitions values and self concepts of 44 MBA students. Career anchors are prescriptive and descriptive tools that serve to guide an individual’s career. Career anchors also act as driving and constraining forces in decisions and choices of careers (Schein 1978). Schein proposed in his original longitudinal research there were five career anchors, including technical,

managerial, autonomy, security and entrepreneurial or creative. Subsequent research added three more categories: service, pure challenge and lifestyle challenge (Derr, 1989; DeLong, 1982) that there were eight career anchors that guide a person's career:

- Technical/ functional competences (achievement of expert status amongst peers);
- Managerial competence (willingness to solve complex problems and undertake decision);
- Independence (person freedom in job centre and settings);
- Stability (long term employment);
- Entrepreneurial creativity (opportunity to identify and create new businesses, services or products);
- Service and dedication (desire to engage in activities that improve the world in some ways);
- Pure challenge (to overcome major obstacles and solve unsolvable problems);
- Lifestyle (to integrate career and personal needs).

A main premise of the career anchor theory is that an individual's career values and attitudes are consistent throughout their career, after some adjustment in the early stages of their career. Throughout the career, the individual gains awareness that allows them to develop positive and negative views about their career and developments for the future (Beck and La Lopa 2001). Congruence between work environment and career direction is said to increase job commitment and career satisfaction; a mismatch will result in reduced turnover and reduced satisfaction (Feldman and Bollino 1996). Schein (1987, 1990) stated that work effectiveness and job stability followed, once congruence was found. The career anchor theory takes a traditional hierarchical approach to careers, focusing on linear career progressions. Schein (1974, 1978) also highlights that an individual's abilities, motives and values are interactive and inseparable.

Criticisms of the career anchor theory approach can be observed through the research methodology as the model was developed from only 44 MBA students. This is a group that can be observed as having unique, ambitious, driven and studious characteristics; therefore, its generalizability to other less educational groups is questionable. Additionally, another criticism of career anchor theory is that it has not been extended to other cultures. Although

an investigation of career anchors in other non Western environments, including Malaysia and South Africa, by Marshall and Bonner (2003) was conducted, the groups used were also MBA students, who it could be suggested have more Westernised views of career. However, it was found that lifestyle anchor was the most important career anchor across the sample. This anchor was not identified as one of Schein's original career anchors. Therefore, it could be argued that the original anchor model is not applicable to individuals in more globalised working environments, thus another career anchor was highlighted as important in this research. This leads to an additional criticism of career anchor research, which is that career anchors were applied to the research populations without appreciation of the national culture and context (Ituma and Simpson 2007). Subsequent research has been conducted into career anchor theory applicability and national culture.

Research that attempted to investigate the applicability of the career anchor theory in Nigerian IT workers was conducted by Ituma and Simpson (2007). The research found that five out of the original eight career anchors were manifested within the Nigerian sample. There was no evidence of the career anchor service or dedication due to national context differences. A unique anchor in this study was found, marketability, which was unique to the national context, highlighting the competition of the IT market. The research found that the majority of Schein's original career anchors were expressed in this sample; however, they were explained in a different way from the Western expressed career anchors. This research has highlighted that career anchors can be applicable to other national contexts. However, more research should be conducted in non European and non North American contexts.

Additionally, Feldman and Bollino (1996) question whether individuals only have one primary career anchor that is unlikely to change, and this also suggests that a person will only seek opportunities to strengthen this anchor (Ituma and Simpson 2007). This claim although useful, is very absolute. The original research found that 10 out of the 44 participants had two career anchors simultaneously and 4 out 44 had three anchors, which supports the view that some individuals may be driven by more than one career anchor. Due to the current working environment being dynamic, an individual's wants and needs may rapidly change, suggesting that several career anchors may be manifesting (Feldman and Bollino 1996). Therefore, the view that only one anchor is a stable drive in careers is unlikely in a globalised working world.

The career anchor theory is related to other matching models, including person–environment fit models, as its main aim is to provide congruence or fit between the personality of an individual and preference to a career. The career anchor theory has been a very influential theory of career choice and career development; however it may be too static in today’s ever changing career climate. Therefore, to conclude matching models have been seen to be influential, especially by career counselling practitioners. Matching models provide a way to guide individuals and have the potential to provide an insight to their careers. The next set of traditional career theories to be discussed will be developmental stage theories.

2.6 Developmental Stage Theories

Developmental stage theories have also been used pervasively in career counselling and have generated much career research. Developmental stage theories focus on the developmental aspect of career choice and growth of such life experiences. This group of theories chart traditional career paths and progression, closely related to the bureaucratic, hierarchical models of careers. The hierarchical model of careers would suggest a clear age and experience related progression in one or two organisational fields. The two dominant stage theories include: Super’s Career Stage theory (1957) and Levinson’s Theory of Punctuated Equilibrium (1978). Both theories emphasise how different phases in life trigger career stages, behaviours, career paths and career thinking (Kidd 2002). Super’s (1957) theory is concerned with how individuals implement their self concept through vocational choices, and is divided into five stages, including: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline. They are being reviewed in this literature review as they chart career development through an individuals life and it links with the first research question 1) to what extent are black African and black Caribbean workers boundaryless? The inclusion of the developmental stage theories are to find out if the sample identify with developmental stage theories also.

Stage	Explanation
1) Growth (0–14) -	The self concept develops through identification of family and school figures.
2) Exploration (15–24)	Through school and the study of career options, the notion of career develops.
3) Establishment(25–44)	Having found a niche, the individual makes efforts to establish themselves within it.
4) Maintenance (45–64)	Individual is concerned with holding onto skills and position within the workplace.
5)Decline (65+)	Retirement when the traditional work life ceases

Table 2.5 Super’s Career Stage model, adapted from Kidd (2002)

In contrast, Levinson (1978) suggests a punctuated equilibrium model of career development based on the age of the individual. Levinson's (1978) model was developed by interviewing 40 men, and found that life structures are defined by differing periods of stability within their careers.

Other stage theories include Form and Miller's theory (1949) states that a series of social adjustments occur when working in an organisation, beginning at birth and ending at death.

These stages include:

- 0–15: orientation to working world;
- 15–18: beginning stage, can include part time work;
- 18–34: entry to the labour market;
- 34–60: stability stage;
- 60+: retirement.

The theory also highlights the influence of the idea of social class and states that it is the primary predictor of occupational attainment. This theory rightly assumes that contextual factors such as social class may affect the career stage process; however, it has been argued that the amount of variance in career stages cannot be explained by social predictors alone and that there could be other factors (Baruch 2004). The researchers also make it clear that not everyone goes through the same stages successfully and achieves stability and security. Criticisms of this model include that some people may never actually reach the last two stages and that most people will stay in the earlier stages. Therefore, the model is not fit for purpose in the sense that it will only apply to a small minority of workers, this may be due to the initial research only focussing on two, narrow careers such as academics and engineers, and academics would have mentoring, direction, representation and sponsoring phases, which can be seen in teaching and supervising students, and informing policy through research and consultancy work (Baruch 2004).

An integrated model of developmental stage theories by Dalton, Thompson and Price (1977) also emerged. They have not attached specific ages to their stages, and focus on professional growth and managerial development. This is an important addition to the model, as stage theories have been criticised for being only applicable to people in the early stages of their

careers. It indicates a work under guidance or the apprentice mode, where people learn how to perform tasks and ask the advice of more experienced members of the team. The model is based on a longitudinal study of academics and engineers, who aimed to find out why some people were productive and contributed throughout their careers, and why others reduced over time. Dalton *et al.* (1977) stated that the career can be explained as a progression through stages that are independent of organisational structures. Therefore, Dalton *et al.*'s (1977) model, although effective as it underplays the significance of age, is not entirely workable due to the lack of applicability of the latter two stages to the current employment climate.

Stage	Description
Foundation	Educational experience helps plant the seeds of career aspiration.
Career entry	Through attainment of a profession, via apprenticeship, college, university, or other professional training.
Advancement	Professional and hierarchical development within an organisation(s) or expanding one's own business.
Re-evaluation	Checking match between aspiration and fulfilment, rethinking job/role/career. Can emerge from internal feelings or external feelings, which may lead to change in career or remaining on the same path.
Reinforcement	Reinforcement of present career or return to learning stage for establishment of a new career.
Decline	Withdrawal from working life, swift or can spread over years.
Retirement	Leaving labour market.

Table 2.6 Integrated career stage model Baruch (2004: pp54)

The above integrated stage model gives the flexibility and a less regimented path that other single stage theories lack; however it does have its limitations. As has been reviewed, it can be seen that developmental stage theories do not specifically apply to minority groups or women. Latter stage theories also have issues with generalizability, are prescriptive in the sense that many of the research reports included all male white middle class participants, and claim that these theories are applicable to individuals. The modern career climate includes evidence of redundancies, career breaks and career changes that may not conform to regimented stages.

Specific empirical research on Levinson's punctuated equilibrium model is lacking (Swanson 1992). Additionally, differing research studies often use contrasting measures of the stages across studies, and this makes the research hard to consolidate and reach meaningful conclusions. Currently, there are a number of methods used to define career stages, including: age, tenure, psychological adjustment and organisational level. Lastly, researchers have been criticised as using stages as a post hoc explanation for research findings as opposed to testing

the stages with relevant hypotheses (Hackett 1985). Thus, the stage models have stimulated a vast amount of research into career development. However, less research is focussed on the establishment and maintenance stages of the model, which could be due to the difficulties in finding a testable hypothesis for these stages.

Other criticisms of career stage theories stem from their overreliance on male subjects for research. Both Levinson (1978) and Super (1957), have stated that their theories are applicable to women; although there are limited research studies that have supported this (Cytrynbaum and Crites 1989). Unique female issues may include: differing and unique career paths, being faced with pay inequalities, having greater family demands and experiencing workplace discrimination; researchers are concerned that traditional stage theories cannot adequately capture the experiences of women in the workplace (Bardwick 1980). The steady increase of women in the workplace has made it important that these theories become more applicable to women, as they are frequently used in human resources management and career development programmes within the workplace (Schein 1978).

Ornstein and Isabella (1990) found little support for either Levinson's (1978) or Super's (1957) theories with regards to women, despite organisational commitment and turnover intention differing for women of different ages. Ornstein and Isabella's (1990) research did not support the stage patterns suggested by Levinson. However, Levinson (1996) interviewed 45 females, from academics to business professionals, and found that women progress through the same age related stages as men, but have gender stereotypes, sexism and cultural stereotypes to contend with. However, the sample size used by Levinson (1996) was limited to ages 35–45, which could hinder the generalizability of his findings that women progress through the same developmental stages as men.

Additionally, developmental stage theories do show that there is a link between women and their progression through stages as Super (1957) set out. Smart (1998) researched career theory in Australian dieticians. They found that satisfaction with pay and job involvement was lowest in the exploration stage. Women in the establishment stage were more satisfied with pay and less willing to relocate compared with women in the exploration phase. Although these findings were insightful, there are limitations to this research. An example of the limitations of Super's (1957) theory include that the women in the sample were from a

homogenous group of dieticians. Careers within the medical arena could be seen to be following a more traditional and standardised career path than in other professions.

According to Smart, the course of development of a dietician in Australia is prescriptive as a four-year undergraduate degree is a prerequisite for the profession. This therefore suggests that the sample used was one in which stage-like career progression was already a feature, regardless of the gender of participants. Additionally, the sample only looked at full time employees responses and rejected 77 women who worked less than full time. These findings may have been due to experimenter effects, where participants expose information they think the researchers want to hear. The sample who worked part time could have been more likely to have a less stage related career paths and have issues in juggling family commitments with work anyway, therefore this sample may have been likely to support Super's (1957) theory. This research shows that additional research into career stage theory and its applicability to the female population is needed, which should take a broader approach, highlighting multiple factors.

Therefore, career stage theories can be said to be useful and pervasive in career counselling. However, in relation to the modern dynamics of workers, such as professions, cultures, organisational size and type of employment, such prescriptive stage theories fail to identify and highlight the differences in some people's career experiences. Using specific age groupings is said to be inadequate in a world where people have multiple careers, and also an environment that has seen changes in business norms and value systems, which has reduced the relevance of age as a career stage (Baruch 2004). The extent to which stage theories apply to minorities has not been adequately empirically explored, highlighting a large research gap. As the majority of the research and theory development has been tested in Western majority populations, their applicability to a varied and ever increasing sub population of developed countries needs to be explored.

2.7 Summary

This section has discussed the most popular traditional career theories, such as person–environment fit models, Schein's career anchor theory, and developmental stage theories. These theories were included into the current literature review due to traditional theories of careers being the foundation of career scholarship. It is essential to understand the background of career research in order to analyse the applicability of these theories to the

modern employment context and to appreciate development of newer more contemporary career theories.

The applicability of traditional career theories to the current increasingly diverse workforce and to minority professional groups is not entirely known. Research that developed traditional theories tends focus on white, middle class males, which is not entirely representative of the current UK workforce (Collin and Young 2000). Person–environment fit theories have been influential since the early twentieth century however, their applicability to minority professional groups in the UK has been questionable. The assumption of these and many traditional career theories is a “one size fits all”, one dimensional, prescriptive set of rules, designed with a majority ethnic population in mind. The current changing environment of work is becoming increasingly globalised, dynamic and flexible. The core and development of such traditional career theories have centred on majority groups in mainly the North American context. Therefore, the current research will look at the applicability of contemporary career theories to minority groups. The next chapter will investigate contemporary career theories, such as boundaryless career theory, and its applicability to minority groups in the UK.

3 Contemporary Career Theories

Contemporary career theories have emerged from a dawn of a new vocational era. This new era has developed from a distinct shift in working patterns from traditional working styles, following hierarchical organisational progression, to dynamic, less standardised career paths which have transpired during the last fifty to sixty years (Arthur *et al.* 2005). Chapter two gave an overview of traditional career theories in order to lay a foundation to the research areas and scholarship that have preceded the development of contemporary career theories discussed in this chapter. Changes in the external environment such as restructuring and outsourcing have threatened traditional views of careers which emphasise hierarchical, linear career progression (Inkson *et al.*, 2012). Onyx and Maclean (1996) suggest that the classic concept of linear career progression is inadequate and inconsistent with certain occupations. With an increasing reliance on temporary and contract workers contemporary career theories attempt to capture the essence of the demands of contemporary employment relationships (Sullivan and Baruch 2009). The current chapter will focus on literature regarding contemporary career theories, such as social learning theories, boundaryless, post corporate and portfolio career theories, career boundaries and barriers. Interest in the nature of careers and how this impacts individuals has led to several investigations of how hindrances affect the career development of some groups which will be investigated in this literature review.

Aforementioned changes in the world of work have developed from changing economic conditions including, an increasing technological, globalised and competitive economy which has changed the way business is conducted. During the 1981-1982 recession fundamental organisational and structural changes occurred, such as: loosing poorly performing businesses and encouragements to acquire new organisations to enhance profitability. Such changes have led to increasing use of out-sourcing and partnering with other organisations to develop competitive businesses (Capelli 1999). Furthermore, shifts in technology have led to organisations lessening their reliance on long term relationships with employees whose skills could become stagnant and irrelevant in fast paced organisations. Instead, there tends to be a focus on external labour markets capable of supplying organisations with highly skilled individuals who are often hired on a contractual or temporary basis in order to fulfil needs (Capelli 1999).

These changes in employment trends can be seen in the 1982 context as a reactionary component to financial crises and this is echoed today in the current financial crisis. De-layering of organisations provided some employees with fewer traditional organisational opportunities which led to less structured, unpredictable working environments (Greenhaus *et al.* 2004). Large scale layoffs, a decline of manufacturing organisations and increases in dual wage earning families also provide evidence of a shifting organisational climate (Biemann *et al.* 2012). To respond to such organisational changes, contemporary career theories have been developed which attempt to explain careers in a complex environment.

Theories to explain these less constrained career patterns have been conceptualised under the umbrella term of the boundaryless career, but include other career metaphors which highlight the change to a freer, unbounded career experience. This shift is characterised typically by individuals who can move between and within vocations with greater ease (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). Other terms which have become synonymous with the view of contemporary career theory include: protean career theory, intelligent career and post corporate career. In the current thesis, the career models which will be used and focussed on will be the boundaryless career theory which include, protean and intelligent career competencies. This focus on the boundaryless career is due to it focusing on career competencies such as values driven, self directed (Protean), boundarylessness, organisational mobility (Boundaryless careers) and knowing whom, knowing how and knowing why (intelligent career competencies). This combination of boundaryless, protean and intelligent career competencies comes from the seminal work of Arthur and Rousseau (1996) and research by Greenhaus et al (2004). These competencies have been isolated by Arthur and Rousseau as important aspects of knowledge intensive work (1996).

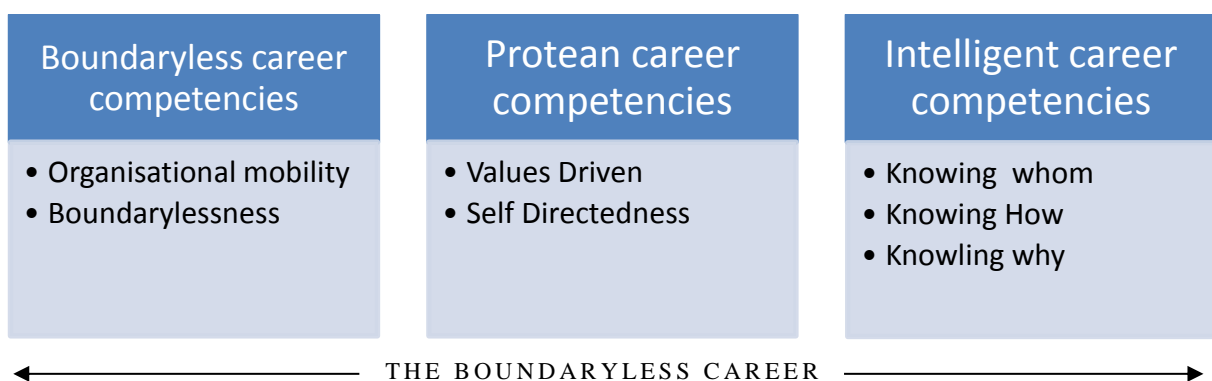


Table 3.1–Career competencies of the boundaryless career

The first section of this chapter will focus on boundaryless careers, career barriers, theories related to career barriers and a discussion of the terms career boundary and career barrier. The inclusion of career barriers in this section of the thesis is due to the metaphor of a career barrier being included in contemporary career theories such as Krumboltz's (1976) and Lent's *et al* (1994) socio cognitive theory of career development. The following section of this chapter will discuss other contemporary career theories and their applicability to the modern career climate.

3.1 The Boundaryless Career Theory

Traditional Careers	Boundaryless Careers
Identity from employer	Identity from self/profession
Career viewed in one organizational model	Career viewed through multiple organizations
Career management by employer	Self management of career
Loyal to employer	Not loyal to any one employer
Risk averse	Willing to take risks
Earning money is important	Fulfilment and enjoyment drivers
Concerned with success with current employer	Not overtly concerned with succeeding with the current employer

Adapted from Arthur and Rousseau (1996)

Table 3.2-Traditional and boundaryless careers

A boundaryless career, according to Inkson (2006), is a career “**with no limits as to how far it can extend or a career with no clear lines or boundary markings as to where limits are**”. A boundaryless career can also be represented by careers that take place without certain constraints. Commentators of traditional careers where individuals follow a hierarchical progression towards power and prestige posit that these careers have been replaced by independent, individually driven and subjective career advancement (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). Table 3.2 expresses the main differences between traditional careers and the boundaryless career. The characteristics of a more boundaryless career include gaining self or professional identity, careers that may span more than one or two organisations, self career management, individuals who are willing to take risks and those who are not concerned with succeeding with one particular employer. Career validation tends to be sought from outside of

the organisation, sustained by external networks or knowledge. The boundaryless career tends to be conceptualised as opposite to the traditional organisational career, less rigid and more flexible.

The development of the boundaryless career has been linked to the development of Neo-liberalism in the UK. The emergence of the boundaryless career developed before the rise of neo-liberalism prior to 1994. Neo-liberalism is commonly understood as the advocate of self regulating free markets and a reduced role of governments and businesses main responsibility to return profits to their stake holders (Friedman, 1970). This led to the privatisation of state owned companies and the reduction of the power of trade unions and employment structures that complement the individual, rather than collectives. This was the backdrop to which the boundaryless career theory was developed, described as the new economy, characterised by company innovation, through flexibility, individuality and employee mobility (Roper *et al.*, 2010).

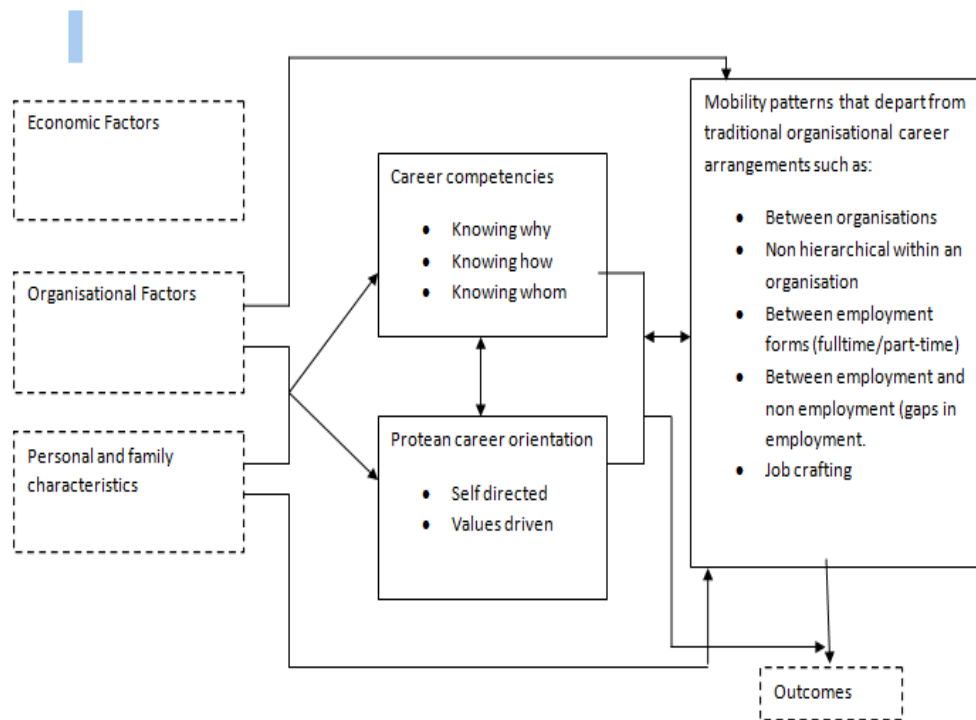
According to Arthur and Rousseau (1996) the boundaryless career depends on the perception of the career actor who may perceive a boundaryless career despite some organisational structural constraints. The main premise of a boundaryless career is that an individual has independence from organisational boundaries rather than dependence on the organisational structures (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). In its purest form the idea of a boundaryless career in the research literature is something that is debatable as there are some careers that are clearly held together by specific boundaries, such as the medical profession (Sullivan *et al.* 1999, Sullivan and Arthur 2009, Inkson *et al.* 2012).

Contemporary careers are often identified under the umbrella of boundaryless careers. Arthur and Rousseau (1996) highlight the boundaryless career as a range of possible career forms that are opposite to traditional career forms and not as a separate career theory in itself. The current research will refer to the boundaryless career theory which will include protean and intelligent career competencies. The reason for this is that many research investigations on contemporary careers focus on the boundaryless career but do not effectively isolate the specific competencies (Sullivan and Arthur 2005, Pang 2003, De Vos and Soens, 2008). Briscoe *et al.*'s (2006) research investigation to develop empirical scales, defined boundaryless careers as crossing both objective and subjective career boundaries (which is separate from the definition of protean careers, which focuses on the self directed and the

individual managing their careers based on their values) (Arthur 1994) and introduced measurements that measure the two separate career forms.

Figure 3.1 from Greenhaus *et al.* (2004) defines boundaryless career theory as: job crafting, career moves that are lateral not just hierarchical, movements between organisations and full time and part time work. Additionally, Greenhaus *et al.*'s (2004) diagram incorporates both protean and intelligent career competencies as part of the boundaryless career. However, for the purposes of this thesis, the boundaryless career is defined as the aspects of career that involve both physical and psychological mobility and protean career competencies will be defined as the value driven and self-directed nature of organisational careers. These boundaryless career competencies will be addressed separately.

The three components of boundaryless career emerge from the image below (Figure 3.1), one component includes the mobility patterns that differ from traditional career patterns, emphasising frequent organisational changes. Many research studies have focused on the increased organisational mobility between organisations and between employment and non-employment (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). Research focusing on this intra organisational and inter organisational mobility has been common in contemporary career research due to inter organisational movements being relatively easy to quantify (Greenhaus *et al.* 2004).



A boundaryless perspective on careers: The variables enclosed in the boxes with thick borders are the three elements of the boundaryless perspective. The variables enclosed in the boxes with dashed borders are antecedents or outcomes of the variables captured by a boundaryless perspective

Figure 3.1 Boundaryless perspectives on careers (Greenhaus *et al.* 2004)

Contrastingly, the forms of boundary crossing that receives less focus in the research literature are the internal, psychological aspects of careers, including the concept of job crafting, or the actions individuals take to reorganise and redefine their careers. Job crafting involves changing the task boundaries of the job, by changing the type of work activities, cognitively changing the perceptions of the job, changing the way in which an individual interacts on the job or with other individuals. To this end, the current research will focus on the internal or psychological aspect of boundaryless careers, mainly due to the view that it has not thus far been investigated adequately (Greenhaus *et al.* 2004).

Statistics appear to support this trend to a boundaryless career. For example, large firms of 500 employees or more accounted for only 30% of employment in the UK and other European countries (Storey 1994) and this is even less in Japan at 15% and is further decreasing in Hong Kong and Singapore (Castells 1996). This strongly suggests that large organisations are becoming increasingly decentralised into autonomous employment groups. Furthermore, British labour market statistics show that in the 1998 workplace employee

relations survey 40% of managers reported that recruitment for part time workers increased by 20% and those on fixed term contracts increased by 17% with more agency and temporary employees. Additionally 25% of those questioned felt that they were expected to do additional jobs (Cully, *et al.* 1998). This gives evidence to the view that the employment landscape is shifting.

Breedan (1993) conducted a longitudinal study of job transitions of 436 adults and found that 36% changed jobs 39% changed occupations and 25% made no changes at all. Those who did change careers had significantly higher satisfaction than those who made no changes at all. At the end of the long term observation, an unselected sample of nearly 2/3 had not only changed employers, but also the category of work (Breedan 1993).

Research investigations of boundaryless career theory on physical mobility have exposed interesting findings. In an investigation by Arthur *et al.* (1999), 63 out of 75 changed employers at least once in 10 years, or became self employed, prompting the researchers to conclude that 84 per cent of respondents had engaged in a boundaryless career. It was also found that 84 per cent had worked for an average of three employers in 10 years; also 62 per cent of inter-organisational moves did not include mobility to higher level positions. Moves to other organisations sometimes meant a changes in industry (35 per cent) or changes in occupation (34 per cent).

Moore and Butner (1997) studied 128 entrepreneurial women and found that their decisions to move from corporate firms to a self employed basis were motivated by organisational factors and personal aspirations rather than traditional family demands. This evidence strongly confirms the change in working behaviour of the modern world and the shift to working patterns that complement an increasingly globalised and changing environment. Women may pursue mobility between organisations because it allows the individual to straddle family and home life more successfully than the traditional career. Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) found that women were more likely to change work patterns because of family commitments and thus, strike a more satisfying balance between work and family.

More evidence can be observed in a case study of the film industry that shows evidence of an increasingly project based and contract focussed workforce. This is also characterised by using firms and subcontractors for specific projects that disband when that task is over. Self

employed individuals move from project to project and the role of the company is to finance and finish the final product (the film). This identifies how careers in this sector move across firms rather than moving within them (Jones 1996). The study showed that elite sub-contractors provided greater social capital when those individuals had access to enhanced networks at elite firms. An individual's place within said elite groups can be cemented by a successful performance on each new project. Furthermore, due to constant project work, it is the responsibility of the individual to extend their skills, experiences and knowledge (Jones 1996).

Therefore, the aforementioned research does seem to demonstrate how the film industry lacks the linear, hierarchical nature of a traditional career. The film industry example can be an example of a boundaryless career along executives in management consultancies. These examples support the view that the development of highly skilled, niche and knowledge led creative industries cannot be incorporated into traditional career paradigms. The study also highlighted two important skills: the development of key technical skills, and becoming a valued member of a team (Jones 1996). These skills can also be seen as important skills for the vast majority of people in the changing working environment as they allow expertise in a field and the development of important interpersonal skills.

Additional research by Segers *et al.* (2008) found that women have a preference towards non traditional careers more than men in terms of age and boundaryless careers. Younger participants have a more boundaryless outlook to work than older participants. Additionally it was found that having management experience or high educational experience is positively related to physical mobility, career self management and psychological mobility. Therefore Segers *et al.* (2008) found links between demographic characteristics and boundaryless career preferences. Other researchers such as Cheramie *et al.* (2007) researched executive career management and the boundaryless career and specifically examined factors that may have allowed executives to change jobs. It was found that factors such as age and pay were related to the likelihood of job mobility; executive job changers were more likely to move and be rewarded by greater pay increases and greater organisational levels.

Research has also focussed on the gender aspect of boundaryless careers. Sullivan *et al.* (1998) have suggested that women are more likely to prefer self designed careers and have preferred crafted careers. However, empirical evidence has remained inconsistent. Reitman

and Schneer (2003) found that women were less likely to pursue a protean career path and Briscoe *et al.* (2006) found a non significant relationship between gender and self-directed aspects of protean career orientation. Differing amounts of consistency in findings may be due to different methods of testing; these differences may lead to varying levels of external variables that have not been controlled for. Thus, although anecdotally, it would appear that women would prefer self designed careers, there is a distinct lack of convergent evidence that supports this. The current research investigations have found significant correlations between the level of education, age, occupational groups and boundaryless career mind-sets in participants. Therefore more standardised research methods should be used in order to draw clear conclusions of this trend towards the boundaryless career. The research findings in the aforementioned studies point towards the following research hypotheses in the current research:

Hypothesis 1: Younger individuals will have higher levels of protean and boundaryless career outlook.

Hypothesis 2: Individuals with higher levels of education will have a more boundaryless and protean outlook.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a difference in the boundaryless and protean career outlook between different professional groups.

Evidence to suggest that the boundaryless career does not represent the majority of individuals' careers can also be appreciated. Reitman and Schneer (2003) found that one-third of MBA graduates in America followed the "promised path" of traditional careers over a 13-year period. This contrast in information highlights some key debates in boundaryless career literature, including a lack of empirical support for this alleged predominance of boundaryless careers (Inkson *et al* 2012). Becker and Haunschild (2003) suggest that career researchers have treated boundaryless career as an empirical fact. As boundarylessness is often categorised by the by crossing of employer or organisational boundaries, research tends to focus on the objective view of boundarylessness. Evidence to suggest that physical mobility is increasing is not always supported by statistics. For example, Jacoby (1999) has found that the percentage of US workers who had worked for the same employer for 10 years or more remained stable from 1983 to 1998. Stevens (2005) found that the average tenure for

older males remained virtually stable at over 21 years (from 1969 to 2002). However, research does suggest that for younger individuals, boundaryless career mobility is more of a factor (Inkson *et al.* 2012). Therefore, the extent of boundarylessness has been described as over exaggerated within the current career literature.

What does seem clear within the research is that long tenure positions have declined in organisations, but this has not been extensively documented or researched. It was also highlighted by investigators that diminished job security is a function of market based employment, where employers rely on the external labour market to cope with the need to maintain a competitive edge. This produces a system of hiring new employees with specific needed skills (a characteristic of knowledge intensive workers) and letting go of old employees who do not possess such skills, which in theory may lead to an increase in intra organisational mobility (Greenhaus *et al.* 2008).

Other research investigations which have investigated the boundaryless career theory have recently focussed on boundarylessness in insecure employment environments. Research by Briscoe *et al* (2012) found that boundarylessness and self directed mindsets correlating with external support seeking, active coping and individual work outcomes of job search behaviour. This suggests that those who are comfortable with boundaryless and protean competencies are more likely to actively seek help and advice and seek other employment opportunities. Boundaryless and protean mindsets are associated with those who need to develop skills in order to deal with certain career environments. The study used both undergraduate and graduate students and full time employed individuals.

Catmak-Otluoglu (2012) investigated boundaryless and protean career attitudes and organisational commitment and whether or not supervisor support mediates boundaryless career attitudes. 380 white collar employees with a minimum of one year's work experience completed the questionnaire in Istanbul via the internet. It was found that organisational mobility was negatively correlated to organisational commitment. Self directedness was negatively related to continuance commitment. This shows that boundaryless and protean characteristics are related to a reduced level of organisational commitment. This supports the notion of boundaryless and protean careers being opposite concepts to traditional organisational careers.

Chan *et al* (2012) researched entrepreneurship, professionalism and leadership in over 10,000 Singaporean students. They found that high entrepreneurial and leadership aspirations were correlated with boundaryless and protean career attitudes, whereas those who were motivated by the professional career were motivated by professionalism and leadership components. Creed *et al* (2011) researched the predictors of the new career in 207 adolescents. Social support was related to the boundaryless mindset.

Verbruggen (2012) researched organisational mobility and career success, it was found that boundaryless mindset was related to wage promotion and organisational mobility was related to less promotion and less organisational satisfaction. This finding shows that boundaryless career focuses less on hierarchical career progression and traditional career success.

Another trend in the research investigated protean career success with self induced expatriates. Self induced expatriates are those who voluntarily leave their home country to pursue a career in another country. Cao *et al* (2013) questioned 132 self induced expatriates and found that protean career attitudes were positively related to career and life satisfaction and intention to stay in the host country. This finding shows that there is a link between the boundaryless career theory and expatriates motivation to leave the host country.

Research by Vansteenkiste *et al* (2013) investigated the organisational mobility in unemployed individuals. It was found that those with high levels of organisational mobility spent more time looking for employment and got more interviews, however these interviews did not necessarily translate to more job offers. Therefore although organisational mobility preference in the unemployed sample that was investigated did link to positive employment search behaviours, this did not link to actual job offers.

Gabriel and Nasina (2012) investigated boundaryless career attitude and organisational commitment among accountants. 132 accountants were questioned and it was found that organisational mobility was negatively related to organisational commitment. This finding is not surprising as organisational commitment may be linked to the objective career models such as Holland's career stage theories. In comparison, the boundaryless career model being linked to less organisational commitment is an intuitive finding as boundaryless individuals seek validation from outside of the organisation and are used to collaborating with those outside of the organisation (Arthur and Rousseau 1996).

The view that there has been a vast change in individual’s experience of careers to a less constrained one is contentious. In contrast to the vast amount of research on traditional career theories such as person–environment fit, knowledge showing the extent of the shift to said boundaryless career patterns appears to be somewhat limited (Ituma and Simpson 2009). Additionally, Sullivan *et al.* (1998) in their review of career research have stated that the contemporary career theories such as boundarylessness and protean career leanings have dominated much of career research, but with a vast lack of empirical research. They have also highlighted that little research on non traditional careers has focussed on the preference for boundaryless careers in either non Western countries or within smaller segments of the workforce such as disabled workers, blue collar workers or minorities.

The aforementioned research studies highlight the emergence of a phenomenon of the boundaryless career, showing more individuals moving to different organisations according to career opportunities. This gives an impression of a change from a rigid and hierarchical working environment, where careers were secure and linear, to a rapidly changing system, where the working world is unpredictable, vulnerable to change and multidirectional (Vondracek, *et al* 1999). The calls for research to investigate psychological mobility have been answered by research of Sullivan and Arthur (2005). Sullivan and Arthur (2005) investigated the link between physical mobility and psychological mobility in the workplace and highlighted a lack of clarification between the concepts. They created a model highlighting and placing individuals on a spectrum of boundarylessness into four quadrants.

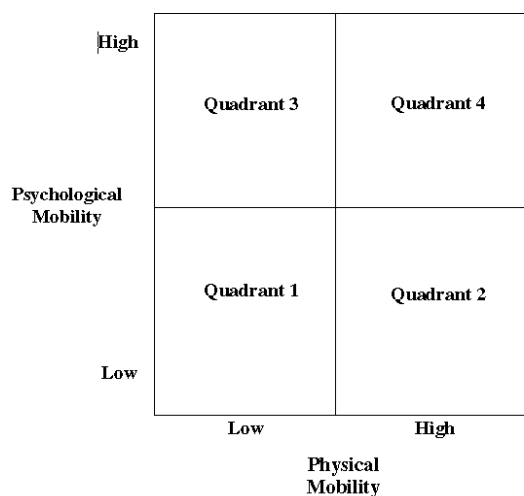


Figure 3.2 – Quadrant diagram of boundaryless career (Sullivan and Arthur, 2005).

Quadrant 1, describes those who have low levels of physical mobility and low levels of psychological mobility. This is particularly characterised by people who possibly lack basic skills, training and are under employed, or individuals who may have specific knowledge where it is hard to transfer this knowledge to another department or situation. Quadrant 2 is characterised by individuals who have high physical mobility and low psychological mobility, which includes temporary workers working for as a means to an end, or solely for economic reasons.

Quadrant 3 is characterised by low physiological mobility but high psychological mobility. This is highlighted by individuals who have a high expectation of their own employability, including management consultants or nurses who can find personal growth sometimes outside the organisation through voluntary work or reintroducing a new perspective on the organisation that they are in. This is very similar to the explanation given by Greenhaus (2003) who suggest that job crafting leads to individuals changing their perspective of jobs so that it offers more variety and psychological freedom, but within one organisation.

Lastly, Quadrant 4 describes those people who have high levels of physiological mobility and high levels of psychological mobility. These workers have careers that incorporate several physiological changes: such as a chef who works for many various organisations, increasing skills, knowledge and expertise or a contracting management consultant. Therefore this model is extremely useful in its ability to characterise and highlight the different models of boundaryless behaviours that can be exhibited in the working world (Sullivan and Arthur 2005). However, this model has been under utilised in the literature.

Although the boundaryless career theory has been embraced by the literature, there are some limitations of the theory. One criticism includes that the current literature on the boundaryless career theory tends to reflect Western, majority workers (Sullivan 1999, Sullivan and Baruch 2009). Research has attempted to address this neglect in the research. Ituma and Simpson (2009) researched the concept of boundaryless career in a non Western perspective regarding ICT workers in Nigeria. Personal networks highlight the view that individuals with restricted networks are less likely to engage in inter-firm mobility. Other themes that were highlighted were gender discrimination and perception of educational qualifications. This study showed that within a non UK perspective 60 per cent of respondents were able to

engage in intra-firm mobility and thus this is an example of physical mobility and the boundaryless career.

An additional research by Pang (2003) researched the careers of two generations of Chinese individuals in Hong Kong and two generations of Chinese people in the UK, focussing on generational similarities of career amongst the sample. The research used a distinguished between voluntary and involuntary boundarylessness as a framework. Involuntary boundarylessness occurs when people plan to find a new job as a result of downsizing, restructuring and firing. Whereas voluntary boundaryless occurs when people are compelled to move to a new firm if a new rewarding opportunity is available. It was found that first generation Chinese individuals in Hong Kong and Britain were involuntarily bounded, but then developed a voluntary boundedness to their careers. In contrast, second generation Chinese in Britain were ambiguous and in Hong Kong had a voluntary bounded career style. This research shows the complexity of the boundaryless career, but primarily focuses on physical movements of career. These studies respond to Sullivan (1999), and Sullivan and Baruch (2009) call to investigate boundaryless career theory in alternative cultures. However, three out of the four research investigations focus on the majority group members within those countries. Only Pang (2003) investigated minorities within a majority context – Chinese individuals in the UK – and this too is lacking within career research (Kenny and Briner, 2007, Atewologun and Singh, 2010).

Criticisms of the Boundaryless Career Theory

Critiques of the boundaryless career have developed over the years, potentially threatening the validity of the concept. According to Pringle and Mallon (2003), many of the empirical research investigations into boundaryless career theory have focused on a limited sample of participants within a small range of working environments, for example the biotechnology industry (Gunz *et al.* 2000) and the film industry (Jones 1996). However, for the theory to evolve, research should be conducted into the experiences of people who have not been focused on in mainstream career theories. According to Humphries and Gatenby (1996), career theory in general has developed to portray minority groups as “*the other*”, as an alternative to the normal pattern.

In addition, specific research into minorities and their career orientations has been called for by Sullivan *et al.* (1998), Sullivan and Arthur (2009). Sullivan *et al.* (1998), Sullivan and Arthur (2009) highlight that boundary permeability should be addressed in relation to specific minority groups. There is a need for this in order to understand the unique boundaries that may be faced by such specific ethnic groups. Pringle and Mallon (2003) state that at the current rate of investigation it can be argued that boundaryless career theory is limited by its lack of attention to a diverse range of groups. Although boundaryless career theory is increasingly being investigated internationally (Ituma and Simpson, 2007, Pang, 2003, Cakmak-Otluoglu 2012), within countries such as Nigeria, Turkey and China, boundaryless career research has not addressed minority groups within majority populations, such as within America and the UK. Atewologun and Singh, (2010) highlight that the careers of minority groups need to be investigate to explore and investigate diverse employees which is needed in a globalised working environment to enhance their organisational effectiveness.

Another criticism of boundaryless career theory is linked to the spread of the concept of the “boundaryless” career. Boundaryless career theory is characterised by managers being able to move freely, relying on competencies that are transferable between companies. Sullivan and Arthur (2005) stated that there have been calls for greater clarity for the concepts of both boundaryless and protean careers. The majority of research studies have investigated boundarylessness as the physical movements, or the objective representation of boundarylessness (moving between firms or organisations). Sullivan *et al.* (1998) found that 16 research studies investigated the crossing of physical boundaries and only three studies focussed on relationships across organisational boundaries. This shows that there is a clear lack of research into the psychological aspect of boundaryless careers, for example the thought processes that may trigger boundarylessness addressing the perceived capacity for change by individuals. When the term was first coined by Arthur and Rousseau (1996) they identified six areas that boundarylessness encompasses. They included:

1. The stereotypical Silicon Valley career that includes people moving across boundaries of separate employers.
2. The career characterised by academics or carpenters who draw validation and marketability outside the present employer.
3. Careers of estate agents sustained by external networks of information.

4. Careers that break traditional organisational assumptions about hierarchy and career advancement.
5. Careers that involve someone rejecting existing career opportunities for personal or familial reasons.
6. Change based on the career “actor” who may perceive a boundaryless future regardless of structural constraints.

A possible reason why research has focused so much on definition one is mainly due to the view that it tends to be easier to operationalise. However, it can be argued this focus does not highlight the versatility of the concept of boundaryless career. Research specifically needs to question the differences between different aspects of boundaryless career, such as physical and psychological boundarylessness (Inkson et al 2012, Sullivan *et al.* 1999, Sullivan and Baruch 2009). Also according to Sullivan and Baruch (2009) boundaryless career theory has failed to distinguish amongst the causes of boundarylessness, (voluntary or involuntary), origin (company or self directed), and direction (up, down, lateral) (Feldman and Ng 2007). Research is needed to distinguish between these differences to highlight the vast and distinct nature of the concept in order for the theory to become more dynamic.

Other problems have been identified regarding the applicability of the term boundarylessness to contemporary careers. Gunz *et al.* (2000) suggest that careers have not in reality become more boundaryless, but career boundaries have become more complex. Sullivan *et al.* (1998) in their review of career literature suggested that the term boundaryless is a “misnomer”, and something that should not be overemphasised or over exaggerated in the career literature. Despite this, the theory still needs to be developed, by focusing on other aspects of boundaryless careers, not just mobility patterns (Greenhaus 2000). Thus, investigations by current career researchers state that empirical investigations have focussed on limited professional groups, from mainly majority populations in Western countries. To respond, the current research will investigate an under researched group within the UK context.

The aforementioned research studies highlight the perspective that boundaryless career studies which have been researched so far show a reliance on physical career movements and reveal that for some industries relying on one’s self for career development and career enactment is common. Although the concept of boundaryless career is contentious, the concept still needs to be empirically developed and tested on multiple populations and ethnic

groups (Greenhaus *et al.* 2000; Sullivan and Baruch 2009; Inkson *et al.* 2012). International boundaryless career research has been conducted, but has tended not to focus on minority groups within majority populations. Therefore the current research aims to address this problem by investigating black Africans and black Caribbeans and the extent to which their careers are boundaryless. Another type of contemporary career that will be discussed is the protean career, which has strong links to the boundaryless career concept.

3.2 Protean Career Competencies

The term protean career emphasises the role of the individual in the development of career. The protean career has developed from the premise that individuals are responsible for their own career development, as opposed to organisations having a pivotal role in career development (Hall 1996). The term “protean” originates from Greek mythology, being the name of Proteus, the Greek god who could change shape at will. This use of mythology to describe “the new career” highlights the flexibility and adaptability of an individual to their working environment (Hall and Mirvis 1996). The protean career theory is based on an individualised context of personal needs and professional interests and is driven by personal drive rather than an organisational interest (Hall 1996). The origins of the protean career model emerged from the work of Hall and Foster (1975).

Hall and Foster discussed the concept of the protean career in their book *Careers in Organisations* (1975), where dual career couples, equal opportunities in careers and the changing definition of career success were discussed. The majority of organisations at the time were hierarchical and linear. However, the beginnings of a counter culture of personal choice began to emerge along with personal expression in society, which also manifested in the workplace. 1975 signalled a time of growing interest in career self management and development for psychological success. In the late 1970s a recession occurred, which signalled a move to the downsizing and restructuring of organisations to reduce costs. Many companies in the West moved to manufacturing in lower cost economies, heralding the beginnings of a more globalised world economy. Therefore, in this ever changing unpredictable environment, a protean career outlook was seen as a “smart” adaptation for an individual (Hall 2004).

The protean career emphasises the increased possibilities that “career” has come to represent and how the recognition of opportunities can lead to success (Arthur *et al.* 1999). The protean

career also emphasises a self-directed approach to the career that appears to be driven by an individual's own values rather than the values of the organisation. Additionally, researchers have focussed on the subjective career perspective, which is driven by personal goals and not by external successes such as pay and rank (Briscoe and Hall 2006). An individual that does not hold protean career ideals tends to have external standards in comparison to self developed ones and is more likely to ask the organisation for direction as opposed to a more proactive independent approach.

Table 3.3 depicts the difference between the protean career and traditional career models. It shows that an individual is the developer in their career progress as opposed to the organisation. The protean career theory has highlighted the change in career relationships and the change in the relationships between employees and organisations.

Issue	Protean career	Traditional career
Who is in charge	Person	Organisation
Core values	Freedom growth	Advancement
Degree of mobility	High	Low
Success criteria	Psychological success	Position level salary
Key attitudes	Work satisfaction	Organisation commitment

Table 3.3 – Protean vs. Traditional careers (Hall and Mirvis 1996)

The main advantage of this view of careers is that it offers a new perspective about careers to match a changing career landscape. The concept also suggests that careers can be marked by distinct peaks and troughs (Hall and Parker 1993). An additional strength is that the metaphor provides a perspective to observe employers and employees, as increasing numbers of individuals are becoming self-directed and are constantly looking for new career experiences and challenges (Hall and Mirvis 1996).

Protean career competencies have stimulated many theoretical papers, such as that of De Vos and Soens (2008), who conducted research on 289 employees and found that protean career was related to high levels of career satisfaction, career insight and career self management. Protean career management was measured using Briscoe *et al.*'s (2006) scale. These questionnaire methods were used to assess the level of protean career outlook and it was found that this sample had a high level of values-driven careers, which puts an individual's beliefs before the organisation's and has self-directed career management. The study was

conducted in Belgium, 60 per cent of the sample were between 30 and 45 years old and 95 per cent were Belgian nationals. The study showed that there was a trend towards protean career behaviours. However the links between career satisfaction and career self management cannot be highlighted due to the correlational level of the research. Thus, relying on quantitative research exclusively only provides one level of career analysis.

Chudzikowski *et al* (2011) investigated the frequency, form (organisational, horizontal and vertical) and impact (objective career success) in 291 Austrian graduates from 1970 to 1990 through the first 15 years of their careers. The findings were that the 1990 graduates made significantly more career transitions in the first 15 years of their careers than their 1970 cohort. The careers of the 1990 cohort were less traditional in nature, but not overwhelmingly so. The 1990 cohort moved more frequently across boundaries and within organisations. However, upward career transitions remained the dominant form of movement for both groups. This research gives evidence to the view that careers have changed over the last 40 years, but gives a more measured view of the transition, which has been criticised by researchers such as Sullivan and Baruch. (2009) and Inkson *et al*. (2012). This research investigation, although international in nature, focusing on Austrian workers, did not focus on minorities within Austria. Research also focused on questionnaire methods to address the comparison between the generations.

In an exploratory investigation by Mintz (2003), 25 successful men who made midlife career transformations were questioned. It was found that their goal was to achieve career success both subjectively and objectively. A new instrument to measure protean orientations was used and it was found that the population scored significantly higher than the mean. Additionally the group scored high on four of the “big five” personality constructs: extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness. The biggest differences appeared to be on the openness measure as these 25 participants scored a high average score, which suggests that the protean careerist has open characteristics, such as someone who is a lifelong learner and is open to new possibilities (Hall and Mirvis 1996).

The investigations highlighted above show research based on the protean career, using quantitative research methods. Although many of the studies were based in America, Austria and Turkey; the research focussed on majority group members within those countries. Therefore, the current research will address the research calls made by Sullivan

(1999, Sullivan and Baruch 2009), Kenny and Briner, (2007), Atewologun and Singh, (2010) that research is needed that addresses minority careers within majority populations.

In summary, the protean career is characterised by the individual who has a freedom to develop their own careers without the constraints, and work according to their own values as opposed to organisational ones. The protean career is more concerned with internal career success than position and salary. This is in contrast to traditional career theories, which stress the importance of the organisation in career development. The next section discusses the portfolio career theory, which is another contemporary career theory.

3.3 Intelligent Career Competencies

First developed by DeFellippi and Arthur (1994), intelligent career competencies were developed to respond to Quinn's (1992) views on intelligent enterprise. The theory's main premise is that individuals develop key strategies to navigate their careers, which reflect an individual's motivation, identity, skills, expertise, relationships and reputation. These methods allow career researchers to examine the contribution to a knowledge driven economy. The theory also allows career researchers to support a variety of different social science disciplines, including psychology and sociology. According to Arthur and Rousseau (1996), intelligent career competencies are aspects of boundaryless career theory.

The main premise of the theory is that a career unfolds in three ways, "knowing why", "knowing how" and "knowing whom". "Knowing why" explains an individual's motivation to work, identity, and personality dimensions, such as self concepts and dispositions that are an integral part of choosing and pursuing a career. Popular ways of capturing and forming a self-awareness of career preference is that of using personality assessments such as the big 5 personality theories (Costa and McCrae 1992) and Jungian personality theories such as the MBTI.

Intelligent career competencies emphasise the "knowing how" competency as useful in navigating careers. "Knowing how" suggests that investments in careers (job relevant skills and expertise) are useful to the development of careers and that such skills can also be defined as human capital. Human capital mainly views formal education as a substitute for a person's productivity at work. The "knowing how" conceptualisation also involves explicit

knowledge, such as what has been learnt on a course, and tacit knowledge is intuitive knowledge, which occurs in mainly craft occupations.

Lastly, the intelligent career highlights the third competency, “knowing whom”, which involves relationships made inside and outside of the workplace, professional associations, and contacts with family and friends having a positive effect on career development. Such networking ability provides channels for the exchange of information and the building of a reputation. These three ways are all interconnected. An analysis shows that this conceptualisation allows the researcher to view the career in many forms, including psychology, sociology and business studies. The review of studies of intelligent career competencies found that quantitative and linear research dominate (Parker *et al.* 2009). Research by Ford and Wells (1985) found that 65 per cent of black administrators had mentors, and Malone (1981) found that 82 per cent of participants that were questioned also had mentors. Many black respondents had white mentors, especially those who were early on in their careers; however it was found that some mentees felt a lack of connection with white mentors and found black mentors instead. Therefore having white mentors for black employees may have opened doors in the organisations and increased career progression, however the participants did not feel comfortable with these mentors in the long term due to a lack of connection with them.

Eby et al. (2003) found that individuals with higher levels of “knowing why” (proactive personality, open to changes), “knowing how” (career skills), and “knowing whom” (a mentor or internal networks) competencies reported greater levels of perceived career success. Eby et al.’s (2003) research identifies that intelligent career competencies are often linked to greater levels of career success. Therefore, intelligent career competencies can be viewed as a useful framework for viewing careers in a modern context, and an aspect of the boundaryless career theory emphasising internal and external aspects of careers.

3.4 Other Contemporary Career Theories

Portfolio Careers

Since the emergence of the boundaryless career as a new metaphor to describe employment activities other explanations and models have emerged such as the portfolio career. The portfolio career as described by Handy (1994) are characterised by the exchange of full time employment for a more independent working style. This is characterised by differing

components of work for differing clients. A key premise of portfolio work is that it concentrates on a range of different working arrangements, termed: wage work, fee work, home work, gift work (when referring to community or charity work done for free) and study work (Mallon 1998). Handy (1989) also discusses the shamrock organisation, which involves a three-leafed workforce representing core, flexible and subcontracted labour. These new working realities have spurred the increase of portfolio workers, which is characterised by self employment and charging fees for outputs or services (Gold and Fraser 2002).

These characteristics of work support the emergence of an increasing amount of portfolio related employee relationship. Handy (1989) does not attempt to define the term “portfolio careers” and does not describe the differences between portfolio work and other similar forms of work such as freelance work and consultancy work. Furthermore, although the concept is not empirically grounded, it has been largely accepted and incorporated into career theory rhetoric (Mallon 1999). To this end, there is a scarcity of research into the area of portfolio careers.

Mallon (1998) interviewed 16 women and six men between the ages of 34 and 50 who were former public sector managers. The participants had left the organisation to pursue a more independent working style. Mallon (1998) explored the rise of freelance workers and characterised four self employed career types:

- Refugees: those who are pushed into self employment by labour market factors, and mainly maintain contractual employment.
- Missionaries: have either a positive orientation to portfolio work or have taken the opportunity to regain some autonomy in their career, e.g. a group who leave employment voluntarily because they feel “fed up”.
- Tradeoffs: seeking to balance work with other needs, perhaps on a temporary basis. Their central concern shifts from work to home.
- Converts: appreciate the lure of self employment. They can come from all categories but are likely to start as refugees before converting.

Although Mallon’s study is related to self employed individuals, it applies also to those who leave organisations to develop an independent portfolio approach to work. Criticisms of this study can be observed by the small sample size and therefore problems with generalisation

and the small amount of males in the sample. Mallon's (1998) study found that 20 of their participants were in the missionary grouping, but only five of them had a positive view of portfolio work. Within the accounts of 15 people there were varying amounts of push factors, such as: frustrations or unhappiness about restructuring, new bosses, or failed promotional attempts. The remaining respondents were categorised into refugee status or those who were pushed into self employment. They can be seen as having been initially reluctant regarding portfolio working, but having become used to the working style. The major factor which led the participants within this study to choose portfolio working seems to be a push from an organisation leading to the individuals attempting alternative working patterns.

The concept of a "push" to portfolio working has been stated as inadequate to capture the main factors which lead individuals to actually *choose* portfolio work (Mallon 1998). According to Mallon (1998) a factor that explains the "push" to portfolio working can be the possible negative perceptions of the individual's ability to succeed in the external workplace environment and thus choosing a portfolio working style instead. This perception of the labour market does not necessarily correspond to workplace objective realities (Riley 2005). Participants in this research study, despite perceiving some workplace opportunities, may have seen portfolio work as their only long term option (Mallon 1998). Mallon's study gives evidence to the multi-faceted reasons as to why individuals leave traditional organisations and try portfolio work as an alternative.

Another research study conducted by Mallon (1999) gives additional evidence to the pervasiveness of portfolio careers. The research investigated 25 ex-NHS managers who had changed from managerial careers to portfolio careers. The participating group used were individuals familiar with the traditional career structures of the National Health Service, and thus it shows the pervasiveness of the transition to portfolio work as they moved from a traditionally cared for career to a more vulnerable, self controlled one. The 25 participants comprised 18 women and seven men, between the ages of 34 and 50. The participants were a well qualified, educated group, and the research used qualitative interview methods to investigate their shift to portfolio careers. Qualitative methods, although difficult to generalise, give a rich and deeper understanding regarding the issues affecting portfolio workers. The interviews explored the reasons why the individuals had left the NHS, why they opted for portfolio work, how it was experienced, the extent that this was salient with their

previous career history, their new relationship with organisations, future plans and their view of career success (Mallon 1999).

The findings highlighted themes explaining why some individuals opted for portfolio careers. These themes included **“the real career”**, where half of the participants mourned the loss of their organisational career; **“no going back”**, where individuals thought that they could not or would never go back to the traditional organisational career; **“values and integrity”** was another theme that was identified, where individuals put the organisation and their clients ahead of their own career goals; **“development”** was a theme where participants perceived portfolio work as an opportunity to learn and develop skills away from the external demands of work; lastly **“consolidation”** refers to the motivations expressed about fulfilling personal needs and also includes the package of work skills, knowledge and attitude (Mallon 1999). This investigation highlights the main reasons why people chose portfolio careers.

However, there are criticisms of portfolio careers. These criticisms are that the reported benefits of such careers have been over exaggerated in the research and that focus should be shifted to those who have not benefitted from portfolio careers. This view is also shared by theorists such as Bradley *et al.* (2000), who state that many of the positive claims made about contemporary forms of employment remain, “unfounded and mythical”. However, there have been additional research studies that attempt to support portfolio career theory.

Gold and Fraser (2002) investigated a group of translators and their experiences of being portfolio workers. Translators are reported to have a long history of working independently of organisations, and the research draws on their success of moving from organisational career management to self career management. The themes and issues that were highlighted included that some did not believe that they had a career, some were forced out of a traditional organisational career, and others embraced the flexibility of portfolio working. For example, a translator in the study was still working in his mid-70s. Also the notion of professionalism was highlighted, and translators had a large professional body and networks. This helped encourage professional status and to foster a support network.

It can be argued that there has been an increase in the use of portfolio workers in today’s working environment. The reasons that professionals turn to portfolio working include individuals having negative perceptions of their ability to succeed in traditional work

environments. The main criticisms of the current research are that although they offer an exploratory starting point into the reasons why people opt for portfolio careers, it does not isolate any specific reasons. Moreover, the sample sizes used in the aforementioned research studies are small and thus the findings cannot be generalised easily (Gold and Fraser 2002). Therefore, this does not give career theorists and human resource professionals clear strategies of how to integrate and maintain portfolio workers. Gold and Fraser (2002) state that because portfolio careerists tend to focus on their professional or occupational identity and are likely to enhance the organisation by sustaining a work pattern, in depth research should be conducted into the benefits and challenges that these individuals experience. Research on portfolio careers does not tend to focus on the current economic climate and how careers have been affected by the economic environment. The portfolio career literature has tended not to focus on minority career development, which is another major criticism of the theory. As the diversity of organisations has increased, the importance of developing all employees and developing talent is becoming more important

Post Corporate Career Theory

Peiperl and Baruch (1997) highlight that the post corporate career often takes place outside of organisational constraints and occurs when employees are either forced to, or make the decision to, leave an organisation. Reasons for this include issues such as a lack of career advancement or organisational dissolution. These issues act as catalysts that lead individuals out of organisational careers. Instead smaller, entrepreneurial organisations lead to individual, consultant type roles. Post-corporate careers describe individuals who are flexible, dynamic, and make their own decisions and choices about their careers. Thus, the post corporate career theory is similar to the boundaryless career theory in that it emphasises a new career involvement within an organisation, highlighting an employment relationship that is more flexible and dynamic. What is in contrast to a boundaryless career is that the post corporate career theory explains the initial reasons for a self reliant, individually driven career, including a dissatisfaction with an organisation, or being fired from an organisation.

Research has been conducted on the post corporate career with professional services workers. Richardson (1996) observed four career patterns: fast linear, slow linear, downward and plateau. The research addressed 200 accounting professionals in the UK and found that the majority of men fell into the fast linear category, whereas women were in the downward

career or the plateau pattern. This shows that professionals have varied career types and that there is a gender divide in how the post corporate career is realised in this group.

The rewards in post corporate careers differ from the rewards in traditional careers as they are based on income creation, asset growth and development of contacts and skills. An additional characteristic of the post corporate career is that individuals identify with their profession or their industry rather than a single organisation. The post corporate career is also more flexible and more compatible with family commitments, as individuals who are more in charge of their own work schedules can fit in their work around their personal lives. However, as work and life become less defined, the demands of work can sometimes encroach on non work life, which is perceived as an aspect of the post corporate career. There are other negative aspects to the post corporate career such as the sense of isolation that may be an effect of tele-working. Despite tele-working providing a vast amount of freedom and flexibility, it may affect an individual's face to face contact. To deal with the negative aspects of the post corporate career, supporting elements of organisations may emerge, such as providing training in the form of membership bodies to help support the needs of employees.

Thus the post corporate carer differs from traditional career theories because employees identify with their profession rather than a single company. Careers are categorised as more flexible, and post corporate careers can more readily fit in with family commitments. This links to knowledge intensive workers because individuals who have post corporate careers often use unique skills and competencies. The next theory that is concerned with knowledge intensive industries is the kaleidoscope career theory.

Kaleidoscope Career Theory

The kaleidoscope career model is a contemporary career model that can be applied to knowledge intensive workers. The career model was developed by the results of five different research studies of over 3,000 professional workers (Maniero and Sullivan, 2006, Sullivan and Maniero 2007). Like an actual kaleidoscope, which *produces* patterns on the rotation of a tube, the kaleidoscope career model describes how individuals can change career patterns by the rotation of various aspects of their lives in order to arrange their relationships and roles in new ways. Employees navigate and evaluate their choices through the lens of a kaleidoscope to determine the best fit among demands of work, opportunities, interests and values. Each decision made affects the outcome of the career pattern. The career model also highlights

three sections or parameters which are navigated. The three categories are: “authenticity”, where individual’s values are aligned with the organisations’ values and organisational culture; “balance”, which concerns the level at which a person can achieve a work–life balance; and lastly “challenge”, which is concerned with an individual’s need for stimulation in work, which may advance careers. These three levels are active over the lifespan of an individual and shape their career decisions. These three aspects may shift depending on the context (Sullivan *and* Baurch. 2009).

Research on kaleidoscope careers by Maniero and Sullivan (2006) addressed the way in which the kaleidoscope career model could explain American women’s career enactment. They surveyed 100 professional women asking them to explain career transitions and why they made such moves. A second survey looked at over 1,600 professionals comparing differences in career motivations and transitions between men and women. The last stage of data collection was through conversations with 22 men and five women about their careers. The research findings were that the women’s career enactment followed the kaleidoscope career model, as women’s career decisions were concerned with largely how decisions affected other people around them. They found that women’s decision making on their careers factor the needs of their children, spouses, aging parents and friends.

In contrast, men in the sample tended to address their career choices from the individual perspective, acting firstly for the benefit of their careers. Men were also able to successfully balance work and non work, mainly due to women managing to balance their work and non work issues on their behalf. During the quantitative section, the statement, “I made changes in my career due to family demands”, was highlighted by more women than men. More men than women highlighted reasons associated with career achievements.

This research shows that for the professionals sampled, women evaluated the choices and options through the lens of a kaleidoscope, trying to find a best fit between work, home life and ambition. Therefore, it can be seen in this sample that this career model is enacted by both men and women, but in different ways. Kaleidoscope career theory needs to be integrated into career policies in organisations to make sure there is a clear distinction between authenticity, balance and challenge, or careers that offer a clear balance between home and life, a challenging work environment, and when employees are in agreement with the values of the organisation.

The kaleidoscope career theory differs somewhat from the post corporate career as it allows for flexibility and a clearer career path. The post corporate career is less in line with the organisation's control and more to do with individual's motivation and drive to make contacts and links with other professionals with specialised knowledge. The kaleidoscope career model on the other hand has three categories that maintain equilibrium between authenticity, balance and challenge, which is largely concerned with the balance between work and life. This is a focus that is not explicitly covered in other career theories.

As both kaleidoscope and post corporate careers theories highlight the flexible, boundaryless career metaphor as a catalyst to these more inclusive career patterns and theories to deal with the rapidly changing, more flexible style of work that knowledge intensive workers engage in. The post corporate career includes consulting, deal making and temporary work, and links to smaller organisations to engage in outsourcing, and professional partnerships or knowledge based organisations. The kaleidoscope career theory can specifically show the career trajectories of knowledge intensive workers as it includes three categories of authenticity, balance and challenge that a knowledge intensive worker seeks when they attempt to develop and navigate their career. Research studies support this view of career development as it allows for professional workers to develop their careers in a more holistic and defined way that also includes consideration for home and family life.

Contemporary career theories and competencies	Authors	Summary	Positive	Negative
Boundaryless	Arthur and Rousseau (1995)	Careers have no limits No constraints Career self management Moves through many organisations Movements can be lateral Psychological mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights the changing aspects of career Shows that careers are changing as a result 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over emphasis on physical mobility Too absolute Not enough empirical investigation
Protean competencies	Hall and Foster (1975)	Self directed career Driven by individual values Personal responsibility for career success and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes the personal views of career actors Has changing environment at its core 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on questionnaire methods Not enough empirical evidence
Portfolio	Handy (1994) Bradley <i>et al.</i> (2000)	Independent working style Wage work Fee work Home work and gift work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes contextual aspects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor levels of empirical research Over exaggeration of this form of career Unfounded and mythical
Intelligent competencies	DeFellippi and Arthur (1994)	Motivation, identity, key skills, expertise and reputation. Knowing why motivation to work, identity, personality, self concept Knowing how human capital, or skill needed Knowing whom relationships inside and outside of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies external forces and their applicability to career development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not define the career decision making process
Post corporate	Peiperl and Baruch (1997)	Leaner, flatter, entrepreneurial organisations Contractors Flexible and dynamic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes the changing organisational climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough empirical evidence
Kaleidoscope	Maniero and Sullivan (2006)	Changing career patterns by the rotation of different aspects of their lives Authenticity/Balance/Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses external factors in the development of career, for example family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough empirical evidence.

Table 3.4 – Table comparing contemporary career theories.

Therefore to conclude this section, the above table (Table 3.4) summarises contemporary career theories. A common observation can be made that many of these theories have not been rigorously empirically tested. For example, boundaryless career theory and post corporate career theory have generated a lot of research investigations, however these investigations have been criticised as being not rigorous enough to develop these career theories (Inkson *et al* 2012).

Another observation from the above table is that the majority of contemporary career theories attempt to incorporate environmental, economic conditions. The integration of economic and environmental pressures has developed these careers theories to be more dynamic; however the application of these theories to real working experiences has been lacking. As explained by Sullivan *et al.* (1998), Sullivan and Baruch (2009) and Inkson *et al.* (2012), there has been an over exaggeration within the literature regarding the extent of boundaryless and other contemporary career theories. Contemporary career theories have been reported as experienced by all, which is not always the case, and accepted by all, which is not the case at all. Many occupations and organisations are still strictly hierarchical and would not function as well using a boundaryless model for their employees.

Based on a large amount of data on the boundaryless career model, along with the view that knowledge intensive individuals have a higher propensity for boundaryless career enactment, this career model has been selected for use in this thesis. The aspect of the boundaryless career that will mainly be investigated within this research will be the internal, psychological aspect of both boundaryless careers including protean and intelligent competencies. This focus on the internal aspect of the boundaryless career is due to a focus on organisational movements in many boundaryless career studies (Greenhaus *et al.* 2004). The extent to which the sample are self-directed in their careers and the extent to which they use their own values to navigate careers, as opposed to organisational careers, will be investigated in the current research. The aspects of boundaryless careers that will be investigated is the extent to which individuals move between organisations and how confident they are in collaborating across teams and organisations to solve organisational problems.

3.5 Career Barriers and Career Boundaries

This section on career barriers will highlight the metaphors and other career concepts that link to career barriers such as the glass ceiling, and a comparison between career boundaries and career barriers. The reason to clarify and compare the terms “career barrier” and “career boundary” is that researchers have called for this clarification within the research, as the terms are often used interchangeably (Sullivan and Arthur 2005). The exploration of career hindrances has been of great importance and interest to researchers since the work of Crites (1969). Investigations by Crites (1969) centred on the perceived internal and external conflicts that may lead to career barriers for women. The concept of a barrier in the experience of career has been something that may have been ignored by traditional career theories such as Schein’s career anchor model (1978), Holland’s person–environment fit model (1973, 1985, 1997), and Super’s developmental stage career model (1957) which highlight careers as stable. Although traditional career theories have accepted that external influences such as socioeconomic status, parental involvement, gender and race affect career choice; such theories do not explicitly consider or explain how these external factors may affect career paths for some groups.

Career barrier theories have been the precursors to the development of boundaryless career theories. Traditional career theories have been extremely influential within the career counselling arena; however they fail to explain the affect that external influences may have on career development. In an increasingly diverse, multi skilled workforce, factors that impede career development of some workers such as ethnic minorities, should be a large consideration in the career literature and career counselling models.

Crites (1969) researched the effect of career hindrances on women. Crites (1969) defined barriers as: “thwarting conditions” that may “hinder the career development process for some groups”. Crites (1969) also envisaged barriers as being either internal in nature, such as internal conflicts, or external, including frustrations that may make career development difficult. Crites (1969) proposed that career adjustment occurred through a sequence of events, for example a motivated worker, encountering a thwarting condition, leads to either frustration (external) or conflict (internal), leading the individual to adjust their response. In order to fulfil their needs the worker needs to cope well with the adjustment problem and a tension or anxiety reducing response leads to career satisfaction and success. Internal conflicts according to Crites (1969) include self concept and motivation to achieve. External

frustrations contrastingly included discrimination in the workplace and wage disputes (Creed *et al.* 2004).

Author	Explanation
Crites (1969)	“Thwarting conditions” that may impede development. Internal conflict, self-concept, motivation, self-efficacy External discrimination, wages
O’Leary (1974)	6 Internal barriers (fear of failure) 4 External barriers (gender stereotypes)
Farmer (1976)	6 Internal/ external self-concept barriers 3 Environmental barriers
Harmon (1977)	Psychological and sociological barriers to women’s career development.
Weiner (1979, 1985, 1986)	External uncontrollable, stable factors – fate/misfortune attribution theory Internal, stable and controllable people are more likely to establish ways to overcome these
Swanson and Tokar (1991)	Social or interpersonal (role obligations/relocation) Attitudinal (self-concept attitudes towards work) Interactional (discrimination/lack of qualifications)
Lent <i>et al.</i> (1994)	Self efficacy mediates the role of career barriers in career development
Swanson and Woike (1997)	Events or conditions within their environment that makes career progress difficult

Table 3.5 - Career barrier concepts

Other theorists have defined career barriers that can be seen in the above table (Table 3.5). O’Leary (1974) hypothesised that there are six internal and four external barriers to upward career mobility in women. The external barriers were defined as barriers that extend beyond the specific work setting and include societal attitudes such as: gender stereotypes, attitudes towards women in management roles, attitudes towards female competence, and the prevalence of the male managerial model. Internal barriers are said to occur when a woman’s self system has a direct influence on the achievement behaviours of a women. Achievement behaviours include: fear of failure, low self esteem, role conflict, and fear of success and the perceived consequences of occupational advancement. This early definition of career related barriers is insightful and highlights both internal conflicts concerned with the individuals psychological thought processes and attributions, and external barriers concerned with multiple, negative external stimuli that may affect the career preparedness and confidence of individuals.

Contrastingly, Farmer (1976) posited six internal self-concept barriers and three environmental barriers to women’s career development. This distinction between internal and external barriers is effective, but the definitions do not go into the same level of detail as other explanations of career barriers. Harmon (1977) found a distinction between

psychological and sociological barriers to career, whereas Swanson and Tokar (1991) made a distinction between social, attitudinal and interactional barriers. Social barriers include gender role obligations, attitudinal barriers including self concept and self esteem, and interactional barriers that include discrimination or lack of qualifications. By dividing barriers into three parts, Swanson and Tokar (1991) can highlight how both internal and external aspects can affect careers. Weiner (1979, 1985, and 1986) highlighted external factors as barriers that are difficult to control, and internal factors as barriers that an individual can control.

A common theme in career barrier definitions is that most of the definitions use the internal and external dichotomy. Internal barriers include factors located within the individual, including self esteem, self worth and other internal self concepts. External barriers include environmental barriers, such as discrimination, lack of skills or experience. This distinction is useful as it allows researchers to measure and quantify career barriers in order to measure the extent of the phenomenon of career barriers. Career barriers have been hypothesised as explanatory concepts that may be useful for a) accounting for the gap between women's abilities and their achievements; b) to inhibit career aspirations among women and c) to moderate the relationship between women's careers aspirations and their range of perceived career options (Farmer 1976). According to McWhirter *et al.* (1998), the last 30 years has been concerned with the career barriers that have an effect on women's career development. The formulations of the career barrier concepts were to understand the career difficulties of women progressing in the workplace. Subsequently, career barrier concepts have also been used to describe career hindrances that ethnic minorities may face.

3.6 Glass Ceiling Research

Glass ceiling research concerns the extent to which ethnic minority groups in majority populations can attain top levels of employment within an organisation, and whether there is a proverbial glass ceiling that prevents minorities from achieving this. The term "glass ceiling" was first popularised by an article in the *Wall Street Journal* and the metaphor has been used frequently subsequently. A commonly used definition from research conducted in America from the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) has described a glass ceiling as an **"un-breachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper levels of the corporate ladder, regardless of an individual's qualifications or**

achievements”. The concept of a glass ceiling is well linked to the idea of a career barrier as they are both perceived as impenetrable career hindrances, and the glass ceiling metaphor has been extremely pervasive within the research. To this effect, many research investigations have been conducted into the metaphor of a glass ceiling.

Morisson (1992) investigated the glass ceilings and interviewed 190 managers from 16 organisations in America. The research findings highlighted six instrumental career barriers to hinder the advancement of women and minorities. Sexual and racial discrimination, poor career planning, lonely unsupportive organisational cultures and difficulty in balancing work life balance. The most salient barrier highlighted in the sample was racial and sexual discrimination. It was discussed that some white men and others assumed women and minorities are less competent and suitable for leadership positions than white men.

Maume (1999) researched gender and race differences in managerial promotions. The research found that black workers were less likely than their white counterparts to be promoted. It was also found that black men, black women and white women waited longer than white men to be promoted. When controlling for college level education in a sample aged below 39, race was not a barrier to career progression. However, for the majority of black individuals race was a barrier to promotions. Therefore, for this investigation, being a woman or black significantly affected the rate of promotion, and race was highlighted as a barrier to career progression for older workers.

Glass ceilings in specific professions such as medicine have also been investigated. An investigation by Longo and Straehley (2008) looked into career barriers and glass ceilings in female surgeons in North America. The main objective of the study was to provide female surgeons with a forum to discuss feelings of gender related barriers in their career paths and to document how they coped with them. Findings highlighted that 70 per cent of the participants claimed they had encountered gender discrimination in academia. Women of colour who were questioned reported increased vulnerability to discrimination. This study did not claim any large quantitative conclusions, but nevertheless, provides an interesting insight into career barriers and glass ceilings in such a male dominated profession (Longo and Straehley 2008)

Cotter *et al.* (2001) investigated the glass ceiling effect using data regarding income dynamics, gender and race. A main finding was that racial inequalities for men were not the same as the clear barrier or glass ceiling that was found for women. Black men were less likely to achieve the highest earnings in comparison to their white counterparts; however the gap did not widen later in their careers. The groups that were observed were: white men, white women, black men and black women. Work experience was also defined as an independent variable. This research shows that for a large number of participants glass ceilings are more apparent with respect to gender, in that black women had more hindrances to their career development than both black and white men. This suggests that gender had more of an effect on employment than race in this sample.

An additional investigation looked at the perceived glass ceiling and justice perceptions in Hispanic law associates in the US. The research conducted by Foley (2002), examined the relationship between the perceived glass ceiling, perceptions of promotional fairness, and attitudinal outcomes for a portion of Hispanic lawyers. The research investigated the influence of ethnic composition of peer employees, gender, perceived ethnic discrimination, the effect of these perceptions on fairness of promotions, perceptions of career prospects, and intentions to leave the firm.

The findings supported the assertion that perceived glass ceilings exist in the target sample. Being female and perceiving high levels of ethnic discrimination increased perceptions of differences in promotion outcomes according to demographics, whilst having peer Hispanic associates decreased the perception of a glass ceiling. Additionally, the findings also suggest that the glass ceiling perception decreases perceptions of promotional fairness. When individuals believe promotion decisions are fair, they have improved perceptions of their own career prospects. Additionally, the study highlighted links between a perceived glass ceiling, distributive justice, perceived career prospects and intentions to leave the firm. If minority employees perceive promotions as less fair due to ethnic discrimination they may adjust their work related attitudes accordingly. Therefore, law firm partners should provide women and men of all ethnicities the same salient comparisons and explicit feedback about the rationale for promotions within the firm.

James (2000) also investigated race related differences in promotions and the underlying effects of social and human capital. The study examined two areas that attempt to explain the

disparity in work related experiences and outcomes between black and white managers in America: education and training, representing human capital; and racial similarities of networks and the proportion of strong ties represented social capital. These categories were used to predict whether human and social capital would mediate the relationship between race and work related experiences and the outcomes under investigation.

Findings showed that black managers reported a slower range of promotions than their white counterparts. Also race had both a direct and an indirect effect on outcomes. Participation in training significantly predicted promotion rates, but race still remained a significant predictor. Additionally, it was shown that race moderates human capital and the promotional rate and suggests a type of treatment discrimination against black workers. Social capital did not predict promotional rate, although social capital mediated the relationship between race and psychosocial support. Black managers reported having less social capital than white managers, and social capital was positively related to the receipt of psychosocial support. No differences were found between black and white individuals in their receipt of career related support.

This research highlighted many issues such as human capital's link with promotion. The research has high external validity; however some limitations have been highlighted. For example the actual direction between relationships and social capital, promotions, and support is difficult to determine. An important implication for the current research is that organisations may be underutilising minority employees, despite equivalent human capital investment. Failure to promote black employees in organisations for which positions that they are more than qualified for can result in resentment, loss of productivity, stress and unnecessary high turnover rates. Additionally, opportunity costs may be felt by underestimating the contributions of the black talent pool, by ignoring the desires of a black consumer base. Having a more diverse outlook can offer a different perspective on problem solving activities, improving overall decision making processes (Thomas and Ely, 1996).

A research investigation into the career experiences of women by Bell and Nkomo (2001) of black and white women's corporate experiences explored women's early life stories; how gender, race and social class affected the main developmental aspects of their lives; their upward mobility and career satisfaction. The investigation began with thorough interviews with a targeted group of female executives.

The interviews were supplemented by questionnaire surveys of over 800 black and white female managers across America. The topics covered within the survey included career dynamics, current work conditions, career histories, race and gender dynamics at work, personal life, personal dimensions of ethnic identity and background information. The participants themselves occupied a wider variety of executive and managerial positions in the private sector. The use of a quantitative survey creates an empirical silhouette on the research project.

The findings highlighted that, firstly, white women managers made greater progress in reaching upper level management positions: 32 per cent of white women managers were in top level management positions compared with only 14 per cent of black respondents. Also employment histories differed between black and white women; black women had been demoted more than white women had. In terms of earnings, 27 per cent of the white women included in the survey were earning \$100,000 or more, compared with 10 per cent of black women; 68 per cent of white woman managers were satisfied with their career progress compared with 58 per cent of black managers. White women managers also perceived their current responsibilities as being more significant than black women did. These differences were evident even when there were no differences in the educational levels of the two groups. Black women also felt to a larger extent than white women that they had to work harder than the white males to succeed in their chosen career roles.

There were also reports of daily occurrences of racism and being stereotyped as incompetent and unqualified. The last barrier was also seen in the qualitative phase of the research, as only 21 per cent of the black women surveyed felt that their companies were committed to the advancement of minority employees in management. Conversely, white women were more positive about their respective company's efforts to advance women and minorities.

The majority of black respondents who expressed that they were behind in terms of career progress attributed this to being stalled or hindered by their companies. Conversely, the white respondents rarely attributed their lack of career progression to gender discrimination or company failure. Instead, the nature of work was expressed as a reason, or not performing well enough to be given a promotion. It can therefore be seen in this survey that white women tended to have more internalised career barriers, whereas, black women have more

externalised career barriers. However, despite these difficult barriers, the participants were highly successful career women.

Thus, this research strongly shows working women's perceptions of career barriers and glass ceilings. The authors have made a distinction between "glass ceiling", which is more typically faced by white women in the workplace, and "concrete walls", more typically felt by black women in the workplace. Additionally, white women had perceived a less discriminatory process in their climb to the top of the corporate ladder, and highlighted more internalised career barriers than black women. The way in which the study was structured and designed showed a distinct sympathy for the participant's backgrounds and career journeys and tried to look holistically at both areas. The use of mixed methods design also shows the complexities of the issues and a deeper level of analysis of such issues.

Therefore, to conclude, the metaphor of a glass ceiling has been heavily researched over the last 25 years. The main debates in glass ceiling research show that the labour market has what Gunz *et al.* (2000) would describe as a reluctance to select ethnic minority candidates. This may be due to indirect or direct discrimination of minorities in the labour force. The metaphor of a career barrier, which was originally coined to explain the career hindrances of women, has been used now to refer to any uncomfortable condition that a person may find themselves in that stops them from progressing in a career, which has also been extended for use in minority group workers. The metaphor of glass ceiling or career barrier is a rigid, inflexible concept and absolute. These metaphors do not provide explanations as to how individuals can remove or deal with such barriers to their career progression. Many research investigations exploring the glass ceiling have been highlighted in this review, none of which have provided explanations as to how to deal with these glass ceilings. The next section will discuss the relationship between race and career.

3.7 Social Learning Theories

Career theories that have integrated the concept of career barriers include Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (1976). Social learning theories offer an explanation of how career barriers can sometimes be formed. The social learning theories transpired from classical psychological theories, such as reinforcement theory, and classical behaviourism, such as Bandura (1977a). Social learning theories assume that individual personalities and behaviour emerge from individual learning experiences rather than from a

predisposed or genetic process. Learning experiences come from contact with and analysis of positively or negatively reinforcing events. The social learning theory does suggest that personalities are affected by environmental experiences and incorporates an individual's environment to the development of learning.

The social learning theory recognises that people are intelligent, problem solving beings, who strive to understand the reinforcements that surround them in order to control their environment. The theory also suggests that there are three major types of learning experiences that allow the individual to manoeuvre around their careers. The first are instrumental learning experiences, which occur when an individual is positively reinforced or punished for exercises. For example, this can emerge when a person is positively reinforced for tasks, such as getting an A in an exam after studying hard. The behaviour would thus be reinforced and will be more likely to be repeated, avoiding punishing behaviours leads to an increasing dislike of performing these behaviours (Krumboltz 1976).

The second type of learning behaviour is associative learning experiences. These occur when individuals associate neutral experiences with emotionally laden events or stimuli. An example of this can be seen in that a person may have a negative association, such as hating hospitals because of the death of a relative. Therefore, a person has ascribed a positive or negative emotional aspect to the hospital. These two experiences occur through direct experience with reinforcing or punishing events (Krumboltz 1976).

A third way in which an individual learns behaviour is said to be through vicarious experiences. This includes learning experiences and skills through the observation of the behaviours of others, or by gaining new information and ideas through media, family members, friends, books, movies and television. Whether or not an individual chooses to display such experiences depends on the analysis of reinforcement. When an individual or group perceives the environment as being unreasonable or unfair they may rely on models in order to change or the models may influence their behaviour. These changes can be achieved individually or in groups.

Thus, social learning theory suggests that occupational preferences represent self observation or generalisations about interests and values that have arisen as a result of various learning experiences. It is thus hypothesised that occupational preferences develop when an individual

is positively reinforced for engaging in activities associated with occupational experiences relevant to certain occupations. Additionally, if the individual observes a valued model being reinforced in these activities, they are more likely to repeat them, and thirdly if the behaviour is positively reinforced, by a valued individual, the behaviour is more likely to occur (Mitchel and Krumboltz 1984). In this theory, career barriers are formed when an individual has negative instrumental learning experiences; secondly individuals may have negative associative experiences; and lastly barriers may form when vicarious learning is negative and thus individuals feel that they cannot overcome them. Another social cognitive theory of career development to incorporate barriers is Lent's social cognitive theory.

Lent's *et al* (1994) social cognitive theory of career development also integrates the addition of career barriers as a hindrance to the career decision process. The main tenets of social learning theory include career self efficacy and outcome expectations. Self efficacy is defined as a person's confidence in their ability to perform a certain task (Bandura 1986) and in this case, the confidence an individual has to choose a career (Lent *et al* 1994). It is said that these beliefs are among the most important mechanisms of personal agency and can help an individual determine a choice of activities, environments and emotional reactions when confronted by career related obstacles (Lent *et al* 1994; Bandura 1989).

Outcome expectations are defined as personal beliefs about the future outcomes of career plans. Outcome expectations are more concerned with thoughts such as "what will happen if I choose this career?" Figure 3.1 (below) depicts the thought process that may occur in the face of career decision making in social cognitive career theory.

Goal representations organise and guide behaviour, and increase the likelihood that outcome expectations will be achieved. Career goals can include occupational aspirations, plans or decisions. Lent *et al* (1994) posits that career self efficacy, outcome expectations and goal representations interact with each other. If outcome expectations are low, career self efficacy is low and goals are reduced, this will lead to significant barriers to career enactment.

Therefore, as discussed, social learning and social cognitive career theories both suggest that an individual learns from others and include important mechanisms for this. Social learning theory highlights that learning through others and learning via reinforcement is a way in which people can formulate career ideas and judgements. The social cognitive theory

highlights more of an interaction with the internal aspects of the individual, which include outcome expectations about the future and self efficacy beliefs. Career barriers that an individual believes may be encountered in the future may not be grounded in reality but are said to have a major influence on career decision making in adolescents (Albert and Luzzo 1999). This theory has been included as it offers an explanation of how career barriers are formed and aids the distinction of the term career barrier and career boundary aimed for in this thesis.

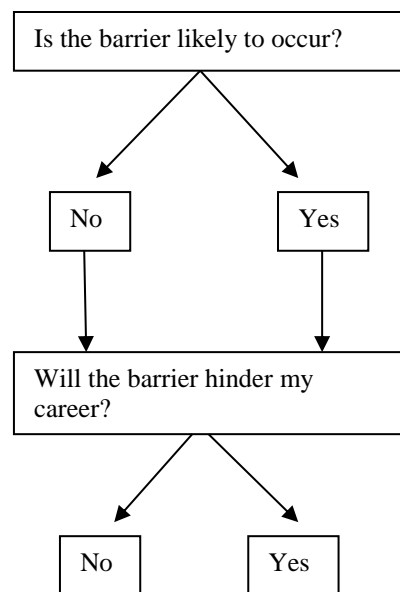


Figure 3.3 Diagram of the hypothetical process occurring when individuals approach potential career barriers.

3.8 Career Barrier Research

Based on the interest in theories of career barriers, there has been a plethora of research investigations into the phenomenon of career barriers. Research studies conducted by researchers such as Hackett and Betz (1981) have explored the relationship of occupational self efficacy expectations perceived by undergraduate women and men. The findings suggest that there were gender differences in self efficacy levels and outcome expectations with regards to education. Also there were gender differences in terms of gender stereotypes and traditional male and female occupations.

Additionally, Hackett and Betz (1981) have suggested that self efficacy can explain a range of career related problems, and focus in particular on women's career development. It has been stated that if individuals lack personal efficacy in career choice, their choices are less

likely to be sustained when obstacles or barriers are encountered (Hackett 1985). Personal self efficacy is also related to outcome expectations that can be influenced by career role models. Lent *et al* (1994) stated that career role models increase the likelihood of an individual considering a career, and an individual will be influenced substantially by their family members.

Research studies into the trend of career self efficacy have dominated the career barrier literature for over 20 years. Many research studies focus on undergraduate and secondary school children and adolescents (Osipow 1999; Lent *et al.* 2008; Bonitz *et al.* 2010; Judge and Bono 2001). Lent *et al.* (2008) conducted research into self efficacy behaviour in university students. Their investigation used qualitative methods to examine perceived influences on college students' selection of career choices. Students from two separate universities participated in interviews. The findings suggested that personal factors such as interests and work relevant experiences were frequently cited as a basis for the choice selection, although contextual factors such as financial constraints and social support were among the most salient barriers to choice implementation.

An additional study showed the importance of self efficacy longitudinally and its links to career goals. Abele and Spurk (2009) investigated the impact of occupational self efficacy and career advancement on objective (salary and status) and subjective (career satisfaction on career attainment) career success. Over 700 full time professionals answered questionnaires after graduation, three years later, and seven years later. All participants held master's degrees and the graduating subjects were law, medicine, arts, humanities, natural sciences, economics, engineering and teaching.

The findings demonstrated that career advancement goals in entry level careers had a positive impact on salary and status three years later, and a positive impact on salary change and career satisfaction seven years later. Additionally, self efficacy and career advancement goals correlated moderately. Therefore, it can be seen that career advancement is moderately related to self efficacy in this investigation. The benefits of this study are with its extensive sample size and longitudinal methodology. Additionally, the sample used would suggest that the findings may not be applicable to individuals who are not as accomplished in their careers.

Creed *et al.* (2004) conducted an additional study of final year high school students and the links between optimism, self esteem, external career barriers, career decision making self efficacy, and career focus. It was shown that the cognitive style had an influence on determining the perception of internal and external barriers (females only), and barriers with optimistic or pessimistic cognitive style were found to predict career decision self efficacy in males. However, there was no evidence that barriers predicted career decision making self efficacy. Carver and Scheier (1981) have a theory that can also be linked to the social career cognitive theory. The next section will discuss another important tenet of social cognitive career theory, outcome expectations.

Outcome expectations are an important aspect of the development of career decision making. The theory explains that interests are not just seen as expressions of personality, but can be transformed into vocational interests if they have a high level of self efficacy to be successful (outcome expectations). An example of this can be seen in an additional research investigation by Lent *et al.* (2008). The study investigated the nature of the social cognitive model of career choice. Participants included 209 engineering students taking courses at either predominantly white, or historically black universities. Questionnaire measures were completed that included self efficacy, outcome expectations, interests and goals, near the end of two consecutive terms. Self efficacy was highlighted as a mediator and precursor to outcome expectations, interests and goals. A similar investigation is highlighted below.

Rogers *et al.* (2005) researched career outcome expectations in undergraduate students in North America. It was found that both self efficacy and outcome expectations were related positively to interest in the degree. Increased outcome expectations significantly predicted increased pursuit intentions, but interestingly, did not have the same effect on interest. Both efficacy and outcome expectations accounted for significant levels in predicting interest and pursuit intentions.

Fitzgerald and Weizman (1992) elaborate on the nature of a number of internal and external barriers that have been highlighted as influencing women's career development. External barriers were characterised as specific to the workplace and include discrimination in selection, promotion and evaluation of leadership behaviours, exclusion from networks, lower pay for equivalent work, inadequate childbirth leave policies and sexual harassment. Contrastingly, internal conflicts or psychological stressors include meeting the demands of

multiple roles. Betz and Voyten (1997) also discussed work related barriers to women's career development and used differing terminology to describe barriers, while using the internal or external dichotomy. National culture can also have an effect in the perception of career barriers and perception of career choice.

Other factors that may influence career choice are cultures high on individualism and cultures high on collectivism. This can be linked to the outcome expectations of careers due to the different perspectives of career an individual has based on their national culture. People from individualistic cultures seek advantage and career progression, autonomy and financial security. In collectivist societies, individuals tend to seek greater career stability (Ozbilgin *et al.* 2005). Collectivism has also been defined as the tendency for people to view themselves as part of a large group and to protect members of the group. Research suggests that there is a positive relationship between collectivism and family relatedness and individualism and peer relatedness (Kwan *et al.* 1997).

Research by Ramamoorthy and Flood, (2002) suggests that even *within* countries, there may be variables that exist between cultural values. Research by Triandis (2008) states that African countries rate highly on the collectivist scale. Research by Agarwala (2008) investigated the relationship between MBA students in India, their cultural leanings and their career choices. Findings showed that fathers were very important as career role models and career guiders. Additionally the dominant cultural value was collectivism. This shows that having a collectivist cultural stance is linked to the extent to which family is involved in the career decision making process. Family networks can increase the levels of outcome expectations, as career role models will be identified. Therefore culture does have an effect on career decision making.

Another research investigation that looked at the relationship between cultural values and career decision making was conducted by Pearson and Bueschke. (2001), who investigated African American women and their perception of family influence over their career choice. The findings showed a familial emphasis on education, relationships with family members, and the family's social and economic resources. This shows that the participants may have similar experiences to the two aforementioned investigations. Thus, this suggests that within black Caribbeans and black Africans in the UK, this also may be the case.

Therefore, social cognitive career theories and career barrier theories were developed initially to explain the career hindrances of women, and have now been used to explain the career hindrances of minority groups. Although research has investigated career barriers in minority career development, it has mainly focused on perceived career barriers in adolescents and university groups.

Thus, the aforementioned theory highlights the importance of the individual's power of decision making, and recognition of and response to occupational career barriers. The main hypothesis of the theory is that individuals realise and identify specific barriers (based on their perception of occupational accessibility) and form coping strategies such as the compromising of occupational goals. Through compromising career goals due to perceived barriers, individuals may feel negatively towards the career decision making process and display anxiety, concern and a lack of confidence. In turn, this may erode self confidence and complicate career planning (Luzzo 1996).

To conclude, although the concept of career barriers has been useful in describing female career hindrances, it remains a tool to explain the lack of upward career progression of women in traditional organisations. Career barriers suggest a disparity between the organisation and the individual, based on environmental or internal issues. However, the concept of a career barrier can be described as a rigid conceptual metaphor by which to describe career difficulties. Although it describes inequality in the marketplace, it does not provide conceptual suggestions by which an individual can navigate these problems. The idea of a career barrier is that individuals are prevented from progressing; however this concept of a barrier does not describe how individuals navigate their careers subsequent to this. In contrast, a career boundary is perceived as being more flexible, dynamic and less rigid. The next section will discuss the difference between career boundaries and career barriers.

3.9 Clarifying the Terms “Boundaryless Career” and “Career Barrier”

Researchers such as Sullivan and Arthur (2005) highlight a need for clarification of the terms career boundary and career barrier. In contrast to a boundaryless career, career barriers according to theorists are described as are “thwarting conditions which impede career development” (Crites 1969). This can be linked to the definition by Gunz *et al.* (2000) who state that impermeable boundaries are barriers to mobility. This definition suggests that

barriers are impermeable, very difficult obstacles that may negatively affect an individual’s career progression.

Career barriers	Career boundaries
Impermeable	Permeable
Inflexible	Flexible
Objective barriers - based on what many others believe about a professions barriers	Objective – opinions on boundaries that many people have accepted about a profession.
Subjective barriers – opinions about the barriers of careers only some individuals have about careers	Subjective – opinions of careers that only some people have about careers.
“thwarting conditions which may hinder career development process” (Crites 1969)	“Things that separate and surround things” Gunz <i>et al.</i> (2000).
Multiple negative stimuli that may affect confidence.	Job crafting, redefining jobs or modifying jobs
Internal barriers, fear of failure, low career self efficacy.	Demand centred boundaries- surround occupational groups
External barriers- gender role stereotypes, male managerial model	Evolutionary- surround organisational divisions.
	Constructional- only permeable to the elite
	Reluctance to select on the part of selectors due to lack of expertise. External vs. Internal hiring
	Reluctance to move boundaries that people construct in their minds. Construction of mental barriers (Gunz et al 2000)

Table 3.6: Differences between career boundaries and career barriers

Contrastingly, it can be argued that a career boundary can be permeable, allowing an individual to cross careers with more ease. Additionally, a career boundary can have impermeable characteristics like career barriers, which can impede career mobility. Gunz *et al.* (2000) highlight that career boundaries are “**things that separate and surround things**” state that boundaries are more complex and multifaceted than career barriers (2000). Researching barriers to career advancement can be viewed as a one dimensional, rigid perspective of an ethnic minority’s advancement and a way to describe career hindrances. Contrastingly, a career boundary can be conceptualised as a progressive, inclusive metaphor, indicative of more flexible occupational movements. Career boundaries are metaphors that suggest that individuals can move around depending on its permeability.

Gunz *et al.* (2000) suggest that the career boundaries that individuals face may include labour market boundaries, demand side boundaries (**reluctance to select**) or supply side boundaries (**reluctance to move**). “**Reluctance to select**” concerns a lack of experience or expertise on the part of the employee, hindering them from getting a new career. Contrastingly, “**reluctance to move**” refers to the boundaries that individuals construct in their minds, potentially limiting where individuals place themselves in terms of careers and jobs. The individual may not perceive that they have the skills, experience or career contacts to change careers. Therefore, career boundaries have been defined as labour market imperfections driven by the reluctance of selectors to allow certain types of individuals to move into or within organisations, or the reluctance of career actors to move to certain jobs (Gunz *et al.* 2000).

Researchers have also called for a clarification of the concept of the boundaryless career and for a measure to define and quantify the concept. To this end, researchers Briscoe *et al* (2006) have developed a 13-item scale that addresses the differences between boundaryless career attitudes, focussing on boundarylessness and organisational mobility competencies. Based on the discussion above, a clarification of the terms career boundary and career barrier has been attempted in the current section. Career barriers tend to be less permeable, more rigid and objective, while career boundaries tend to be more flexible, dynamic and more permeable.

In order to investigate whether or not black knowledge intensive workers are external from the mainstream in their career enactment; the current research will use a quantitative research method to investigate the nature of physical mobility faced by black Caribbean and black African workers in the UK, and a qualitative phase to investigate the nature of their careers, the nature of the boundaries that may have been faced (including boundary permeability), and the techniques they have used to overcome such boundaries – in terms of the three career competencies highlighted necessary for boundary crossing by Arthur and Rousseau (1996): (knowing why) looking outside the organisation for identity; career marketability (knowing how); and establishing networks of influence (knowing whom), will also be used in the qualitative phase of the research. Additionally, a psychological aspect of boundarylessness such as identifying with the profession as opposed to the organisation has also been highlighted. The industries highlighted in the research are knowledge intensive organisations.

Therefore, the current research will address the research gap outlined in both Sullivan (1999,) Sullivan and Baruch 2009) and Atewologun and Singh (2010), who called for research into boundaryless careers of minorities in majority populations. As highlighted in the previous sections, many barrier investigations have been conducted in the US with minority groups. While the concept of barrier research regarding specific minority groups is lacking in the research, neither does the concept adequately address how people move around these boundaries to succeed in their careers. Instead the concept of a barrier covers people's career movements as a permanent stopping point. The boundaryless career, contrastingly, offers a dynamic career concept to understand the careers of knowledge intensive workers.

3.10 Summary

In summary, the literature review has explained career theories from the historical origins to the present day manifestations, such as boundaryless and protean career theory. In particular this chapter has investigated contemporary career theories from career barrier theories to protean career theories. Career theories are grouped into traditional theories such as person–environment fit, Super's developmental stage theory, and contemporary career theories such as boundaryless and protean career theories.

Key debates centring on boundaryless career theories discuss the view that little is known about the career experiences of black knowledge intensive workers in the UK once they are established in their careers (Atewologun and Singh 2010; Kenny and Briner 2007). This research gap needs to be filled in order for organisations to understand all workers in their organisations. This will be investigated using qualitative methods by semi structured interviews.

Another key debate surrounding the boundaryless career theory is that the research has tended to focus on the upward mobility moves of individuals in America and the UK, rather than focusing on other aspects of boundaryless career theory, including individual aspects of career theory such as the personal perceptions of the nature of career boundaries on a subjective level (Greenhaus *et al.* 2004; Gunz *et al.* 2000). This research question will also be investigated using qualitative research methods by semi structured interviews:

Criticisms of both boundaryless and protean careers include that these contemporary career theories have not been adequately tested in order to observe whether they can be applied to

minority groups in majority countries (Sullivan *et al.* 1998, 1999, Sullivan and Baruch 2009, Inkson *et al.* 2012). Therefore a research gap can be identified, as research is needed to investigate the internal, psychological aspect of boundarylessness in minority populations to adequately investigate the permeability of career boundaries in under researched, minority, professional groups. Using the Briscoe *et al.* (2006) questionnaire, quantitative aspects of the boundaryless and protean career will be investigated and the research questions below will be answered.

1) To what extent are black African and black Caribbean knowledge workers' careers boundaryless and protean?

2) What are the experiences and nature of the career boundaries and barriers that black Africans and black Caribbeans face?

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Younger individuals will have higher levels of protean and boundaryless career outlook.

Hypothesis 2: Individuals with higher levels of education will have a more boundaryless and protean outlook.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a difference in the boundaryless and protean career outlook between different professional groups.

4. CONTEXT: THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY AND THE BLACK CAREER EXPERIENCE

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the research context. It is important to understand the career journeys of black knowledge intensive workers in the UK by establishing a historical and present day context to the research. Currently, there is a dearth of research on the applicability of boundaryless career theory to black populations in the UK. This chapter will explain and analyse the knowledge economy and research that has attempted to define it and how it links to the boundaryless career competencies. Additionally this chapter will summarise the origins of African and Caribbean migration to the UK, highlight the occupations in which black populations find themselves and analyse the current research addressing black individuals' careers. In addition the current chapter will highlight the knowledge economy as an organisational context and the career theories that can explain the skills and competencies needed in order for these workers to navigate their careers successfully. The first section will outline the different perspectives of knowledge and career theories that are related to new career theories.

4.2 Perspectives on The Knowledge Economy

The knowledge economy has attracted an increasing amount of research and economic attention as it is claimed that the industry is now at the centre of economic growth. For many decades researchers have argued that developed countries have become driven by economies and technologies based on knowledge and information. Such technologies emerged in the 1950s with the increase and development of computers and then developed rapidly from the development and use of the Internet and email. Knowledge was measured by the increase of management services, consulting firms and the development of intellectual property (Powell and Snellman 2004). Quinn (1992) states that the primary task of technology firms and service organisations is to nurture and develop knowledge based competencies. Knowledge based organisations develop new structures in order to attract and leverage key individuals as knowledge resources.

Organisations included under the umbrella term of knowledge intensive organisations, and thus based upon the knowledge economy, define work as having an intellectual element

where well qualified, well educated employees form a part of the workforce (Alvesson 2001). Typical examples of knowledge intensive organisations include: law firms, accounting organisations, management consultancies, engineering organisations, IT organisations, advertising, research and development units and other high technology firms (Alvesson 2001). In these organisations, knowledge is of paramount importance and receives greater attention than other inputs of the organisations. Starbuck (1992) characterised knowledge intensive firms as management consulting, IT, accounting, banking and law organisations.

Miles *et al.* (1995) identified two types of knowledge intensive business services. First, traditional professional services such as accountancy and legal services based on specialist knowledge of systems and social aspects. These services include: marketing, training, design, architecture, management consultancy, legal services and financial services. These services help users negotiate complex systems and procedures. The second type of knowledge intensive business services are connected with technology and knowledge transfer of these new forms of technology such as IT and engineering consultancy services. These different definitions of knowledge intensive firms have the development and sharing of unique skill dependent knowledge at the core of their explanations.

The knowledge economy is sometimes regarded as a separate section of the economy, isolated from the mainstream, where technical specialist knowledge is developed and used. This first approach to the knowledge economy concerns developments in science, technology and innovation. Universities and research organisations are responsible for developing the currency of knowledge that leads to new product development. If this view of the knowledge economy is taken, the growth of activities in the knowledge economy is often measured by the number of patents granted, research and development spending and innovation (Van Winden *et al.* 2007).

Conversely, the second perspective on the knowledge economy is more inclusive, addressing the view that knowledge generation is becoming a dominant factor throughout the economy. It has become an integrated force that allows organisations and employees to acquire, develop, use and share knowledge for economic development (Dahlman and Anderson 2000). Van- Winden *et al.* (2007) have highlighted four pillars of the knowledge economy. These include: organisations that have economic and organisational systems that provide incentives for the use of knowledge, its creation and entrepreneurship; a skilled and highly educated

workforce who dynamically create and utilise knowledge; a structure aiding effective communication, processing and sharing of information; and lastly a system of research centres, think tanks, consultancy firms and other organisations that can adapt and develop local and regional knowledge.

Author	Knowledge definition
Becker 1964	General relatable to most aspects of life Specific used in specialised contexts.
Lane and Lubatkin 1998	Articulate easily codified, written and transferred, human and social capital. Tacit original, unique, difficult to imitate creates strategic value. On the job knowledge.
Lengnick-Hall and Andrade 2008	Occupation specific knowledge about the specific occupation. Industry specific related to industry. Firm specific organisational knowledge.

Table 4.1 Definitions of knowledge

Knowledge can also be classified into articulable and tacit knowledge (Lane and Lubatkin 1998). Articulate knowledge can easily be codified, written and transferred (Liebeskind 1996). Contrastingly, tacit knowledge is concerned with non codified information and routines that are embedded in the organisational culture (Liebeskind 1996). Tacit knowledge is also concerned with skills and the working relationships of the firm that are of importance to professional skills. Additionally, tacit knowledge is often original and unique and thus difficult to imitate and copy and this has a high level of creating strategic value to an organisation (Lane and Lubatkin 1998). Such professionals gain knowledge through formal education (articulate) and through on the job training (tacit).

Articulate knowledge is characterised by a formal education from universities, the ex-students of which are assumed to have a vast amount of specialist skills and higher intellectual potential. It is also assumed that the value of education lasts throughout a person's career and that their human capital is useful to the organisation. Employees are then able to navigate the knowledge economy due to the social capital they developed through university. These networks help individuals to develop valuable social networks and provide

access to valuable external resources. This knowledge, combined with tacit on the job knowledge, helps an individual to climb up the corporate ladder (Lane and Lubatkin 1998).

Becker (1964) highlights the distinction between general versus specific knowledge. General knowledge or public knowledge is knowledge that is relatable to most aspects of life, and includes general reading, writing and mathematical skills that are transferable to other situations (Lepak and Snell 2003). Contrastingly, specific knowledge is information that can be used in specialised contexts. Lengnick-Hall and Andrade (2008) highlight different forms of knowledge: occupation specific knowledge is information that is known about a particular occupational group; contrastingly industry specific knowledge is information that is only related to a particular industry; and lastly, firm specific knowledge is information that can only be applied to that specific organisation. Employees in knowledge intensive organisations can bring all forms of this knowledge to the organisation in different forms and amounts; this will increase the competitive edge of the organisation.

Based on these views of knowledge, it can be observed that there are many different definitions of knowledge. Through careful talent management, knowledge intensive organisations can extract these layered forms of knowledge in order to increase the competitive edge of the organisation and its strategic management (Lengnick- Hall and Andrade 2008). Industry, firm specific and articulable knowledge are vastly important in knowledge intensive organisations as they form the basis of creating their unique set of services.

Knowledge management in organisations includes knowledge acquisition, creation, knowledge capture, storage, knowledge diffusion and transfer (Sparrow *et al.* 2006). The creation and acquisition of knowledge refers to how new knowledge is created and its importance in knowledge intensive firms. Knowledge capture and knowledge storage refers to the maintenance of information to enable an organisation to codify and store knowledge. Lastly, knowledge diffusion and transfer refers to the sharing and mobilization of knowledge to create knowledge based value within an organisation. In order for these forms of knowledge to be useful, an organisation must codify and utilise the knowledge effectively (Lengnick-Hall and Andrade 2008). Thus, differing definitions of knowledge demonstrate the vast aspects and perspectives of what knowledge is. Knowledge intensive firms are able to

consolidate and use both tacit and articulable knowledge and general and specific knowledge. The different types of knowledge help organisations to maintain a competitive edge.

Knowledge intensive firms have been described as good examples of people dependant organisations (Robertson and Swan 2004) due to the view that the knowledge developed is dependent upon the individuals within an organisation. Research addressing the career development of knowledge intensive workers has been called for by academics; especially in relation to the careers of ethnic minority workers (Kenny and Briner 2007; Sullivan and Baruch. 2009). The current research investigation aims to address the research gap around contemporary career theories and into minority populations.

Knowledge intensive organisations, according to Davenport and Prusak (2000), can buy, rent or make knowledge. Making knowledge occurs when a new employee is hired due to their unique fundamental knowledge and their potential capacity to learn and develop knowledge over time. This knowledge requires time to develop and thus the organisation cannot utilise this knowledge in the short term. Buying knowledge occurs when an organisation hires employees who have specific needed knowledge that can be applied to organisational problems or knowledge gaps. This is a short term answer to knowledge acquisition as staff can quickly use their knowledge in order for the organisation to solve specific problems.

Renting knowledge occurs when the organisation hires employees for a specific period of time, mostly on a contract, with a particular knowledge stream, where they can solve problems immediately. There is no obligation for the organisation to retain these knowledge workers and there is an expectation that their knowledge can be captured before they leave the organisation (Davenport and Prusak 2000).

Therefore, in knowledge intensive organisations keeping a constant stream of staff who know specific information is very important. Making knowledge (including hiring people based on the potential of their knowledge) and renting knowledge (choosing people based on specific, urgent knowledge gaps in the organisation) maintain a motivated and well functioning workforce if they are adequately integrated into the organisational culture. Research into the knowledge economy spans three main phases according to Powell and Snellman (2004), research addressing the science based industries, research that centres around the definition of

knowledge intensive firms, and lastly the third strand of work is concerned with how learning and innovation shapes such knowledge based firms.

	Knowledge work	Boundaryless career competencies	Traditional work
Employees' career development	External to the organisation through education and socialisation	Protean 'self directed' career, ownership with the individual	Internal through training, development, rules and career ideas
Employees' loyalty	Loyalty to professionals, networks and peers	Protean 'values driven' individual values	Loyalty to the organisation and its career systems
Skills and knowledge	Specialised and deep	Intelligent career 'knowing how'	Narrow and functional
Locus of work	Groups, teams and projects	Intelligent career 'knowing whom'	Individuals
Focus on work	Customers, problems, issues	Intelligent career 'knowing why'	Tasks, objectives, performance
Impact on company success	Some major contributions of strategic long term importance	Intelligent career 'knowing how'	Many small contributions.

Table 4.2: Comparison of knowledge and traditional work, adapted from Despres and Hiltrop (1995)

The table 4.2 above which has been adapted from research from Despres and Hiltrop (1995), shows differences between traditional work and knowledge work and the link between knowledge work and boundaryless career competencies. Knowledge work is perceived as more dependent on the individual, where the individual is responsible for their own career development, networking and education. The locus of work is dependent on project, groups and teams. These elements are characteristics of the boundaryless career theory, which includes protean and intelligent career competencies. Protean career competencies emphasise self directed career management developing through the individual's own values as opposed to the organisation's values. Additionally, specialist skills and knowledge a part of intelligent career competencies such as 'knowing how' and 'knowing whom' (DeFellipi and Arthur 1994). The boundaryless career competencies can be strongly linked to knowledge intensive industries; the similarities between the two concepts are highlighted in Table 4.2.

The intelligent career competencies that are tenets of the boundaryless career theory (Arthur and Rousseau 1996; Greenhaus *et al.* 2004) suggest that 'knowing why' (motivation and

identity), 'knowing how' (skills and expertise of the individual) and 'knowing whom' (relationships and networks) are related to the skills needed to navigate knowledge intensive industries. Knowing who describes the extent to which an individual has relationships inside and outside the workplace, professional associations and contacts with family and friends. This suggests that the knowledge economy incorporates key aspects of contemporary career theories, more specifically boundaryless career theory that includes protean characteristics. This theory was developed with the knowledge at its core and was developed with intelligent ideas, enterprise and knowledge organisations at its centre (Quinn 1992). The knowledge economy and the boundaryless career competencies both focus on the subjective, internal career. Thus, Table 4.2 shows a strong link between the boundaryless career and the knowledge economy, and so this is the most appropriate theory to use in the current investigation. Based on the link between boundaryless career theory and knowledge intensive industries, Khapova *et al.* (2007) have stated that more research is needed between the subjective career and the knowledge economy and knowledge organisations. The next section will discuss the link between boundaryless career competencies and human capital theory.

4.3 Human Capital Theory

Human capital is a large aspect of the knowledge economy as it posits that knowledge is the trading asset of many service based organisations. Human capital is linked to boundaryless career theory as the investment in education, training and skills is an important aspect of knowledge organisations and boundaryless career theories. Human capital attempts to explain the investment of education and training and how this can lead to human resources gains and improvement in employment. From this view, it can be seen that education and experience are seen as deliberate investments, preparing employees in organisations in order to increase productivity, efficiency, and increasing growth and development (Nafukho *et al.* 2004). Organisations may try to maintain a competitive edge in the knowledge economy by hiring a well educated and highly skilled workforce with above average levels of work experience (Myers *et al.* 2004). Employees that have invested in themselves and have a high level of human capital may be less committed to the organisation and more focused on their careers (Lepak and Snell 2003). The view of an individual being more in charge of their career is akin to protean career dynamics, where an individual is more concerned with their career development on an individual basis. Thus, such employees are less likely to seek lifelong employment with a particular organisation as they are able to sell their skills, qualifications and expertise to other organisations (Rousseau and Wade- Benzoni 1994).

Human capital is a useful tool for organisations and employees as it provides a signal of applicants' worthiness to be employed because of their job relevant knowledge. Charles Handy (1989) formulated a metaphor of what an organisation of the future would look like. Handy posited that the organisation of the future would be like a shamrock, with three semi circles describing divisions of the organisations. These semi circles represent core staff, contractors and temporary workers; addressing three core divisions of a workforce which can be observed in figure 4.1. Handy's (1989) research suggested that there would be an increased reliance on temporary, highly skilled workers, which has become a reality in knowledge intensive organisations.

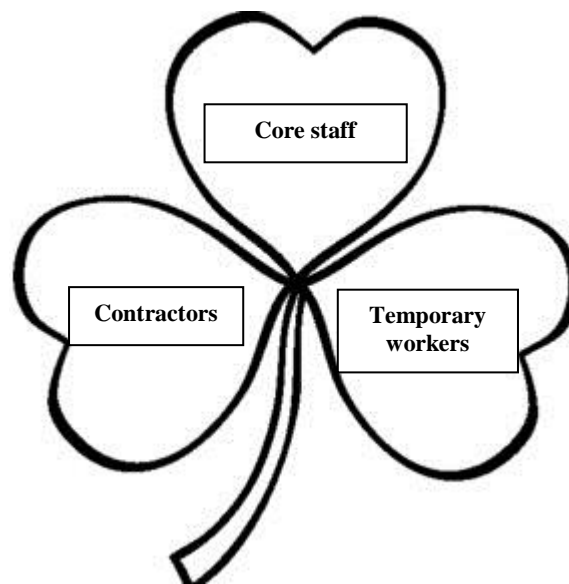


Figure 4.1- Handy's Shamrock Organisation

Human capital theory is favoured by potential staff as it demonstrates that the applicants have certain competencies and desired attributes needed by organisations, such as communication, motivation and project management skills (Swenson-Lepper 2005). Human capital is represented by intangible skills, experience and competencies that are highly sought by organisations and employers in order to allow them to maintain their competitive edge.

McGreggor *et al.* (2004) suggest the skills that workers need for this new boundaryless and dynamic labour market are vast. These skills include: specialised and differentiated industry knowledge such as team work, organisational skills and negotiation skills. Additionally, workers should be able to work on multiple projects at a time. Due to commercial organisations being mainly concerned with profit, reward structures for staff are highly

competitive; suggesting that influence and negotiation skills will also be important. This shows that there is a specific link between knowledge intensive organisations and a boundaryless career orientation, including industry knowledge and transferable skills, which can be developed by organisational boundary crossing. In the career competencies highlighted by boundaryless career theory as knowing how, why and whom, specialised and differential knowledge can be placed under knowing how to perform knowledge work.

Human capital can be seen as a way to increase the strategic value of an organisation as it allows the organisation to improve on the efficiency and effectiveness of a firm (Barney 1991). Barney (1991) has also highlighted how unique, rare and specialised human capital is, qualities that can improve the organisation's competitive advantage. Lepak and Snell (2003) conducted research into the link between human capital and employment and highlighted four categories of workers in the knowledge economy. The first category highlighted was knowledge based employment based on employees who contribute to organisations' strategic objectives. Organisations are more likely to focus on knowledge based employment to cement long term employee commitment. Contrastingly job based employment is concerned with human capital that has a strategic element but the skills involved are not as unique and therefore will not add to the organisation's competitive edge. Workers are able to make contributions to the organisation and hold on to transferable skills where staff focus on predetermined tasks (Lepak and Snell 2003).

Contract work is the next category where workers are used for outsourced work by organisations to reduce costs. The last category, alliances or partnerships, is categorised by external workers developing and providing knowledge intensive services to firms. This can be seen where legal consultancies or accountancy firms provide long term services to other organisations. Through these partnerships, organisations gain human capital without incurring the costs of internally employing such a skilful workforce (Lepak and Snell 2003). The four categories highlighted by Lepak and Snell (2003) suggest the employment strategies of human capital theory, from employing highly skilled workers with unique skills, to having an alliance with an organisation capitalising on specialist knowledge without incurring the cost of internal employment. This shows how important and different the manifestations of human capital are that are used in the knowledge economy.

Hitt and Ireland (2000) addressed the link between human capital and professional service firms' performance and found they found that human capital had a positive effect on performance in organisations. They investigated this by contacting America's largest 100 largest law firms and analysing data spanning four years, from 1987 to 1991. The researchers investigated human capital, leverage, service diversification and geographic diversification. The researchers characterised human capital by looking at the qualifications and experiences of the employees and the quality of the employees' work. It was observed that human capital can significantly impact the strategic performance of an organisation to help it maintain a competitive edge.

Other research concerned with human capital was conducted by James (2000), who examined the disparity between black and white managers, and human capital differences. The participants were 127 black and white managers in Fortune 500 financial services firms. It was found that black managers reported slower rates of promotion and less psychological support than white managers. Other analyses found that race moderated the relationship between human capital and promotion and suggests treatment discrimination against black professionals. There was no difference in the amount of career related support that was received. This study shows that even with high levels of human capital, discrimination can be prevalent amongst black professionals when matched for education, age and experience.

Therefore, human capital theory is strongly linked to the knowledge economy as it highlights that well educated and experienced workers are at the forefront of a learning organisation's strategic and competitive advantage. Navigating occupational groups such as law, management consultancy and financial services would require an above average level of human capital. Human capital also links very strongly to boundaryless career theory as it involves specialist skills and knowledge, including tacit and articulable knowledge. Knowing how is concerned with both forms of knowledge. Thus human capital theory is a distinct part of the boundaryless career theory. Another aspect which has been linked to knowledge intensive organisations is social capital theory.

4.4 Social Capital Theory

Social capital resources can include qualities that represent network relationships with peers, subordinates and superiors. These relationships are important because they can help regulate

and facilitate career advancement (Coleman 1988). In the career competencies section of boundaryless career model by Greenhaus *et al.* (2004), social capital theory would be included under knowing whom. Demographic similarity increases social capital in an employment context and includes: race, sex, status and educational level. Evidence shows that individuals tend to interact with their own social group more than with members of other social groups (Levine and Moreland 1990). Based on this view, researchers have highlighted that individuals often make links with those who belong to the same racial group, compared to individuals who are racially dissimilar. Having no or limited social capital can impede relationship formation and limit organisational benefits, which can also impact career navigation (Thomas 1990).

Coleman (1988) defines social capital as being made up of three separate parts: obligations, information and norms. Obligations represent knowledge that is developed through mutual support, for example if one individual helps another, the other individual is then obligated to help the first person in return. Information, which is the second aspect of human capital, represents capital that forms on the basis of relationships themselves. The more professional contacts that person has, the more information that person has on a topic. Lastly norms are social capital that is concerned with what the group of professionals believe or understand. According to Coleman, three aspects are contained in the view of social capital that leverage individuals' personal and professional contacts, obligation to help others and community rules or norms. According to Coleman (1988) social capital predates and paves the way for human capital to form.

In relation to ethnic issues in the workplace, social capital theory highlights and can explain issues within ethnic minority career progression. The advantage of same race relationships according to social capital is that they can lead to desirable organisational outcomes such as information exchange, social support and career advancement. Having limited or no social capital in the form of racial similarity has been shown to reduce organisational benefits. Social capital can be viewed as an explanation for career development, but it is unclear how race mediates the development of the career. It is postulated that black professionals may have fewer social capital resources to increase and impact human capital compared to white people in organisations (Coleman 1988) Therefore, in terms of boundaryless career theory the amount of social capital an individual has is linked to knowing whom. Ibarra (1995) suggested that social capital in black professionals is mediated by the quantity of same race

others. For black knowledge intensive workers employed in traditional American organisations there is a low representation of black employees. Black employees are limited in their ability to develop as much social capital as their comparative white colleagues due to the latter having more same race ties (Ibarra 1995).

Research into the reduction of social capital in black professionals has been conducted by Kram (1988). Kram (1988) found that mentor relationships are harder to manage, maintain and initiate when parties belong to different racial groups (Alderfer 1986). Thus, according to the research, black individuals can have fewer social capital ties for two reasons: the limited availability of same race others to use as contacts in order to leverage their human capital, and a possible difficulty in forming strong cross race relationships in order to increase career progression (James 2000).

Social and human capital highlights the skills and information that knowledge intensive workers need in order to navigate their boundaryless careers. The specific career skills needed to succeed in the new career include forming influential and helpful relationships with others (social capital), educational level, experience, skills (human capital) and social norms in the profession (social capital). These skills form the basis of knowing who, knowing how and knowing why, which is fundamental to the intelligent career competencies. These skills of human and social capital form the basis of skills needed to navigate a new career and are strongly linked to intelligent career competencies, which will be discussed along with the link to knowledge intensive workers.

Therefore, it has been highlighted that there is a growing amount of research that centres on the knowledge economy. However, it can be seen that this fairly new area of research is distinctly lacking in the area of career development and modern careers in knowledge intensive firms focusing on black knowledge intensive workers and their orientation to boundaryless careers.

Career theories that have been highlighted and summarised such as: boundaryless, protean and intelligent career competencies, kaleidoscope career theory, human and social capital theory and post corporate career theory, highlight their applicability to knowledge intensive firms and employees. The aforementioned theories show and highlight certain competencies such knowing how, knowing whom and knowing why, and how these competencies can

greatly enhance an individual's working and career development. Additionally, having a challenging work environment, balancing work and life commitments, can also allow individuals to maintain an attractive and fulfilling work balance in the light of a volatile working environment.

The research investigations that have been summarised also show the applicability of the boundaryless career to the knowledge intensive industry. The industry is ever changing and there is a need for locating a highly skilled, dynamic and enthusiastic workforce, always striving to increase their knowledge in order to enhance their human capital, and that can also benefit the organisation's strategic edge. There is a lack of specific research into minority knowledge intensive workers. There is very little research currently into black knowledge economy workers and contemporary career theories. Thus, the current research investigation aims to address the research gap around contemporary career theories and minority populations.

4.5 Black Africans and Black Caribbean's In The UK

Caribbean Migration to The UK

This section of the context chapter will focus on the sample researchers including Sullivan *et al.* (1999), Sullivan and Baruch(2009), who have stated that there is currently little information about ethnic minority perception of the boundaryless career. Additionally Kenny and Briner (2007) suggest that more research is needed to understand the careers of ethnic minorities post selection. This section will focus on the history, employment and career experiences that have faced the black population in the UK. In the current investigation the term 'black African' refers to black individuals from first generation migrants who originate from countries within the continent of Africa. The term 'black Caribbean' refers to black individuals from first generation migrants living and working in the UK who originate from the Caribbean Islands.

Black Africans and black Caribbeans have been resident and key components of the British Isles for hundreds of years. Since the transatlantic slave trade that began in the sixteenth century, black individuals have been present in the UK (Hiro 1973). The numbers of black

Caribbeans in the UK increased rapidly during the post Second World War migration that occurred in the 1950s. The early arrival of black Caribbeans to the UK led to the group working in distinct occupations. Subsequent larger scale immigration to the UK was due to the labour shortages in post war Britain, which further led to an advancement of employment stratification for black individuals in Britain (Hiro 1973).

After the nineteenth century, when many Africans were transported to the Caribbean during the transatlantic slave trade to work in the sugar plantations, the black population of the Caribbean grew substantially. Following the abolition of slavery Jamaicans began to migrate, mainly to the US, in order to find sustainable employment. However, after 1924, literacy and numeracy tests were introduced for visas and the economic depression meant that the level of migration to America decreased after the world wars. As the British needed cheap and willing labour to rebuild the country in the armed forces and war industries, Caribbeans began to migrate to the UK, where there were increased employment opportunities. Before 1952, there was a steady and meagre migration of Caribbeans to the UK due to the increased amount of Caribbeans who preferred America for its established community and proximity to the Islands. According to Chamberlain (1995), between 1948 and 1973, 550,000 Caribbeans migrated to Britain.

The McCarran–Walter Act of 1952, which attached a quota of Caribbean migrants to the US, led to an increase in Caribbean migration to the UK; thus in 1954, nearly 11,000 Caribbeans arrived in the UK, which more than doubled the following year. Other countries in the Caribbean encouraged migration for other reasons, and Barbados, the most densely populated Island in the Caribbean, was the first country to formulate a national emigration scheme. Within the 1950s–1960s, 4,000 Barbadians were sent to work for London Transport, British Rail, hotels and the NHS. From 1945–1955, the profile of the migrants was that of skilled and semi skilled workers. This contrasts greatly to the profile of the migrants post 1955–1962, where migrants were unskilled with rural backgrounds of poverty (Hiro 1973). The migration of the black Caribbean population to the UK grew due to those who were familiar with the country as they had worked in the UK during the war, and those who were skilled filling the labour shortages in the UK. Some migrants found it difficult to secure jobs in the UK due to overt discrimination. The reality was that the migrants took the jobs that were the least popular with indigenous people (Hiro 1973). It is said that the primary reason for the Caribbean migration to the UK was economic.

On arrival to the UK, it was still not easy for some Caribbean migrants to secure employment. A study by Glass (1961) highlighted that 55 per cent of migrants had experienced underemployment (not being paid in line with your professional qualifications or skills) due to migration that could have been due to discrimination. The epicentres of most migration tended to centre on larger UK cities and port areas such as London, Birmingham and Liverpool (Stillwell and Duke-Williams 2005). Parekh (1982) suggested that the non homogenous nature of Caribbean immigration to the UK, consisting of those practising different religions, dialects and cultures, marked a layer of suspicion amongst the indigenous population, which may have contributed to reduced employment rates in the UK. In comparison to other immigrant groups such as Chinese or Irish immigrants who had a more homogenous culture, it was more difficult for black Caribbeans to form alliances and provide bespoke employment and housing for the themselves in the UK. Therefore the triggers of Caribbean migration to the UK were mainly for employment reasons; however upon arrival to the UK some Caribbeans discovered employment discrimination and employment barriers to their career progression. The next section will discuss and highlight the triggers for African migration to the UK and the treatment they received on arrival.

African Migration to the UK

The first vast migrations of black Africans to the UK came after the 1960s, and were mainly attracted to the UK for higher education and professional training reasons (Daley 1996). The most popular cities to pursue such education included London, Liverpool and Cardiff, and individuals arrived from Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria (Banton 1998). The pull factor for such education was mainly due to the calibre and reputation of the education system of the West for prestige and social betterment (Goody and Groothues 1977). Evidence of this can be seen in the literary works of the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe in the novel *No Longer at Ease* (1958), where the protagonist is sponsored by the Nigerian government to gain a degree in the UK.

The 1991 census records 213,362 people who classified themselves as black African, with the majority (60 per cent) being of West African origin (Daley 1996). In the 2001 census, this number had increased to 485, 277, which was 0.8 per cent of the total UK population and 10.5 per cent of the ethnic minority population. Despite strong educational achievements,

Dustman and Theodoropoulos (2006) found that ethnic minority migrants and their British born children exhibited lower than average employment rates compared to their white peers. This highlights that human capital does not always convert to advanced career positions and that this phenomenon is more commonplace amongst minorities in the UK.

The following description of the increase of black immigrants to the UK shows that the Caribbean population who entered in the 1950s arrived mainly due to the labour force demand in post war Britain and individuals filled posts in transport, the National Health Service and other industries, such as hotel and tourism. After the post war increase of both groups and subsequent settlement, they remained and still remain in a subordinate position in the labour force compared to white British workers, and for many employers they were seen as a last resort workforce (Brown *et al.* 1992). They then continued to be employed in restricted occupational groups and were over represented in low paid, insecure professions and working in antisocial environments. African immigrants primarily arrived in the UK for education and training purposes. Therefore, both groups of black immigrants arrived in the UK for different reasons, but both ethnic groups have remained at a disadvantaged position in the labour market (Barnes and Roulstone 2005). This disadvantaged position in the labour market has yet to be investigated using a single ethnic group as a sample in a UK context (Atewologun and Singh 2010). Based on this research gap, the next section will investigate the occupational groups that are mostly occupied by the black population in the UK, and which areas are ripe for research.

4.6 Minorities in the UK Labour Force

By highlighting the labour trends of black Africans and Caribbeans in the UK, this section aims to expose the current knowledge of the group. The 1991 census highlighted that the degree of labour market participation of ethnic minority groups taken as a whole was substantially less than that of the majority population for both men and women. The 1991 census found that black Caribbeans were mostly in transport, communications, engineering and distribution industries. Women tended to be over represented in the public health and education services. In contrast, black African men were over represented in the service sector industries, most notably in transport and communications, public health and education and to a smaller extent in business services and public administration. Women were over represented in textiles and all service sector industries, with public health and education being the largest single employer. In terms of job level, two-thirds of Caribbeans were in manual

work and Caribbeans at 14 per cent had the lowest representation in the top category of professionals, managers and employers (Modood *et al.* 1997).

The 1991 census also highlighted that fewer women had top professional managerial occupations. In terms of unemployment levels, minority groups face much higher rates of unemployment than people in majority groups, where women suffer the most. Amongst men aged 16–64, black African unemployment rates were among the highest of all ethnic groups, and could be nearly three times the white unemployment rate. A quarter of black African women were unemployed, which is a rate well above the highest of any white group (Wrench and Madood 2000). These statistics highlight that both black African and black Caribbeans have below average employment rates and additionally have lower representation in business services and professional managerial occupations. Although the numbers are low, those professional, managerial, knowledge intensive workers, due to their highly skill dependent work, should be nurtured, and human capital needs to be maintained in order to have a competitive economic environment.

The labour market trends for both black African and black Caribbean workers have also been analysed in an article by the Department of Work and Pensions (Heath and Cheung 2006). Their research highlighted that a higher proportion of black African and black Caribbean men were unemployed in comparison to their white counterparts and on average amassed lower hourly earnings. The research also highlighted the concept of ethnic penalties, which are defined as disparities that persist and affect an ethnic minority's chances of securing employment, or the sources of disadvantages leading a minority to fare less well in the labour market. Ethnic penalties are a form of career barrier that may affect black individuals in the labour market. Ethnic penalties are not only found in first generation black African and black Caribbean workers, but also in the second generation. Black Africans and black Caribbeans born overseas also had a higher rate of ethnic penalties. Black Africans and black Caribbeans tend to be more represented in the public sector and are underrepresented in the professional and managerial occupations (Heath and Cheung 2006). These findings highlight the difficulties faced by ethnic minorities in the labour market. Further research that highlights this was undertaken by Li (2010).

Li (2010) found that between 1991 and 2001 the ethnic minority population in the UK increased from 5.5 per cent to 8.3 per cent, and overall he found that the data examined

highlighted white individuals as having the most favourable employment conditions compared to ethnic minorities. The most disadvantaged groups in the analysis included black Africans. What was also found in Li's (2010) comparison between American and UK minorities was that there seemed to be a greater race disadvantage in the UK than for the American sample. For example, unemployment rates for minorities in the UK in 1991 were higher than for minorities in America.

Li's (2010) analysis also highlighted that although the white majority enjoyed the highest rates of employment, they were not the most qualified in the UK. In the UK, Chinese, black Africans and Indians had higher qualifications on average than whites, and higher levels of human capital. Even though black Africans, Chinese and Indians had higher levels of human capital, their jobs did not lead them to the job status or payment level appropriate with their human capital levels. Li's (2010) analysis of the comparison between American minorities and British minorities found that the labour market for minorities in the UK is less favourable than that in America, and found evidence of discrimination.

This is a view that is reiterated by Jones (1993), who found that black Africans, black Caribbeans and other ethnic minorities were disadvantaged in the labour market and were disproportionately represented in professional and managerial jobs. According to Jones' report, 30 per cent, of black Africans worked in the private sector and 22 per cent of Caribbeans worked in private sector organisations. According to the labour force survey, 24 per cent of black African men and 18 per cent of black Caribbean men worked in banking, insurance and finance in 2001. For women, both groups were highly represented in education, health and public administration occupations, at over 40 per cent each; while 18 per cent of black African women and 19.5 per cent of black Caribbean women worked in banking, insurance and finance (Li 2010).

American statistics also suggest that black individuals' participation in the labour market has increased. The BLS catalyst report of 2002 showed that black women's representation in the American workforce is increasing. It is suggested that black women continue to be a viable source of talent for organisations; over 60 per cent of the black female population participate in the American workforce (BLS 2006). Also in terms of human capital, black women are amongst the largest female minority group to receive degrees, including doctoral degrees in

America. However this participation and increased level of human capital that black women have at their disposal may not necessarily transcend to organisational and career success.

Therefore, the current section has highlighted through differing statistics that employment representation for black Caribbeans and black Africans in professional and knowledge intensive industries is low. In general the employment prospects for ethnic minorities in the UK are largely unfavourable (Jones 1993; Li 2010). The current research will attempt to address the gaps in the research highlighted by Kenny and Briner (2007) in their review paper regarding organisational research and ethnicity in the UK. They highlighted that research currently needs to focus on post selection ethnic minorities in the labour market to understand the boundaries and barriers to employment.

Kenny and Briner (2007) also stated that research should focus more on professionals, due to the increasing numbers of minorities in the workforce; knowledge intensive organisations are also included in this research gap. Additionally researchers have highlighted that qualitative methods should be used to highlight and more deeply understand ethnic minorities in organisations. Lastly a focus on specific ethnic groups is needed due to different ethnic groups having different cultural and economic backgrounds, which is likely to mean that different groups are prone to having different employment trends and career boundaries. Based on this view, the current research attempts to address these research gaps.

An aim of the current research is to assess the experiences and nature of career boundaries and barriers that black Africans and black Caribbeans face in the UK. As the above section has highlighted unfavourable labour market conditions for black Africans and black Caribbeans, individuals can understand how these unfavourable positions can be perceived as either career barriers or career boundaries depending on the perceived permeability of race discrimination. Based on this the next section will contain information about the relationship between race and career, based on theories and concepts.

4.7 The Relationship between Race and Career

This section draws on theories that attempt to highlight and explain the underrepresentation of minority groups within the labour market. This underrepresentation has already been highlighted within the previous section of the review, such as in the employment statistics

that highlight evidence of ethnic penalties. Based on this evidence, theories have been developed that attempt to explain why minorities have an unfavourable position in the labour market. This would be a useful tool in further understanding the perception of this discrimination and whether the career actor believes they can be overcome. In doing this, the permeability of career boundaries can be understood more fully.

One such theory that increases understanding of the formation of employment discrimination is discrimination theory. Discrimination theory (Zoogah and Josephs 2005) postulates that an employer may have a preference for discrimination in order to maintain an exclusionary workplace. If the organisational culture is one where exclusion is the norm, the organisation will include practices and policies that will prove to be hostile for the minority workforce, which may act as barriers to career development.

Cross (1996) found that minority staff held values that seemed to be more collectivist and group orientated, and that this may have clashed with the corporate culture of the organisation, which was more dependent on individualistic and competitive values. This may have formed a distinctive conflict for the minority group employees as it formed a clash between their own cultural values and professional ambitions. To cope with this dichotomy, minority employees may seek organisations where the leaders focus on cultural awareness and cultural change. If this doesn't happen, the organisation may indirectly reduce the percentage of minority recruits. This highlights that for some minorities, organisations have an exclusionary organisational culture, which can act as barrier to career development.

Another theory, the bi-culturality theory, is one concept that has emerged from the career experiences of racial minorities in the workplace – described as the navigation struggle of being in two distinct cultural worlds (Hopkins 1987). Bell *et al.* (1987) suggested that stress caused by constantly moving between two cultures may be confounded by the view that white dominated organisations are often not aware that their norms and values may highlight cultural distinctions for minority groups. This may lead to minority groups feeling alienated in trying to solve organisational cultural dissonance. Conflicts may emerge when minority group employees try and integrate themselves to the majority cultural norms of the organisations (Thomas and Alderfer 1989). Bell *et al.*'s (1987) research highlighted three patterns of bi-culturality amongst the women studied. The bi-culturality theory perceives the ethnic discrimination that black employees may face as more flexible career boundaries

rather than rigid career barriers (Gunz *et al.* 2000). This is due to the strategies used to navigate cultural dissonance, including integration, which can be an example of boundary crossing.

The first group identified were career orientated women who organised their lives around professional activities; their social lives and networks included both black and white communities. Stress in this group was related to balancing professional and personal lives and the emotional tensions of trying to coexist between two cultures. The second group identified were black community orientated women who deeply involved themselves in the black community, maintaining a distinct social and emotional distance from the dominant culture. This group's stress emerged from inadequate resources in the black community, due to the black community's minority status. They may also experience stress coming from insufficient social support. It can be observed that in this category the orientation to work was more instrumental and did not seek social relationships in the organisations (Goldthorpe 1968).

The last group, family orientated women, were a group whose lives centred on their family, work was seen as a secondary part of their lives. In some ways, the family focus allowed the group to deny some of the stresses that the previous two groups faced; however it also led to other hindrances within the working environment. Women in this group felt unfulfilled in their career, seeing themselves as unaccomplished in their development. This group did not see their working lives as so racialised and did not perceive as much conflict in comparison to the other two groups.

Bell (1987) categorised three different types of coping mechanisms to deal with the concept of bi-culturality, which gives a framework for understanding the experiences of minority workers. Although this research is based on a sample of women, it can also apply to men, as it focuses on the inter relationship between the minority group and the majority group and gives a framework as to how this relationship is realised amongst the minority group. Another perspective that explains career dynamics is the intergroup perspective on race and career dynamics which will be described next.

Institutional theory addresses hindrances to ethnic minority representation in professional jobs. The theory suggests that organisations need to respond to environmental pressures to achieve legitimacy. Institutional theory is concerned with the proposed diversity of the

organisation representing key service users. If this is not achieved in organisations it may affect the strategic planning and effectiveness of organisations. Organisations therefore need to allow the organisation to reflect the community that it services at large. If not, customers and service users will find it difficult to believe in the organisation and therefore be less inclined to interact with the organisation. Therefore, in an increasingly diverse globalised working environment, the case for understanding the career development of ethnic minorities is important in order to maintain a competitive edge (Hill and Jones 2001). Another theory that addresses the lack of ethnic minorities in the workplace is the pipeline theory.

The pipeline theory seeks to explain the underrepresentation of minorities in knowledge intensive services. The theory suggests that there is a lack of suitably qualified minorities in the pipeline and that there is a reduced availability. This according to Zoogah and Josephs (2005) may be due to the number of minority group members, their aspirations, the availability of career role models and access to professional development opportunities. This theory is relevant to the reduced representation of minority workers as it highlights that certain professional groups may provide insufficient information to minority groups for them to develop careers in certain occupations.

The economic motives of professionals can help explain the uneven distribution of minority workers. Some employees may be more concerned with maximising profits without considering the impact on others, as the criteria for many when deciding which job to go for would usually be the job with the highest salary. This is linked to Adams' (1965) equity theory, where an employee would try to match their inputs (experience, skills and education) or human capital with their potential salary when looking for an organisation with which to work. Thus, the criteria highlighted by Buttner, *et al.* (2009) does suggest that minority workers are underrepresented in the labour market for reasons such as the pipeline theory, lack of an organisational culture valuing diversity and difference, and economic motives of minorities. These theories work together to explain the amount of minority underrepresentation in certain industries, including the knowledge intensive industry.

The mid level bottle neck theory can also explain minority groups' under representation in the workforce. This theory states that once the move into management has been made, the minority group's career progression is not always straightforward. Mid level careers may also require degree level education and lead to an increasing level of authority and responsibility

to increase the organisation's financial success and strategic management. Such management promotions are perceived to carry prestige, growth and increased salary, and such people are often more likely to gain senior level positions (Yap and Konrad 2009). Mid level bottlenecks can be explained by organisations stereotyping minorities as having reduced management capabilities and white majority group members as being more competent for management positions than members of minority groups. Additionally, these negative views that may be harboured about minority capabilities in management positions extend to the view that other employees may prefer to be supervised by white people in positions of responsibility, thus perpetuating the phenomenon of in-group domination of mid and senior level positions (Yap and Konrad 2009). Therefore the mid-level bottleneck theory explains racial underrepresentation in the workforce, based on incorrect stereotypes of minority groups that may lead to the career barriers explained by Gunz *et al.* (2000) as a failure to select on the part of the potential employers.

The intergroup theory can also explain racial disparities within the labour force. The intergroup theory suggests that two groups exist in organisations: identity groups and organisation groups (Alderfer 1986). Identity groups share biological characteristics and develop similar world views based on collective experiences and these groups are based on: race, ethnicity, family, gender and age. Contrastingly, organisational group members are those who are assigned to similar tasks, have similar work experiences and thus develop similar organisational views. Predominantly, organisational groupings are based on task, function or hierarchy. Based on these distinctions individuals and organisations are constantly trying to manage potential conflicts between identity and organisation group membership. With regards to race, congruent embeddedness describes when black individuals are in a low position of power and low status positions. In these kind of organisations, where white males tend to hold most of the power, there are likely to be inaccurate evaluations of minorities' abilities, reflecting on the anxieties of the dominant group. This may lead to the minorities perceiving career boundaries or barriers that can be damaging to their career progression.

Research by Work (1986) supports this. Work investigated the position of black managers in predominantly white organisations. It was found that the majority of black managers did not have control over budgets, final hiring authority or profit and loss responsibility, regardless of their organisational level. This shows a difference in the perception and power levels in majority run organisations. Based on this concept, organisations can increase the number of

racial minorities in the organisation in high level positions and in important mid level decision making roles.

The external environment also has an impact on congruent embeddedness. Research by Collins (1983) found that growth of the black middle classes in America has been due to career development and advancement in the health provider, non for profit, and government sectors, but not in the private sector. Additionally, black MBA students find it easier getting jobs in public finance than private finance. This shows the problems and hindrances that can be observed by black employees in their pursuit of organisational mobility. The intergroup perspective gives understanding to the concept of career development in majority group organisations. Another theory that attempts to highlight and explain race relations in organisation is the colour blind theory.

The colour blind theory discusses and explains why the aforementioned study may have found such differences in the treatment of white and black females. It is the belief that ending racial discrimination is best solved by everyone being treated as equal, regardless of race, and instead judging people on their merits. Colour blind ideology is supposed by some researchers to be more helpful to minority groups. However, by ignoring differences that groups of people may have, this may have an adverse effect on minority groups as it may not be the reality of the treatment that they are facing (Ansell 1997). A coping mechanism for some ethnic minority individuals may be to regulate their behaviours and emotions to avoid being the target of prejudice or discrimination (Shelton *et al.* 2005).

A theory which is closely linked to the colour blind theory is the Wells–Jennings hypothesis (1983). This hypothesis attempts to further address the phenomenon of the glass ceiling. They suggest that many white dominant organisations do not function as meritocracies, but in reality function as neo-pigmentocracies. Neo-pigmentocracies are characterised by anti-discrimination laws; however, the psychological mindset of the dominant race does not necessarily agree with this view. In some organisations a few subconsciously disagree and do not accept this view, access to resources is unlimited for white individuals but restricted for black individuals, with only a few black individuals being allowed to reach significant positions. They further group three concepts to describe their ideas: white entitlement, scandalous paradox and legitimist impulse. White entitlement refers to the view that white individuals deserve certain positions and the right to maintain such positions. Some people

have found it hard to accept affirmative action or positive action in organisations, they see such methods as a way to bring unqualified minorities into organisations. This perpetuates the view that white individuals are more deserving and minorities are undeserving. Racialised jobs such as diversity champion are viewed as what organisations are willing to give minorities, rather than what minorities have earned.

A scandalous paradox refers to when an individual who has no legal or social status receives preference over someone who possesses both. This is sometimes seen when white members of an organisation believe that a promotion given to a member of a minority group constitutes a scandalous paradox. The legitimist impulse in reaction to the scandalous paradox causes majority group populations to feel anxious or fear that their rightful position is being given away to others. With this perception, white people see black advancement as an imposition upon white entitlement.

This model shows that although the concept of colour blindness or treating everyone the same in an organisation may theoretically be the stance ascribed to by organisations; the sense of white entitlement causes a situation where minority advancement is seen as an imposition on white privilege and one without merit. This in turn enhances views of unfair and undeserved career advancement of the minority groups. This view gives an insight into the perception and attitudes to minority groups and programmes such as affirmative action and positive action (Thomas and Alderfer 1989). Therefore the Wells–Jennings hypothesis shows why and how black knowledge intensive workers may perceive career barrier or boundaries to career progression based on these negative perceptions of their abilities.

The aforementioned models and concepts, such as the Wells–Jennings hypothesis (1983), the glass ceiling metaphor, the colour blind hypothesis and bi-cultural theory, provide an insight as to the career experiences of the black minorities in organisations and demonstrate the issues in black career progression in organisations, centring on perceptions of ability, meritocracy and fairness. This section has been included to provide an understanding of how minorities may be treated in organisations. These findings are linked to the current research aims, which are to understand the career barriers and boundaries that may be faced, which may include racial discrimination. In order to understand these boundaries and barriers it is necessary to understand contemporary theories of discrimination.

The next section will discuss how UK employment legislation has attempted to deal with the discriminating position of ethnic minorities in the labour force. This has been included because some of the sample may feel a lack of discrimination in their everyday lives due to employment legislation.

4.8 Impact of Employment Legislation

The above section has highlighted the unfavourable position that some black individuals may face in the labour market. This section will highlight employment legislation that has been set up to try and deal with employment discrimination and to remove rigid career barriers based on unfair perceptions of race. Employment legislation may be perceived by minorities and majorities alike as evidence that employment discrimination has declined or been eradicated in the workplace. However others suggest that both institutional racism and structural discrimination are part of a vicious cycle of social exclusion and the poor or average employment prospects that some ethnic minorities in the UK face. Therefore, laws against discrimination and policies for said discrimination can be used in theory as tools to combat or relieve direct discrimination. At the organisational level, equal opportunity policies can be used to tackle indirect and institutional discrimination, but most forms of discrimination may not be able to be changed with said policies alone (Modood *et al* 2000).

One such policy, modelled on the American group-focussed policy of affirmative action, is a practice called positive action. Affirmative action is defined as any measure adopted to correct or compensate for past discrimination or to prevent discrimination from occurring in the future. Positive action, on the other hand, is defined as the measures used to overcome disadvantage over and above what is required to prevent actual discrimination against ethnic minorities. It has been said that interventions that attempt to promote equal opportunities in the labour market have been categorised into four types (Jenkins 1986): legal, administrative, voluntary, and those based on collective action. The legal approach suggests that individuals have the right to access courts for legal suggestions against unlawful treatment by employers. The 1976 Race Relations Act outlaws discriminatory acts in the employment arena based on race, colour, nationality, ethnic origins and national origins, and is said to provide suggestions for improvement of the situation. The administrative approach is said to be where organisations such as local authorities use their influence to intervene in the pursuit of equal

opportunities, using strategies such as contractual compliance to influence the employment policies of other organisations.

The voluntary approach is where the organisation takes steps to reform its own institutional procedures and policies. There is usually an adaptation of equal opportunity chosen carefully to adapt to the specific organisation. This may include measures such as: encouraging ethnic minorities to develop their potential through extra training, which is an example of positive action. This technique can be seen in the attempts by the metropolitan police service and the civil service graduate fast stream programme, which attracts ethnic minority candidates through tailored advertising and programmes to reflect a multicultural workforce.

The last approach used to appease for past discrimination is in the form of collective action, where anti discriminatory aims are championed by action groups of workers or specialised organisations. This technique aims to put pressure on organisations to adopt equal opportunity initiatives. Therefore employment legislation has attempted to deal with the unfavourable position that black individuals are facing in the labour market. However, policies such as positive action and the voluntary approach have not been able to fully integrate black minorities into organisations to increase their position in the labour force. Therefore, the current research aims to provide more information of the career journeys of black minorities in the UK labour force, and to measure the extent that boundaryless career theory applies to black Africans and Caribbeans in knowledge intensive organisations.

4.9 Summary

To summarise, this section has highlighted the theories, research investigations and concepts that try to explain knowledge intensive workers and black career experiences in the UK. The section firstly highlighted the link between knowledge intensive workers and boundaryless career theories as they both emphasise dynamic, individually managed subjective employees. Based on this, boundaryless career is the most appropriate theory to link to knowledge intensive workers' careers.

Additionally, this chapter has introduced black Africans and black Caribbeans and the immigration triggers that increased the black working population, which were a combination of the higher educational needs of black Africans; and the work opportunities for black Caribbeans after the Second World War. Labour force statistics highlight that the black

population have higher levels of human capital, but that this does not always lead to higher job levels or knowledge intensive workers. Legislation attempts to remove career barriers and to reduce employment discrimination have led to a proportional representation of ethnic minorities in knowledge intensive organisations. Therefore, the current research attempts to deal with the lack of knowledge surrounding black career enactment in the UK.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

The aim of the current chapter is to outline and justify the research methods to be used in the current research study. This section will provide a background to the philosophy, strategy, data collection and analysis to be used in this thesis. The chosen research method will be a mixed methods design. The evolution of mixed methods research has developed from an increase in more complex research questions and the acceptance of qualitative research methods as a legitimate form of methodology. The culmination of quantitative and qualitative forms of research enquiry has emerged from the need to generalise qualitative findings to large numbers of individuals, as well as combining with more realistic, considered research that can be developed from qualitative research findings. Thus, as a result of the more sophisticated and demanding research questions demanded, an increase in the use and recognition of mixed methods designs has been seen (Burke-Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004).

Campbell and Fiske (1959) were the first advocates of the use of mixed methods, using both quantitative and qualitative data to study psychological traits. They developed a multi trait, multi method matrix to include variation into personality identification. This early form of method mixing encouraged individuals to experiment with both quantitative and qualitative research methods, and individuals became aware of the possibility of method mixing being applicable in other research contexts. The next topic for debate was looking at the different world views or paradigms that quantitative and qualitative research enquiry represent and whether or not they can indeed be linked.

During the 1970s and 1980s, a paradigm debate developed that considered whether both quantitative and qualitative methods could be combined or were incompatible. Bryman (1988) challenged the argument that both forms should only be used separately but highlighted that there was a connection that existed between the two and they should be used collaboratively. Pragmatism is a concept that has been used to describe those who believe that the two types of research enquiry can be mixed. Therefore, the journey of mixed methods enquiry has moved from a bespoke unique form of research used by a select few, to the present situation where there have been many research studies, and even research journals,

dedicated to the use of mixed methods. Of course there still remain methodological purists, who staunchly reject any mixing of research paradigms. However, other researchers have called for deeper research into the designs, data analysis, validation strategies, mixing and integration and rationales of mixed methods designs to increase the reliability and validity of the method (Burke-Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004).

5.2 Pragmatism

The research paradigm that fits closely within the mixed methods approach is pragmatism, which is said focuses on the consequences of actions, is pluralistic and focused on real world, practical problems (Creswell 2003). This contrasts to empiricism on which quantitative methods are based. Quantitative methods focus on positivist, reductionist, measured and deterministic thoughts, characterised by experimental research designs and prescriptive questionnaires. A positive ontology is based on a single reality, and a positivist epistemology suggests that the key goal of the scientific approach is that knowledge can only be created through controlled investigation and management of facts. Positivists believe that generalisations are possible and that there are causes of behaviours and their effects can be found in research findings.

The other extreme paradigm used in research is constructivism, which posits that there are multiple realities or truths, but includes more experimenter biases. The constructivist epistemology suggests that knowledge is constructed internally within individuals rather than discovered externally through objective research methods alone. Constructivists also suggest that knowledge is very complex and that there multiple perceptions of reality. This approach is grounded in methods such as focus groups, interviews and observations (Crotty 1998).

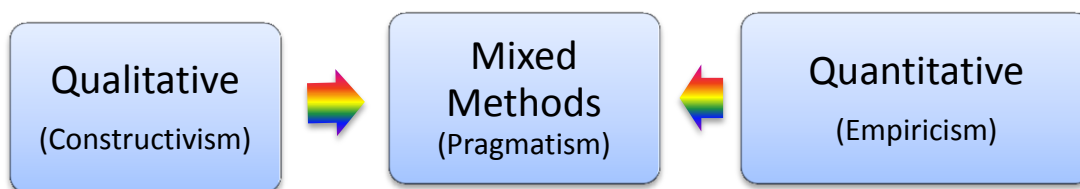


Figure 5.1: Research Paradigm.

Pragmatism tends to sit in the middle of the extreme research poles, which both empiricism and constructivism represent, as can be seen in Figure 5.1. Pragmatism is a well developed paradigm for the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods as it provides a

justification for the use of a combination of methods to help address complex or exploratory research questions (Johnson *et al.* 2007). Pragmatism when observed as an alternative paradigm avoids certain issues of truth and reality and is more concerned with solving practical problems. Additionally, pragmatism allows researchers to be freer of the constraints that may present themselves when only focusing on one research paradigm (Creswell and Plano-Clark 2007).

Pragmatists are concerned with an existential reality (Dewey 1925); referring to a world of complex layers including subjective, objective and a mixture of the two. By combining both research methods, researchers attempt to produce knowledge that corresponds more closely to reality (Feilzer 2010). Pragmatists also tend to hold an anti-representational view of knowledge, suggesting that research should aim to provide an account of how things are in themselves but that may not necessarily accurately represent reality (Rorty 1999). According to Hanson (2008), pragmatism is a tool that allows researchers to end the paradigm debate and to focus on finding out what the researcher wants to know. Pragmatism enables researchers to examine the complexities of real world problems and allows the freedom to explore them.

Many researchers have stated that the differences between empiricism and constructivism have been over stated and that the distinction between both paradigms is not as wide as previously portrayed (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998). Datta (1994) states that there are practical reasons why a coexistence between these research methods is useful, they have informed policy, a lot of information has been taught using these paradigms, funding agencies support both paradigms and many researchers have supported mixed methods designs. Howe (1988) states that both quantitative and qualitative methods are compatible and give researchers the permission to use both methods freely in their research. Based upon this, pragmatists consider the research questions to be more important than the methods used or the methodological stance that underpins the research design, preferring to address the research with whichever method is appropriate and will capture the research questions more adequately (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998).

Therefore pragmatism is the research paradigm that will be embraced within this thesis, due to the paradigm being closely related to mixed methods designs, concerned with finding differing realities and truths and being driven by the research problem. Pragmatism is fitting

to mixed methods designs as it rejects the notion of truth and reality and it is extremely practical to applied research (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998). Pragmatism and thus mixed methods research designs allow the researcher to have more methodological freedom and not to be bound by method, but to have a more flexible and dynamic research stance.

5.3 Categorising Mixed Methods

Mixed methods designs can be categorised into several types. Greene *et al.* (1989) categorised five purposes for mixed methods studies after reviewing 57 mixed methods studies. These comprise:

- Triangulation: seeking convergence of results.
- Complementary: examining overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon.
- Initiation: discovering paradoxes contradictions or fresh perspectives
- Development: using sequential methods, e.g. the results from the first methods inform the use of the second method.
- Expansion or mixed methods adding breadth or scope to the project.

The current research investigation aims to triangulate information from two different methods, and to combine the results to add to the development of boundaryless career theory. A mixed method approach is also being used in order to develop boundaryless career theory and to develop additional questions from the interview stage to inform questions in the questionnaire. Additionally mixed methods will be used to clarify the terms ‘career boundary’ and ‘career barrier’. There have been many names that refer to the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods, including method or multi trait method approaches (Campbell and Fiske 1959). Traditionally, quantitative methods include using a closed ended questionnaire method, including: attitude measurement, behaviour and performance checklists. The current research will be using questionnaires to assess the attitudes and applicability of boundaryless career theory to black knowledge intensive workers. In contrast the qualitative stance is more open ended in essence, and can be performed by observations or interviews.

By mixing research methods, a better understanding of the question can be developed than using quantitative or qualitative methods alone. This can occur in three ways: merging two data sets by bringing them together, connecting two datasets by having to build one or the

other, and embedding one dataset within another so that one type of data provides a supportive role for the other data set. The current research will connect two data sets together by having one build another. This is to ensure that the interview stage has an impact on the quantitative research phase (Creswell and Plano-Clark 2007).

Research Questions	Methods Used
To what extent are black African and black Caribbean knowledge workers' careers boundaryless and protean?	Quantitative (Questionnaire) Sullivan and Arthur, (2006)
What are the experiences and nature of the career boundaries and barriers that black Africans and black Caribbean's face?	Qualitative methods (Semi structured interviews)

Table 5.1 Research questions and research methods

The above table shows that the current research investigation will be using a mixed methods design in order to answer the research questions. To understand the nuances and themes associated with career boundaries, career barriers and the nature and type of boundaries the sample face, semi structured interviews will be conducted. These questions are exploratory in nature, and in order to fully appreciate the themes and understand the topics, qualitative methods are appropriate. Additionally, the research questions that investigate the extent to which boundaryless careers are experienced by black knowledge intensive workers and the link between boundaryless concepts and demographics are more suited to quantitative research methods. The current investigation will use both semi structured interviews and a quantitative questionnaire in order to fully address the research questions.

The concurrent triangulation method suggests that the data needs to be prepared before the data collection commences. The first stage is to quantify the qualitative data by coding and assigning the number of times codes appear in the interview data. These codes represent themes developed in order to analyse the interview data. When dealing with the quantitative data, the data is input, analysed and interpreted. In consolidating the data, both aspects of the design answered separate research questions, as can be observed in the above table (Creswell *et al.* 2003b).

Mixed methods are also occasionally viewed as being a more holistic pattern of enquiry, collaborating methods to form a greater picture of the problem which is to be addressed. In

combining research methods, researchers have the ability to understand background salient issues. More specifically, in the current research investigation interviews will be used to assess the nature of career boundaries and career barriers that are faced, complementing the quantitative aspect of the research. A triangulation mixed methods design was chosen in order to answer the research questions adequately and also to answer the calls in the research for investigation of the subjective aspect of the experience of boundaryless careers (Greenhaus *et al.* 2004).

Another benefit of the mixed method design is that it is practical and allows the researcher to use the best and most appropriate methods (Creswell and Plano-Clark 2007). In the current research the research methods were chosen due to them being the most appropriate to answer the research questions. For an exploratory study, both interviews and questionnaires worked well, while enabling flexibility in the research experience.

The benefits to mixed methods research have been highlighted above, however there are also important weaknesses that have to be considered when using the method. Firstly it can be difficult for one researcher to conduct both types of research, especially if both of the research methods are run concurrently, and a dedicated research team may be required. This disadvantage was counterbalanced in my current research investigation as the questionnaire section was administered online and thus was not too time consuming. Also, as both methods were conducted separately, there was not a conflict of interest in terms of completing the research.

An additional possible problem with mixed methods is that the researcher should have a clear understanding of both methods and know how to employ them effectively in order that they are utilised and manipulated in the most appropriate manner. In the current research study, I gained an in depth knowledge of the research methods to be used after having read extensive literature and from my experience in conducting interviews and questionnaire surveys in the past. Other disadvantages of mixed methods research that may arise is that they can be both time consuming and more expensive, however in the current research this was not the case. There may be problems with contradictory research findings; in the current research any contradictory research findings will be highlighted and explored equally, using past literature in order to clarify results (Burke-Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). These weaknesses will be offset by maintaining transparent and clear research practices.

5.4 Career Research Using Qualitative and Mixed Methods: A Review

As mixed methods research has grown, this section will review research that has used mixed methods and qualitative research methods in the investigation of careers. In a research review of the *Journal of Career Development* from 1972–2007 conducted by Chaichanasakul *et al.* (2010), there was a preference for articles published to use mainly quantitative research methods. This view may be due to the perception that to some, qualitative research fails to meet the ‘high standards’ of quantitative research methods, including quantifiable, measurable and generalisable aspects that can be used to draw conclusions. However, attitudes to quantitative research methods in career research appear to be changing. The journal had increased their publications of qualitative research by 41 per cent ($n = 19$) and mixed method studies by 50 per cent ($n = 6$), after 2000. This demonstrates an increase in the attention that researchers have shown towards mixed method and qualitative research methods in the last 12 years.

Lee *et al.* (1999) suggested that the new types of worker, including the knowledge intensive workers and new career theories may need alternative ways of researching career phenomena. For these new phenomena and styles of working to be fully understood, using methods such as focus groups, interviews, case studies and observations allow the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences and challenges of these types of careers. Chope (2005) suggests that due to the world of work having many changes, e.g. such as unpredictable working environments, research methods other than quantitative methods are needed to reflect the multiple realities of the career that are experienced by employees. These multiple realities can be adequately researched and understood by using quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Research investigations that have used mixed methods in order to study careers have used them for a variety of reasons such as: 1) to research into a new phenomenon or research context (exploratory); 2) for sequential mixed methods design, to develop a questionnaire tool; 3) to add both objective and subjective data into the nature of careers; or 4) to compare data cross culturally. The most common methods used in these investigations include questionnaire research and interviews in order to provide richer more in depth knowledge of career. Due to the view that career enactment and experiences are both objective and subjective in nature, mixed methods designs can accurately highlight and investigate both

aspects of career. Examples of investigations grouped into the aforementioned categories will follow.

New Phenomenon (Explorative)

The following research studies have chosen mixed or qualitative research methods due to the explorative nature of the research. Richie *et al.* (1997) used qualitative research methods and mixed methods to address the work experiences of women. The research investigation focused on grounded theory and interviewed 18 (black and white) women within America. The researchers chose qualitative methods as the methods matched the context and the exploratory nature of the research. Gomez *et al.* (2001) investigated the career development of Latin American women, including cultural identity, family and work life questions using a series of 20 interviews. Due to the explorative nature of the sample, Gomez *et al.* (2011) made the decision to use interviews in order to understand the external and internal motivations and hindrances within their careers. Noonan *et al.* (2004) studied the careers of highly achieving disabled woman and used interview techniques to assess the barriers faced by these women. The use of interview methods in this investigation was useful as it was able to give the investigators a more holistic view of the barriers that the participants faced and to explore an under researched group.

Research focusing on the career decision making methods of adolescents and university students around the globe also uses mixed methods for explorative reasons. Chope (2005) assessed the influences that family have in choosing a career. Critical incident interviews were used, where participants use a timeline to explore incidents that have taken place and have either enhanced or hindered their career paths. These incidents included: relocations, family emergencies, divorce, job loss, being made redundant or moving away from home. This method was effective for finding salient and common incidents with individual experiences of career and the external factors that affect development and career decision making. The use of the critical incident method, was a dynamic way to assess the career decision making of adolescents.

A research investigation of IT workers was conducted by Zimmerman and Ravishankar (2011). The researchers conducted a case study approach and interviewed German and Indian respondents in relation to their professional role identities. The method successfully managed to highlight participants' career aspirations and strategies. The above researchers used mixed

methods or qualitative methods in order investigate new phenomenon or explore a unique context. Another reason for using mixed methods is to develop a new questionnaire design or a sequential mixed methods design.

Sequential Mixed Methods Designs

Sequential mixed methods designs are used to develop quantitative questionnaire designs. Bubany *et al.* (2008) conducted mixed methods research to explore the career development of students. Telephone interviews with 20 students were conducted and thematic analysis was used to understand the interviews. Stage two of the research focused on the development of the themes into a rating instrument. This qualitative sequential design was conducted due to the exploratory nature of the research and allowed the researchers to develop invaluable information into the career development strategy of students. Interviews were used as the first stage in developing a questionnaire in order to stimulate the development of career research.

Ituma and Simpson (2007) researched of the applicability of Schein's career anchor typology of Nigerian IT workers. They used 30 semi structured interviews to inform the development of a questionnaire to test the extent to which the sample used career anchors in career choice and development. This research design was chosen as the authors wanted to design a new quantitative tool. Also due to the initial exploratory nature of the research investigation, using a mixed methods design allows the researcher to find the trends and the nuances in the sample responses as well as being able to design a tool that takes into account the unique research context. Sequential mixed methods designs are useful for developing new tools to inform and stimulate distinct research on the development and objective experiences of careers.

Mixing Objective and Subjective Methods

Career research may also be conducted in order to investigate both objective (quantitative methods) and subjective (qualitative methods) aspects of careers. Barker and Monks (1998) researched the career progression of female accountants in Ireland using a combination of focus groups and questionnaire methods. This research methodology was used in order to draw strong objective and subjective opinions of the views of obstacles and career barriers of female accountants in Ireland.

Shea *et al.* (2009) investigated the career decision making of adolescents. The researchers aimed to evaluate school based career exploration and assessment groups for Chinese immigrant youths. They used both quantitative and quantitative methods to compare the experimental and control groups. They first qualitatively discussed relevant cultural, social and familial factors that had an effect on career decision making; after the programme the participants were interviewed to express the validity of the course's organisation. Then a quantitative questionnaire was used to evaluate the programme, including the career decision self efficacy scale. In this study mixed methods were used in order to develop a rich evaluation of the program which extended beyond quantitative data to qualitative data also.

A research investigation that addressed career decision making and career barriers of hard of hearing high school children used a mixed method design (Punch *et al.* 2006). The study included both methods to examine the perception of career barriers. Students used a questionnaire method and also an interview method in the second phase of the study in order to fully understand the perception of the potential barriers to career decision making. This method fitted with the aims of the investigation as it was able to use methods that offset the negative aspects of the methods: interviews give a subjective view of career whereas questionnaires give more of an objective view of careers. Thus the use of both methods in this study was to investigate both the objective and subjective views of career.

Other research investigations into career choices and journeys that have used mixed methods include an investigation by Jackson (2001). Jackson (2001) investigated the career barriers and glass ceilings of women in middle and senior management. The sample included firstly a 144-item questionnaire, followed by a semi structured interview protocol in order to investigate the subjective opinions of the career barriers that may affect organisations. This investigation was able to yield recommendations for organisations on how to remove or minimise career barriers for middle management professional women, in both an objective and subjective way. Using mixed methods in this research investigation was useful and justified. This shows how both objective and subjective aspects of the career have use mixed methods.

Bell and Nkomo (2001) also used a mixed method design to research black and white women's career experiences, using both a series of in depth interviews and a more extensive questionnaire design. This research investigation yielded a rich and thorough investigation of

the career landscape; similarities and differences could be investigated along with the opinions of the women in relation to the differing career obstacles and successes that the participants faced. Therefore the studies described above used mixed methods designs in order to compare and contrast objective and subjective experiences of careers, which include career boundaries and pay levels.

Cross Cultural

The last group of mixed methods designs are used in order to develop a cross cultural or comparative study of career experiences. Donnelly (2009) used a mixed methods design to investigate and explore management and IT workers' experiences and perceptions of career mobility in the UK and USA. Researchers have also highlighted that investigations of boundaryless careers have focused on case study research or focused on one organisation, which limits the applicability of the concept (Khapova *et al.* 2007). Therefore, Donnelly (2009) used a multi method approach in order to overcome some limitations of the research into boundaryless carers. The researcher used both a survey method and in depth interviews to collect responses from organisational employees and contractors. This investigation used mixed methods in order to add to the growing knowledge of boundaryless career theories and make comparisons between mobility in two countries; thus contrasting data.

Mixed methods have been able to show alternative viewpoints about the phenomenon of career. They have been able to add to the individual aspect of career enactment. Mixed methods are also used due to the view that they provide a more comprehensive evidence for studying a research problem than if each method was used exclusively. Researchers are able to choose from a catalogue of methods that adequately fit and can be used to answer complex research questions. Thus, the researcher is given more freedom to choose the methods that match unique and diverse problems. An additional reason why mixed methods are useful is that they can be used to answer questions that would not be able to be asked by one method alone. For example, if an individual wanted to investigate why the quantitative findings were skewed in a particular direction a qualitative method may be employed to investigate things further.

Based on the previous research studies, the method that will be used in this research study is called a sequential triangulation strategy, which is one of the most widely used mixed methods models. A sequential triangulation design is when the researcher uses two different

methods in an attempt to confirm, contradict or cross validate findings within a single study (Greene *et al.* 1989). The method uses separate quantitative and qualitative methods as a way to offset weaknesses that may be inherent in the individual methods. Another term to describe this method is a cross methods triangulation (Denzin 1978) where research at two points is used to determine the unknown distance or third point (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007). The qualitative stage of the research will enable the researcher to be grounded in the thoughts and themes of the participants who take part. This stage will be conducted before the quantitative phase, which uses the boundaryless careers questionnaire developed by Briscoe *et al.* (2006). This method will be used in order to mix the objective and subjective aspects of career, which in this investigation are related to the subjective experiences of career boundaries and career barriers, using qualitative methods, along with the objective experiences of the boundaryless career, which will be investigated using quantitative methods.

Boundaryless Career Measurements

The development of the empirical measurement of boundaryless and protean career has lagged behind the career theory (Briscoe *et al.* 2006). This lack of empirical measurement can lead to limited research and application due to the lack of operational means to measure the protean and boundaryless work attitudes (Briscoe *et al.* 2006). Briscoe *et al.*'s (2006) research investigation into the development of boundaryless and protean measures aimed to construct valid scales for the investigation of boundaryless and protean career attitudes. The goal was to produce scales that researchers could use to investigate and test career hypotheses. The first study involved scale construction. The second tested and refined the scales using participants, and the third explored and refined the final scales. This scale was used as it has been rigorously tested and is one of few empirical methods to test boundaryless and protean career attitudes. This is the career measure that will be used in this research investigation as it is one of the only measures to capture the extent of boundarylessness in a sample.

Research investigations that have used the Briscoe *et al.* (2006) scale include research by Briscoe and Finklestein (2009), who investigated 212 part time MBA students' links between organisational commitment, protean attitudes and boundaryless attitudes, by the use questionnaires. It was found that organisational mobility was negatively correlated with organisational commitment. This suggests that the more the participants identified with moving within different organisations, the less they were committed to the organisations; so

the lower the development opportunities and the lower the organisational commitment for those with high levels of boundarylessness.

Cakmak-Otluoglu (2012) researched protean and boundaryless career attitudes to organisational commitment. They researched 380 employees and demonstrated that organisational mobility preference is negatively related to organisational commitment. Boundaryless mind-set was related to none of the organisational commitment scales, which suggests that a boundaryless mind-set does not always equate with organisational mobility. The research was conducted in Turkey, with the average age of the respondents being 30. The measures used Briscoe *et al.*'s (2006) protean and boundaryless career scales. This research shows interesting findings in relation to protean career outlook in an international context; however the methodology used were solely quantitative methods, using a majority ethnic group in one country.

An additional research investigation that used the Briscoe *et al.* (2006) scale was conducted by Enache *et al.* (2011) who investigated the link between boundarylessness, gender and career success in 150 students. It was found that women's career success was positively related to self direction and negatively related to a reliance on their own values. It was found that men had a negative link between organisational mobility and men's subjective career success.

De Vos and Soens (2008) used the protean scale to investigate the role of career self management on participants. They questioned 289 employees and found that the protean career attitude is an antecedent of career success, which is mediated by the development of career insight. These studies show that there has been a renewed effort within career researchers to test the concepts of boundarylessness and protean-ness within the modern career climate. The current research investigation aims to add information to the existing knowledge of contemporary careers. The next section will highlight research investigations that use interviews in order to highlight the validity and reliability of interviews.

5.5 Interviews

Interviews are included in the qualitative research paradigm and allow researchers to explore different research questions in a holistic way. Burman (2006) has highlighted that interviews can be complicated, uncertain, time consuming practices that give the researchers a complex

set of issues to address and acknowledge. Before conducting qualitative interviews one has to distinguish what needs to be asked, in what order, and how structured the interview process should be. Semi structured interviews allow the researcher to be able to focus on particular topics, whilst allowing them freedom to formulate questions and sequences to fit each unique interview. Merton *et al.* (1956) also suggest that interviews should be specific about particular themes. The scope of the interviews should involve the problems to be addressed, but this should not be too narrow; this is in order for the interviewees to be able to fully understand and react to the questions naturally. The topics and the questions need to be specific and not general reactions to stimuli, the depth of the interviews should be sufficient to divulge meaning related to specific situations, and lastly, the personal context of the reactions and answers needs to be highlighted and understood. The appreciation of context will give a useful background to the responses of the interview questions. The actual stages of conducting interviews in the current research followed clear protocols. These protocols included the strict ethical guidelines necessary to maintain fairness.

Semi Structured Interviews

Semi structured interviews need to be flexible enough to cover all of the main topics without being rigid, but should also have enough depth to fully explore those topics. Interviews should be interactive in order to encourage the participants to talk freely. The researcher should use a range of probes and other techniques to achieve the required depth, in terms of exploration and explanation. As an interviewer the essential abilities are: the ability to listen, empathise, have clarity to digest and understand the information, to be able to think and react quickly without exercising judgement, as well as having a good memory in order not to repeat unnecessary information. Building rapport with the participants is also of paramount importance to the success of the interviews. This involves demonstrating respect, a genuine interest and being able to show understanding and empathy (Thompson 2000). It is also important for the interviewer to respond positively to questions and points. Additionally the interviewer should impart a sense of calmness.

It is also important that the semi structured interviews are adequately prepared in order to be systematic and efficient. The first stage is the arrival, the first few minutes into the meeting are important for establishing a good impression. In the interviews that were conducted, I reassured the participants if they were feeling anxious or hostile, in order to make them feel at ease. The research topic is introduced in the second stage, and a clear explanation of the

research is provided and permission to continue the interview sought. When beginning the interviews important contextual questions were asked, such as “what is your job title?” in order to have a neutral basis to allow the participants to open up. I guided each interview with the specific topics, with follow up questions, discovery of ideas, thoughts and feelings. At the end of the interview participants were reassured and prepared for debriefing and summary of responses. After the interview, the participants were thanked and debriefed about the purpose of the research, how the data will be stored and the confidentiality of the information (Legard *et al.* 2003).

Interview questions were chosen based on Lent *et al.*'s (1994) socio-cognitive career theory to investigate career experiences and the influence of family and friends on career choice which may have had an impact the formulation of career barriers or career boundaries. Additionally questions which centred on the experience of boundaries and barriers faced in the participants' careers were taken from Arthur and Rousseau (1996), Gunz *et al.* (2000) and Greenhaus *et al.*'s. (2004) work on boundaryless career concepts. The table below (Table 5.2) highlights how the questions were developed

Interview questions	Theories
<p>Demographic questions</p> <p>What did you want to be when you were younger?</p> <p>Did this change?</p> <p>What were your experiences at school?</p> <p>Did you receive any career guidance from school or others?</p> <p>If so of what kind?</p> <p>What were your parent's professions?</p> <p>How much influence have your parents had over your career choice?</p> <p>What are your career ambitions?</p> <p>Did you believe you could achieve these ambitions?</p> <p>What are the main hindrances to these career ambitions?</p>	<p>Lent <i>et al.</i> (1994)</p> <p>Socio-cognitive career theory</p>
<p>How did you acquire your first job?</p> <p>What were your expectations of your first job?</p> <p>Did it fit with your expectations?</p> <p>How did other staff members interact with you?</p> <p>Did you feel accepted and valued?</p> <p>Did you receive adequate training and career progression?</p> <p>Would you say your race/ ethnicity has affected you in your work?</p> <p>Why did you leave?</p> <p>What is your relationship with other professionals?</p> <p>Do you have a career mentor?</p> <p>Do you look for job opportunities outside your organisation in order to develop your career?</p> <p>Do you rely on your employer for training and career development activities?</p> <p>Would you say you are more in charge of your career development than your organisation?</p>	<p>Arthur and Rousseau (1996)</p> <p>Boundaryless career competencies</p> <p>Briscoe <i>et al</i> 2006)</p> <p>Boundaryless career competencies</p>
<p>Do you think you have the skills or contacts to achieve this?</p> <p>Do you have more than one career?</p> <p>Have you ever had any lateral or downward career moves?</p> <p>Did you immigrate to the UK?</p> <p>If so what were your main reasons?</p> <p>What kind of treatment did you receive when you attempted to find work in this country?</p> <p>What is your current job?</p> <p>How long do you want to stay in your job?</p> <p>What do you want to gain from the role?</p> <p>Do you receive adequate training?</p> <p>Do you feel a valued member of the team?</p> <p>What would you like to change in your organisation?</p>	<p>Arthur and Rousseau (1996)</p> <p>Boundaryless career competencies</p>

5.2 Interview questions and related theories

Benefits and Disadvantages of Interviews

According to Johnson *et al* (2007) there are both important benefits and disadvantages of using interview methods in research. Interviews are a good way for measuring attitudes and exploring experiences; in the current research investigation, interviews were used to investigate the nature of career boundaries and barriers that may be faced by black knowledge intensive workers. Additionally, interviews have the ability to provide rich and complex information in this case about the applicability of boundaryless career theory to the sample. Interviews can be viewed as a good way to explore new information and confirm theories, which is a key reason for the use of this method in this research investigation.

Burman (2006) highlights some difficulties concerning interview methods. One difficulty concerns the subjective meanings of the topic rather than the formulation of generalisable responses of quantitative questionnaires in order to add richer and more complex information to a topic like careers. In order to use, the researcher has to be aware and embrace the view that generalisations will be hard or impossible to use. One research question in the current research is to investigate the type and nature of career boundaries that may be faced. These research questions will be investigated using interviews as this is the best method to address the subjective nature of the aforementioned research questions. By doing so, the information on the boundaryless career will be increased, addressing a need for investigation into the subjective nature of boundaryless careers identified by Greenhaus *et al.* (2004).

An additional reason to conduct interviews is to focus on addressing issues that may be too complex to investigate through quantitative means alone. Also, interviews may be used to explore areas where the interviewee perceives gaps, difficulties or issues. Another positive reason for conducting a semi structured approach is that the researchers can tailor questions according to the responses of the client or participant; the interviewer can also follow up regarding any raised issues: semi structured interviews are a more open and flexible research tool as they can document organic issues or thoughts that would otherwise would not be known by the researcher. Thus, interviewing is a flexible and worthwhile research tool well within the qualitative paradigm. The researcher is able to probe and focus on areas and aspects of research that may ordinarily be ignored by mainstream ‘off the shelf’ and established research questionnaires.

One of the weaknesses of interviews is that they can be extremely time consuming, lasting anything between 15 minutes to 3 hours. The average length of the interviews in the current research investigation was between 45 and 90 minutes. Another possible disadvantage of interviews could be the interviewee's reaction to the subconscious cues of the researchers; this is also called investigator effects. Investigator effects or experimenter effects can be mitigated by avoiding leading questions and being aware of the effect that subconscious aspects such as nodding may have on the responses of interview responses. The current investigation aims to use interviews to understand the type and nature of career barriers and boundaries faced by black African and black Caribbean knowledge intensive workers. The next section will discuss the ethics that need to be considered when conducting research investigations.

Ethics in Research

Ethical considerations must be observed in order for research to be conducted that addresses an individual's physical and psychological needs. The British Psychological Society's ethical guidelines suggest that the following concepts need to be considered before and during research: informed consent, confidentiality, harm to participants, right to withdraw, deception and debrief. How the current research fulfilled the aforementioned guidelines will be discussed below. Brunel University ethics approval was sought before interviews commenced.

Before the interviews commenced, the purpose of the research investigation was explained: during the initial email communication within the consent form, and verbally by the interviewer to the participants. The issue, what the information would be used for, who would be present during the interview and how long it would last was communicated to the participants very clearly. Creating a good atmosphere in the interview and allowing the participant to be relaxed, along with giving the participant room to develop information and avoiding talking about your own experiences give the participant the ability to express themselves and enhances the information and quality of the interview.

Confidentiality concerns the extent to which the anonymity of the participants is maintained. This is a key aspect of research ethics as it protects the dignity of the participants and offers protection in terms of any responses they make that may be sensitive to an individual's position in employment. Establishing and maintaining confidentiality is a fundamental tenet

of good ethical guidelines of a research study. Participant confidentiality was made clear to each participant in the standardised instructions before the interviews, and reiterated in the consent form given to the participants prior to the interview. Additionally a confidentiality clause was inserted into the online questionnaire. Participants were assured that whatever was discussed or written would not be traced back to the individual. The researcher reiterated the confidentiality policy whenever any potentially sensitive topic discussed. The participants were reminded in the standardised instructions that they could withdraw from the experiment at any time without any negative repercussions. This element of ethics is extremely important in allowing the participants to feel comfortable in a safe research environment. Therefore ethical guidelines must be taken into account when conducting research in order to keep the welfare of the participants at the centre of the research process.

Qualitative Data Collection

This section will highlight the characteristics of the sample chosen in both the quantitative and qualitative research phases. The first section concerns the qualitative participants, and then the quantitative participants will be highlighted.

Initials	Gender	Age range	Industry	Tenure (years)	UK born?	Ethnic group
1) CH	F	26	IT	2.5	Y	Caribbean
2) PB	F	23	Law	0.5	N	African
3) SAO	M	61	Finance	0.5	N	African
4) DCS	M	51	M. consultant	9	Y	Caribbean
5) RCN	M	25	IT	0.5	Y	Caribbean
6) BO	M	31	Law	2	N	African
7) EA	M	23	IT	1	N	African
8) RO	M	31	HR	6	Y	African
9) MS	F	29	Law	1	Y	Caribbean
10) MM	M	33	Finance	9.5	N	African
11) DO	F	29	Finance	1.5	Y	Caribbean
12) EA2	M	31	Finance	9	N	African
13) TW	F	27	HR	0.6	Y	Caribbean
14) SC	M	24	Finance	0.7	Y	Caribbean
15) JE	M	34	Finance	1	Y	African
16) SB	F	26	Finance	0.7	Y	Caribbean
17) CM	F	37	Marketing	0.8	Y	African
18) JO	M	39	IT	2	Y	African
19) DTD	M	26	Law	2	Y	Caribbean
20) FE	M	43	Finance	1.5	N	African
21) GB	M	35	HR	1.50	N	African
22) MA	F	33	IT	0.5	Y	African
23) JM	F	45	HR	6	Y	Caribbean
24) AS	M	30	Finance	4	N	African
25) DN	M	34	Finance	0.5	Y	Caribbean
26) EI	M	27	HR	0.5	N	African
27) SA	M	28	IT	2	N	African
28) SM	F	31	HR	0.5	Y	African
29) MI	F	31	Finance	0.9	N	Caribbean
30) VP	F	24	Law	0.5	N	African
31) EB	F	39	Law	2.5	Y	Caribbean
32) MC	F	49	HR	4	Y	Caribbean

Table 5.3: Qualitative Research Participants

Qualitative Participants

Thirty two knowledge intensive workers were chosen via an opportunity sampling method, drawing upon personal and professional networks: 44 per cent of the participants were female, ranging from industries such as IT, recruitment, law, and finance; the average tenure was 2.00 years; 47 per cent of the participants were from a black Caribbean background and 59 per cent were born in the UK; 83 per cent had postgraduate or professional qualifications. Table 5.3 shows the information in a pictorial form. As the interviews continued themes

became more defined and more apparent, thus, the interviews stopped after the saturation point was reached and no new themes emerged.

Phase	Procedure
1	Emails sent to specific organisations and individuals
2	Responses dealt with and responded to accordingly
3	Follow up emails to arrange date, time and location of interviews
4	Conduct the interviews giving informed consent and right to withdraw as part of the interview instructions.
5	Debrief the participants
6	Send an email of the transcript to the participant to check accuracy of responses.

Table 5.4: Stages of Interviews

Table 5.4 shows the interview stages: the first stage was to contact organisations and individuals to increase awareness of the research project and to garner participants; in stage two email responses were answered; and in stage three emails were sent to confirm meetings and interviews; stages four and five included conducting the interviews and debriefing participants; and stage six involved sending confirmation and debriefing scripts to participants. These stages were followed in order to maintain standardisation and validity.

Rapport was established in the interviews by confirming and reiterating ethical guidelines regarding informed consent, confidentiality and right to withdraw. The participants were further reassured in this respect throughout the interview process. Additionally, maintaining a calm and non threatening presence throughout the interview was important in developing a tranquil research environment.

Constraints of Access

Whilst conducting interviews, gaining access to research participants was difficult at times (Basit 2010: 59). Finding adequate gatekeepers can be a difficult task as one has to persuade society in general of the applicability, necessity and the validity of the research (Basit 2012). This did have an effect on the completion rate of the questionnaires, as some organisational gatekeepers acted as barriers to access. Other gatekeepers were willing to allow me to access their email data bases in order to complete the data collection phase of the research. Whilst conducting the current research, I relied on personal networks in order to secure the 16 participants; participants were also accessed through word of mouth, as interviewees

contacted other suitable participants on my behalf. Other issues with reflexivity will be discussed in the next section.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity examines the ways which a researcher's identity can influence the research process, how the data is gathered and how the social world is portrayed (Vernon 1997). Reflexivity highlights how an individual's own background and experiences may affect the research process and subsequent findings (Basit 2012). When conducting research, investigators should be aware of how personal, social and cultural contexts may affect the interpretation and representation of the reports of others (Denzin 1978). Hopkins (2008: 203) suggests that researchers should be aware of their own background and beliefs and how these aspects may influence decisions about the research carried out, in order to reduce potential biases. Therefore, reflexivity should be practiced at all times: in designing research, gathering and analysing data and the dissemination of findings. Mosselson (2010) states that by using reflexivity can increase the integrity of the research and improve the processes, analysis and interpretation of data. By using reflexivity methods in research, the researcher can be made aware of their own shortcomings.

Personal reflexivity can be defined as the attitudes and expectations that shape the research project (Wilkinson 1988). Researchers can be unaware of how their presence affects their perception of the research problem. The researcher's participation is a significant aspect to the text to be analysed (Salner 1996; Walsh 1995). Personal reflexivity suggests that researchers possess openness, expose assumptions, expectations and reactions that may impact research (Finlay 1998). An aspect of personal reflexivity that can be observed within the current research is the observance that experimenter effects may have had an effect on the interviewers.

Researchers have found evidence to suggest that the researcher's attitudes can influence the outcome of interview research (Rosenthal 1976). This could manifest itself via sub conscious messages being expressed to the interviewees resulting in the giving of the expected or required answers. To counterbalance this affect, making the participants aware of their ethical rights may minimise subconscious messages made by the researchers. For example, before each interview, the standardised instructions were explained, which included the right to withdraw, informed consent and confidentiality, this was also reiterated at the end in the

debriefing session, thus ethical issues were controlled. This could help to minimise negative effects.

This approach shows that total objectivity in research is not possible and highlights the relationship between the researchers and researched. Contextual reflexivity highlights the situation of the given research study understanding the background of the researchers. Contextual reflexivity discusses the degree to which the researcher takes account of the social field in the research process (Holland 1999).

Shared Characteristics

Having shared characteristics with the participants, for example being a black female, could have been of benefit to the research process. Being a similar age or the same gender, ethnicity, religion or sharing the same language as the research participants can allow the researcher insights to the social experiences of the subjects. Shah (2004) states that shared cultural identity and cultural knowledge can allow the researcher a unique insight of cultural taboos, thus avoiding any potential embarrassment between the researcher and research participants. However, shared characteristics can also be a hindrance, as some researchers may enter the research field with preconceived ideas about the group they are studying based on anecdotal evidence. These disadvantages can include assuming any prior knowledge of the research questions in order to have a realistic data set and a good representation of the information found in the research. I was alert to this aspect when conducting the research and endeavoured to avoid such preconceptions.

Having shared characteristics to the group to be researched can give the investigator a benefit in an enhanced understanding of the researched group, however, researchers should be aware that this closeness can lead to wrongly interpreting information (Basit 2012). Having shared characteristics or being an 'insider' allows the researcher to have shared experiences and have a sense of legitimacy from the participant's perspective. Having a collective identity allows researchers to set boundaries and allows participants to feel comfortable with divulging sensitive topics (Le Gallais 2008).

Thematic Analysis

The analysis which will be used in the qualitative section of the research investigation will be thematic analysis, which has been described as an inherent, coherent way of organising material into specific research questions. Additionally, thematic analysis has been defined as

a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes attached to data (Braun and Clarke 2006). Themes attempt to accurately highlight the responses of the participants.

The first stage of thematic analysis, according to Aronson (1994) and the current research investigation, identified and highlighted all of the data that constituted a pattern. The data was then combined, including all the related patterns, into themes and sub themes. Themes have been defined as units derived from patterns, for example, vocabulary, meanings, reoccurring feelings, proverbs or idioms. Themes come from stories and anecdotes that together form a collective experience (Aronson 1994). Thematic analysis has also been said to interpret various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis 1998). Although thematic analysis is extremely widely used, there appears not to be a clear argument about what the methods of thematic analysis are, and there does not appear to be one holistic description of thematic analysis.

A theme has been defined as an aspect that identifies something important within the data in relation to the research questions at hand, and represents some kind of pattern throughout the data set. A rich discussion and description of the entire set of data is needed, thus allowing the reader a richer understanding of important themes. To do this the researcher can code and analyse information that seems to be an accurate reflection of the whole set (Braun and Clarke 2006). The form of analysis used was through an inductive approach, this means that an individual codes data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding theme. Therefore the analysis becomes more data driven (Aronson 1994).

Additionally data analysis centres on the decision of how to analyse themes. The researcher generally chooses somewhere in between the semantic method and the latent method. The semantic method is an explicit analysis where themes are identified within the surface meanings of the data. This also suggests that there is a summarisation where there is an attempt to look at significant patterns, their meanings and implications in relation to previous research. Latent methods start by identifying the underlying ideas, assumptions, concepts and ideologies involved in the language of the data. Therefore latent analysis is a deeper form of analysis than a purely semantic approach. A combination of both methods allows an appreciation of the latent and deeper meanings of the themes identified (Braun and Clarke 2006). The current research will use a combination of latent and semantic data analysis to understand the major topics.

The stages of thematic analysis that were conducted and followed were identified by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first stage is familiarisation with the data, which includes transcribing data, reading and re-reading the data and noting down initial ideas. This first step was extremely useful and allowed me to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the data and to perform a more in depth analysis of it. The second phase was to generate initial codes in order to organise the data, such as looking for interesting trends and unique features, whilst collating data relevant to each code. The next stage was to search for themes by collating codes into potential themes information. Then next procedure was to review the themes by checking them, working in relation to an extract and map of the entire analysis. The next phase is to generate clear definitions and names for each theme, and lastly, the final opportunity for analysis is to select vivid, compelling examples to support your points and how these themes represent the research findings as a whole (Braun and Clarke 2006). These stages were followed closely in the thematic analysis phase of the research journey. The next section will explain questionnaire research. The current themes that were exposed will be shown in Table 5.5.

Theme name	Sub theme	Theme code
Family		F
	Immediate family	FI
	Extended family	FE
Education		E
	Non UK experiences	EN
	Academic	EA
	Career guidance at school	EC
Hindrances		H
	Internal	HI
	External	HE
Boundarylessness		
	Networking	BN
	Career ownership	BC
	Entrepreneurship	BE
Experience of work		W
	Training	WT

Table 5.5 Interview Themes

5.6 Questionnaire Research

Online Data Collection Methods

Research has increasingly relied on the use of the Internet and computer mediated communication. Researchers have therefore used this increase in Internet use as a novel way of applying traditional survey methods to data collection. Today, survey authoring software packages have been made more user friendly and accessible to researchers. However, there are clear advantages and disadvantages to this method of data collection (Horrigan 2001).

One advantage of online survey collection is that researchers can access many populations that may have been previously inaccessible. A way to utilise this may be to find under researched and unique populations by using the online forums, blogs and discussion groups available on many issues and topics (Horrigan 2001). One benefit of finding unique research populations is that the researcher is able gain access to individuals who share specific interests. In contrast, traditional questionnaire methods may be more problematic for researching large groups of similar individuals who may be interested in similar topics. This was a main factor in my choice of Internet survey methods. The speed and ease of the method enabled data to be collected more effectively than traditional physical questionnaires, which

can be victims of inaccurate data entry. A second benefit of online survey methods is that they may save time for research, as the method allows researchers to reach thousands of individuals with common interests or characteristics, who may be geographically spread (Garton *et al.* 1999). Online questionnaires also allow the researcher to work on other tasks simultaneously whilst collecting data, which may not be as easy in self administered questionnaires.

Thirdly, the cost of online questionnaire collection is significantly less than traditional methods, without the need for costly photocopying, postage and data entry (Llieva *et al.* 2002). Online questionnaire methods, in contrast, can reduce travel and equipment. However, while there are many advantages to using online questionnaire software, there are also clear disadvantages. Sampling could be an issue as little information may be known about the characteristics of the individuals who are completing the survey, and there may be a limited guarantee that the participants provide accurate characteristics or information. Additionally, access to such organisations or virtual groups may be hindered due to data protection rules; this may be an issue in the potential completion rate of online questionnaires.

Lastly, an additional issue with questionnaire surveys is self selection bias (Thompson *et al.* 2003). This suggests that there are people in any population who are more willing and likely than others to complete an online survey. Thus, the probability of certain individuals responding to online questionnaires may lead to a systematic bias (Wright 2005). This disadvantage is a common issue in all social science research investigations. Therefore, after examining the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaire data collection, the time saving, cost saving and the unique ability to reach awkward and inaccessible populations, online questionnaire surveys are considered the best way within this research to collect data.

Quantitative Research Procedure

The second phase of the data collection was an in depth quantitative analysis of the boundaryless and protean nature of participants' careers across a variety of organisational settings and across a large geographical area and age range. The quantitative stage of the research was conducted from August 2011 to November 2011. An online survey was conducted in order to reach the widest variety of participants and to make the collection as rich and as broad as possible. The participants were of black African and black Caribbean origin and based in UK knowledge intensive organisations such as, management

consultancies, accountancy firms and IT organisations. The respondents were from geographical areas the all over the UK, but the majority of the participants were from London and the south east of the UK.

Along with personal networks, organisations such as professional networks and large organisations were contacted in order to distribute the online questionnaire. The response rate of the survey cannot be ascertained due to the response driven nature of the data collection. The total number of respondents was 187; three participants had to be excluded from the survey due to them not being in the target research group. Participation was entirely voluntary, confidentiality was ensured, and the right to withdraw was also reiterated in the introduction of the survey. The questionnaire method did have some disadvantages, mainly gatekeeper access.

Many organisations would not forward the questionnaire to their employees or organisations for reasons such as company policy or data protection. My respondents stagnated at 100; I then approached a professional organisation who agreed to forward the questionnaire to its members. This increased my total number of questionnaire respondents.

Quantitative Participants

Variable	Items	Percentages	Variable	Items	Percentages
Gender	1-Male	42 per cent	Ethnic group	Black Caribbean	37 per cent
	2-Female	58 per cent		Black African	51 per cent
				Any other mixed background	20 per cent
Age	1-18-24	5 per cent	Region	1-Scotland	3 per cent
	2-25-30	24 per cent		2-North West	2 per cent
	3-31-35	21 per cent		3-Yorkshire	3 per cent
	4- 36-40	17 per cent		4-East Midlands	6 per cent
	5- 41-45	12 per cent		5-West Midlands	6 per cent
	6-46-50	12 per cent		6- Wales	1 per cent
	7-51-55	4 per cent		7-South East	12 per cent
	8- 56-60	3 per cent		8-South West	5 per cent
	9- 60+	2 per cent		9-London	63 per cent
Educational level	1 GSCE	1 per cent	Professional group	1. IT	21 per cent
	2 A-level	4 per cent		2. HR	19 per cent
	3 Diploma	4 per cent		3. Accounting and finance	21 per cent
	4 BSc	26 per cent		4. Law	9 per cent
	5 Postgrad diploma	12 per cent		5 Management consulting	19 per cent
	6 MSc	45 per cent		6 Marketing	11 per cent
	7 PhD	5 per cent			
	8 Other	2 per cent			
Tenure	1. < 1 year	20 per cent	University type	1. Redbrick	
	2. 1-2 years	18 per cent		2. Non redbrick	
	3. 2-5 years	33 per cent		3. International	
	3. 6-10 years	18 per cent		4. None	
	4 11-15 years	6 per cent			
5 15+ years	5 per cent				

Table 5.6 Demographic information of quantitative participants

The sample consisted of 187 UK based professional service workers of black African and black Caribbean descent: 58 per cent of the respondents were female; 52 per cent of the respondents were from a black African origin; 24 per cent were from the age range of 25–30; and 63 per cent were from London. The sample seemed to be highly educated, with 45 per cent having obtained a Master’s degree. The occupational groups most highly represented within the sample were: IT, 21 per cent of the sample, and accounting and finance, who accounted for 21 per cent of the sample.

The type of university attended was coded as: 1 for UK-based highly research intensive institutions called Russell Group institutions, 2 for non Russell Group institutions, 3 for

overseas institutions, and 4 for no university. This was included to assess whether the type of university studied had an effect on the level of protean-ness or boundarylessness.

Measures

Protean career attitudes scale. Protean career attitudes were assessed using a scale developed by Briscoe *et al.* (2006). The protean career attitudes scale was measured using the values driven scale and the self-directed career management scale. These scales were used to assess whether participants are using their own values or the organisation's values to guide their career and how far they take an independent role in the management of their career (values driven) and vocational behaviour (self-directed). To assess the values driven aspect, participants indicated on six items the extent to which they conduct their career with their own values or the organisational values such as: "What's most important to me is how I feel about my career success not what other people feel about it". The reliability or Cronbach's α for this scale was 0.64. The self-directed career attitude was assessed by questioning respondents on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree) regarding the amount to which they agreed that they were responsible for their careers, e.g. "I am responsible for the success or failure of my career", the Cronbach's α here was 0.83.

The boundaryless career attitude scale: This scale was measured with two subscales measuring organisational mobility preference and the boundaryless mindset. This scale was developed by Briscoe *et al.* (2006). The scale itself measures the extent to which an individual can navigate the changing work environment characterised by physical and psychological movements (Briscoe *et al.* 2006). The organisational mobility scale measures the preference to remain with one or several employers by the use of five items. For example, regarding "if my organisation provided lifetime employment I wouldn't seek to work in another organisation", the Cronbach's α was 0.78. Lastly the boundaryless mindset scale measures the extent to which a person prefers to initiate working relationships with others across organisational boundaries, e.g. "I would enjoy working on projects with people across many organisations", Cronbach's α here was 0.79.

Additional Items

Additional items on race and gender, such as "my gender has negatively affected my career progression", and "my race has negatively affected my career progression" were included. Also an item on family support was included: "my extended family had an influence on my career choice".

Therefore, to conclude, this section has highlighted the methodological stance of the research, which is pragmatism. Pragmatism is the middle ground of research and draws upon empirical research methods as well as constructivist research methods. It allows the researcher the flexible to use whichever methods fits in with the research questions. Lastly, the section has highlighted the characteristics of the 16 interviewees and the 183 questionnaire respondents in this thesis.

6 Results Part 1: Quantitative Results

6.1 Introduction

The following section will present the findings of the quantitative phase of the research investigation into boundaryless career theories and black knowledge intensive workers in the UK. A psychometric instrument was used to assess the level of protean and boundarylessness within the sample. The instrument used was the *boundaryless career attitudes* scale, with two subscales measuring organisational mobility preference and boundaryless mind-set. This scale was developed by Briscoe *et al.* (2006). The scale itself measures the extent to which an individual can navigate the changing work environment characterised by physical and psychological movements (Briscoe *et al.* 2006).

Protean career attitudes were assessed using scales developed by Briscoe *et al.* (2006): the values driven scale and the self-directed career management scale. The additional questions on race and gender, which included statements such as “my gender has negatively affected my career progression” and “my race has negatively affected my career progression”, were included. Also an item on family support was included which included the statement “my extended family had an influence on my career choice”. The next section will go through the descriptive statistics and tests of hypotheses in order to address whether the hypotheses can be accepted or not.

6.2 Descriptive Statistics

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self directedness	4.1	0.6
Values driven	3.8	0.7
Boundaryless	4.0	0.7
Organisational mobility	2.6	1.0
Race	2.3	1.3
Family support	2.1	1.2
Gender	2.0	1.4
Motivation	2.2	1.2

Table 6.1 Descriptive Statistics

The means and standard deviations of the scales within both boundaryless and protean career outlook were examined. Independent variables were highlighted including: gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, university, profession and tenure. On average the results were

high for the boundaryless and self-directed scale, low for organisational mobility and low for values driven within the samples. This suggests that the participants were most comfortable being boundaryless in their career expression and thus collaborating with others for team work and project based purposes. Participants were more comfortable with planning and organising their own careers. The sample displayed half protean tendencies and half boundaryless tendencies.

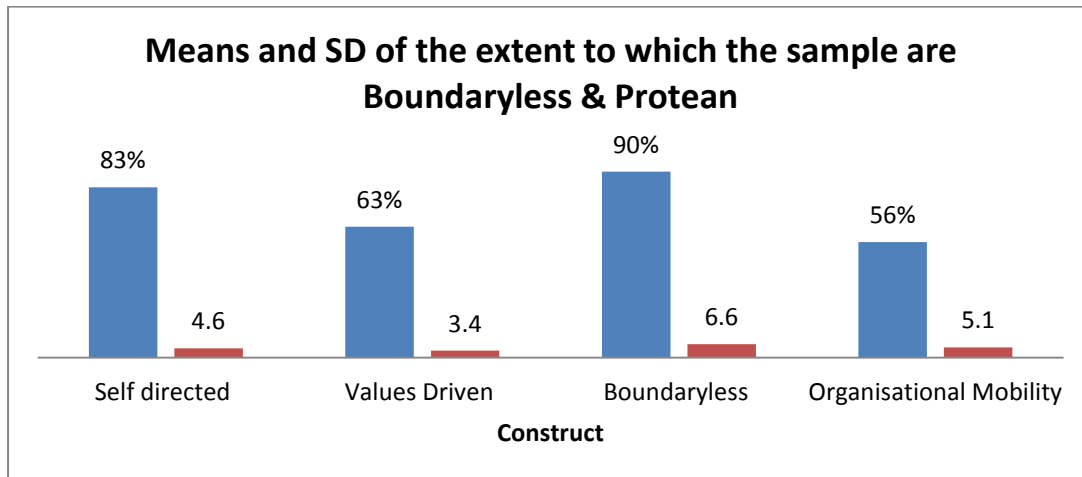


Figure 6.1: Chart to show the extent of boundarylessness and protean career expression in the sample.

To answer the question “To what extent are black African and black Caribbean workers’ careers boundaryless?”, the above chart highlights that the sample seem to be self-directed (83 per cent) and boundaryless in their outlook of their careers (90 per cent). This suggests that the sample take an independent role in the development of their careers and the extent to which a person prefers to initiate working relationships with others across organisational boundaries, such as working collaboratively on projects. The participants appear to be less driven by their own values (63 per cent) and less organisationally mobile (56 per cent), thus the sample appears not to have a direct preference to be with several employers.

6.3 Test of Hypotheses

A multiple hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to test the quantitative hypotheses. The hypotheses were: Hypothesis 1: Younger participants will have higher levels of protean and boundaryless career outlook; Hypothesis 2: Individuals with higher levels of education will have a more boundaryless and protean outlook; Hypothesis 3: There will be a difference in the boundaryless and protean career outlook between different professional groups.

The independent variables of age, gender, region, ethnicity, educational level, university and profession were inputted. The dependent variables of self directedness, values driven, boundarylessness, organisational mobility, familial support, motivation, racial discrimination and gender discrimination were also input. The table below shows the results of the multiple regression analysis.

	Self - directed		Values Driven		Boundaryless		Organisational Mobility	
	R ²	B	R ²	β	R ²	B	R ²	β
Age	-	0.11	-	0.12	-	0.04	-	-0.07
Gender	-	0.03	-	0.02	-	0.04	-	0.00
Region	-	0.07	-	0.03	-	0.05	-	-0.18
Ethnicity	-	0.02	-	-0.08	-	0.04	-	0.09
Education	-	0.07	-	0.04	-	0.14*	-	0.11
University	-	0.03	-	0.02	-	0.08	-	-0.18*
Profession	-	0.19*	-	-0.05	-	0.16*	-	-0.06
Discrim: race	-	0.08	-	0.11	-	0.11	-	0.09
Lack of motivation	-	0.03*	-	-0.06	-	-0.11	-	-0.06
Family support	-	0.06	-	0.08	-	-0.01	-	0.06
Discrim: gender	-	-0.01	-	-0.02	-	0.11	-	-0.00
Self directed	0.029	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Values driven	-	-	-0.012	-	-	-	-	-
Boundarylessness	-	-	-	-	0.029	-	-	-
Organisational Mobility	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.025	-

Table 6.2: Regression analysis between protean and boundaryless mind-set and independent variables N = 187 *p < 0.05

Protean Scale

The control variables were entered and included gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, university, profession and tenure. The association between predictor variables and control variables was low: R (0.2) with an adjusted R² 4.6. This model was a non significant model: F (8, 44) = 0.268, P > 0.05. None of the predictor variables were significant predictors of protean-ness within the sample.

Boundaryless Scale

The control variables that were entered included: gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, university, profession and tenure. This scale was also not significant: $F(8, 44) = 0.406, P > 0.05$; none of the predictor variables were significant predictors of boundarylessness in this sample. Due to the broad scales not showing significant associations, the sub-scales within boundarylessness and protean-ness were tested with a multiple regression analysis. The protean sub scales that were investigated were “self- directedness” and “values driven”. The boundarylessness sub scales that were examined were “boundarylessness” and “organisational mobility”.

For self directedness, the control variables were gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, university, profession and tenure. The adjusted R^2 was 0.029, meaning that 2.9 per cent of the variances were being accounted for by self directedness. The model was not significant: $F(7, 179) = 1.781, P > 0.05$, adjusted R^2 0.029. Some of the predictor variables of self directedness were significant. Profession was a significant predictor of self directness in this sample: $\beta = 0.19, P < 0.01$). This suggests that there was a significant difference for the differing professional groups and their expression of self -directedness. Therefore **Hypothesis 3**: “There will be a difference in the boundaryless and protean career outlook between different professional groups” can be partially accepted as there is a significant difference in different professions and their amount of self- directedness.

For boundarylessness the control variables gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, university, profession and tenure were not significant predictors: $F(7, 179) = 1.783, P > 0.05$. However, two predictor variables which had significant correlations which were profession: $\beta = 0.16, P < 0.01$, and educational level: $\beta = 0.14, P < 0.01$. Therefore, **Hypothesis 3**: “There will be a difference in the boundaryless and protean career outlook between different professional groups” is partially accepted as there is a significant difference in the differing professions and their amount of boundarylessness.

Hypothesis 2 is also partially accepted: “Individuals with higher levels of education will have a more boundaryless and protean outlook.” The results show that there is a significant difference between the differing educational levels and the extent to which the sample are boundaryless. The organisational mobility scale was not significant: $F(7, 179) = 1.688, P >$

0.05) however, one of the predictor variables was significant, this was type of university studied, which was associated with organisational mobility $\beta = -0.18$ $P < 0.01$. Although a specific hypothesis was not created, it is interesting that there was a significant difference expressed by individuals who attended Russell Group universities and those who did not in their acceptance of organisational mobility as a career competency.

Additional questions were asked around motivation, race, gender and family support. There was a significant difference with individuals who had a higher level of motivation and self-directed career management: $\beta = 0.03 < 0.05$. Therefore high levels of motivation are associated with self-directed career management in the sample.

To summarise, a regression analysis found that there was a significant association between professional groups and self-directedness; professional groups and boundarylessness; educational level and boundarylessness; and type of university studied and organisational mobility. Thus hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 can be partially accepted. As regression analysis can only observe correlations and not infer cause and effect or observe which category showed higher or lower means, a series of ANOVAs were conducted to determine which categories had higher means. ANOVAs are used to compare means between and within groups.

6.4 ANOVA Results

A series of ANOVAs was completed on the independent variables that showed significance in the regression analysis. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether there were statistically significant differences in the means of different professional groups and their level of self-directedness and level of boundarylessness.

Self directedness	F value	Boundarylessness		F value
	3.413*			2.220*
Professional group	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Marketing	33.7	3.39	36.7	6.39
Law	33.9	3.54	35.9	7.73
IT	32.2	4.73	34.6	7.44
HR	29.8	5.31	35.8	6.09
Management consultancy	34.6	4.12	39.0	5.07

Table 6.3: Means and SDs of professional group and boundarylessness*significance level < 0.05

Boundarylessness	F value	
	2.639*	
Educational level	Means	SD
GSCE	17.00	n/a
A level	29.50	8.19
Diploma	34.71	6.72
BSc	36.53	6.62
Postgraduate certificate**	36.71	5.27
MSc	36.49	6.25
PhD	35.10	8.41
Other professional courses	36.33	3.21

Table 6.4: Means and SDs of educational level and boundarylessness*significance level < 0.05 ** highest level of boundarylessness

Organisational mobility	F value	
	2.2027	
Type of university studied	Means	SD
None	14.77	5.04
Russell Group*	15.05	5.30
Non Russell Group	13.63	4.99
International	11.25	5.55

Table 6.5: Means and SDs of different types of university and organisational mobility * highest level of OM

	Self directedness		F value	Values driven		F value	Boundaryless		F value	Organisational mobility		F value
Gender	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD		Mean	SD	
Male	33.27	4.77	0.134	19.11	3.62	0.015	35.72	6.61		14.08	4.49	
Female	33.02	4.42		19.18	3.21		36.18	6.67		13.72	5.59	

Table 6.6: Means and SDs of gender scores and the four constructs

Ethnicity	Self Directedness		Values Driven		Boundaryless		Organisational Mobility	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Black African	33.18	4.61	18.85	3.64	36.31	6.51	14.03	5.07
Black Caribbean	33.17	4.56	19.56	2.94	35.57	6.98	13.53	5.33
Any other mixed background	32.00	4.24	19.00	3.85	35.75	4.95	15.13	4.54

Table 6.7: Means and SDs of ethnic groups and the four constructs

Age Group	Self directedness			Values Driven			Boundaryless mind-set			Organisational Mobility		
	Mean	SD	F Value	Mean	SD	F Value	Mean	SD	F Value	Mean	SD	F Value
18-24	34.33	4.33	2.32*	18.67	3.24	2.00	36.56	9.50	2.98*	14.44	4.44	1.09
25-30	31.91	4.73		17.93	3.53		33.62	6.74		13.46	5.28	
31-40	32.81	4.39		19.41	3.07		36.67	5.60		14.72	5.14	
41-50	34.31	4.46		20.04	3.23		38.07*	5.93		12.58	5.18	
51-60*	35.16	3.90		19.08	4.62		34.17	9.01		14.42	4.32	
60+	30.25	5.31		18.75	2.36		31.00	7.39		14.75	5.68	

Table 6.8: Means and SDs of age group & relations to the four constructs *significance level < 0.05

The results revealed statistically significant differences amongst professional groups and self-directedness: $F(5,181) = 3.41, p < 0.05$). A post hoc test, Tukey's HSD, found that there was a significant difference between management consultants ($M = 34.6, SD = 4.12$) and human resources workers ($M = 28.8, SD = 5.31$). Management consultants reported significantly higher levels of self-directed career management than human resources workers. There were no significant differences between any other groups. This provides further information to support **Hypothesis 3**: "There will be a difference in the boundaryless and protean career outlook between different professional groups", more specifically in this sample management consultants displayed higher levels of self-directedness. This finding may be due to the view that management consultants are more flexible and more concerned with their career development as their skills are developed rapidly; they may be organisationally mobile and tend to possess greater career ownership.

Additionally, there were also statistically significant differences amongst the level of boundarylessness and professional groups: $F(5, 181) = 2.22, p < 0.05$). A post hoc test, Tukey's HSD, also found that there was a significant difference between management consultants ($M = 39, SD = 5.07$) and IT workers ($M = 34.6, SD = 7.33$). Again **Hypothesis 3** is partially accepted "There will be a difference in the boundaryless and protean career outlook between different professional groups". Management consultants also displayed higher percentages of boundaryless career outlook than other professional groups studied, (Table 6.3). Management consultants were highlighted as being more boundaryless in their career outlook, suggesting that they were more comfortable working collaboratively on

projects with people across and within organisations. This is a key aspect of social and human capital that may have had an impact on management consultants' perception of their boundarylessness. They may be used to working with individuals across and within organisations on contract assignments.

Another significant difference was found between the means of participants with different levels of education and their levels of boundarylessness: $F(8, 178) = 2.64, P < 0.05$. A post hoc test revealed statistically significant differences between the level of boundarylessness of those with postgraduate certificates ($M = 36.7, SD = 5.27$) and those who had no post GCSE education ($M = 17, SD = (N/A)$). Therefore **Hypothesis 2** can be partially accepted "Individuals with higher levels of education will have a more boundaryless and protean outlook". In this sample, individuals with postgraduate certificates had higher levels of boundarylessness than any other group studied in this sample (Table 7.4). This suggests that human capital does have a large impact within knowledge intensive workers and may influence how confident individuals are at collaborating with individuals in other organisations.

There was also a significant relationship between some age groups, self-directedness and boundarylessness. The age group with the highest level of self-directedness was age range 51–60 ($M = 35.16$): $F(6, 181) = 2.32, P < 0.05$; and the age group with the lowest level was age group 60+ ($M = 30.25$). Age group and boundarylessness was also significant: $F(6, 181) = 2.98, P < 0.05$. A post hoc test, Tukey's HSD, also found that there was a significant difference between the age group 41–50 and the level of boundaryless that they displayed ($M = 38.07, SD = 5.93$). The 61+ age group displayed the least amount of boundarylessness in the sample ($M = 31.00, SD = 7.39$). Therefore **Hypothesis 1**: "Younger participants will have higher levels of protean and boundaryless career outlook" cannot be accepted in this sample as the highest level of self-directedness was seen in the 51–60 age group and the highest level of boundarylessness was seen in the 41–50 age group. This was contrary to the extant research on boundaryless careers, in which the majority of the findings highlighted younger individuals as being more boundaryless and protean. The current finding may have been due to the possibility that in later career stages individuals can have fewer family and social restrictions on their career development and thus are more in charge of their careers and collaborate more with other individuals in other organisations.

A non-significant trend was found between organisational mobility and university type. Universities education was categorised into Russell Group universities, the top 20 research universities in the UK, non-Russell Group universities, international universities and non-university educated individuals. A non significant trend was identified between individuals who went to Russell Group universities ($M = 15.05$, $SD = 5.30$), non-Russell Group universities ($M = 13.63$, $SD = 4.99$), international universities ($M = 11.25$, $SD = 5.55$), and those who did not attend university ($M = 14.77$, $SD = 5.04$). The most mobile group were those who attended Russell Group universities, and the least mobile group were those who had attended international universities. The mobility of individuals who attended Russell Group organisations may have been due to their increased social capital – “knowing who” – with contacts likely to increase career motivation and career success. Therefore **Hypothesis 2** can be partially accepted “Individuals with higher levels of education will have a more boundaryless and protean outlook.”

Although there was no hypothesis centred around gender, a non-significant difference was also found amongst male and females and their level of boundaryless and protean career outlook: $F(2,184) = 0.015$, $p > 0.05$. The literature based on gender and boundaryless career is somewhat mixed; some research investigations have highlighted a preference in women to have boundaryless careers and some have found no significant difference. The current non-significant finding was therefore not surprising.

Additionally a non-significant difference was found amongst black African and black Caribbeans and their level of boundarylessness and protean career outlook: $F(2, 184) = 0.384$, $P > 0.05$. This was not supported in the literature as few studies have investigated the link between ethnic groups and boundarylessness.

6.5 Summary

It can be seen that there were both intuitive and counter intuitive findings highlighted by the quantitative research phase. Questionnaire research provides the ability to isolate variables that may be important in the perception of a phenomenon such as boundaryless career theories and those competencies that are indicative of the ideal:

- The descriptive statistics show that the sample on the whole have a high level of boundarylessness (90 per cent) and self-directedness (83 per cent), the sample are less

values driven (63 per cent) and show a moderate preference for organisational mobility (56 per cent). These findings show that the sample were 50 per cent protean and 50 per cent boundaryless in their career enactment and perception.

- A significant difference between professional groups and their expression of boundarylessness and self-directedness was found. Management consultants highlighted a more boundaryless and more self-directed career leaning than any other professional group. This finding could have been due to the view that management consultants are more frequently employed in project and consultancy based work and thus have experiences of collaborating with others on work projects. Additionally, management consultants may have a greater propensity to manage their own careers due to them working across organisations (Segers *et al.* 2008; Donnelly 2009).
- A significant difference was found between the level of education and boundarylessness (Segers *et al.* 2008). Individuals with postgraduate certificates in this sample had the highest level of boundaryless career outlook. This finding supports the view that people with higher levels of education are more likely to have a more boundaryless career outlook. This could be due a possession of higher levels of human and social capital in order to navigate their careers.
- There was a significant difference between age group and self-directed career outlook. Those aged 51–60 had the highest level of self-directedness. Age group was also a significant factor in the level of boundarylessness in the sample; those aged 41–50 had the highest level of boundarylessness. This finding was highly counter intuitive: the literature stated that boundarylessness is prevalent amongst those who are younger.
- A non-significant difference was found between the boundarylessness, organisational mobility, self directedness, values driven and type of university. There was a non-significant difference found between those attended Russell Group universities and those who did not go to university at all. There was a difference in boundarylessness between those who went to international universities and those who went to the Russell Group universities in the UK. This finding may have been due to individuals

born in the UK gaining more social capital than individuals who were not born in the UK. This would have given individuals attending Russell Group universities a “knowing who” advantage in the working environment.

- A non-significant difference was found between the genders and the four constructs. The results were extremely similar between genders. This finding was both supported and not supported by the extant literature: some research investigations in the current literature found a propensity for women to follow more boundaryless careers; however, others found no significant difference between genders.
- A non-significant difference was also found between different ethnicities and the four constructs. Black African and black Caribbean knowledge intensive workers had extremely similar levels of protean and boundaryless career outlook. Currently there is a lack of research investigating the link between ethnicity and boundaryless careers. The current research found no significant differences between ethnic groups and boundaryless careers.

7 Results Part 2: Qualitative Results

7.1 Introduction

The interview results will be analysed in terms of answering the following research question: “What are the experiences and the nature of career boundaries faced by black knowledge intensive workers in the UK?” The purpose of the interviews was to investigate, in an exploratory manner, the nature of the career boundaries and barriers that were faced by the sample. Interviews were used in order to investigate the subjective aspect of the boundaryless career, as called for by Greenhaus *et al.* (2004).

The results of the qualitative interviews stage of the research are set out in this section. The method of analysis used was thematic analysis, which has been described as an inherent, coherent way of organising material into specific research questions (Braun and Clarke 1996). When investigating the experiences of black knowledge intensive workers in the UK, 32 semi structured interviews, lasting on average 60–90 minutes were conducted. The following main themes have emerged from an analysis of the interviews: hindrances, educational experiences, family, boundarylessness, experiences of work and aspirations. The aforementioned themes have also been divided into various sub themes. The table below is a depiction of the themes and sub themes that have been identified.

Theme name	Sub theme	Theme code
Family		F
	Immediate family	FI
	Extended family	FE
Education		E
	Non UK experiences	EN
	Academic	EA
	Career guidance at school	EC
Hindrances		H
	Internal	HI
	External	HE
Boundarylessness		
	Networking	BN
	Career ownership	BC
	Entrepreneurship	BE
Experience of work		W
	Training	WT

Table 7. 1: Interview Themes

7.2 Themes

The themes highlighted below are based on the 32 semi structured interviews that were conducted. The first section will highlight themes concerned with the development of the careers of black Africans and black Caribbean knowledge intensive workers. Family, career guidance and educational experiences can provide individuals with either positive tools with which to make career boundaries more permeable, or negative factors that develop impermeable career barriers. The first theme that will be discussed will be the role of family in the development of career choice.

Family

A salient theme that emerged from the interviews was the influence of family in career choice and subsequent career enactment. Family was highlighted as a theme in the development of career choice as it is the first exposure most individuals have of career, through which the permeability of career boundaries can be learnt from others.

Immediate and extended family were perceived by the sample as playing a key part in many participants' lives. There was a differentiation in terms of the extent and the nature of the guidance and advice given. According to the sample, the immediate family members offered general career support, highlighting getting "good qualifications" but less specific career

guidance. In contrast in some cases the extended family provided resources, advice and acted as vicarious models for career development, where participants observed the career behaviours of extended family members and attempted to emulate them.

The immediate family and their influence on career decision making has been documented in social cognitive career theory (Lent *et al* 1994). Family influence in career decision making can aid individuals in the development of career by acting as career role models, providing a way in which individuals can learn about careers vicariously, through imitating others' career moves (Bandura 1996). Family influence over careers can develop an individual's career exploration and impart the confidence to pursue careers (Lent *et al* 1994).

The majority of participants did highlight that parents had a positive impact on their career choices but not necessarily in one specific direction. Additionally, the interviews highlighted that extended family had an influence over career choice, making career boundaries more permeable. Extended family such as uncles, aunts and cousins were perceived as career role models and served as advisors in the career decision process of the participants. The next section will discuss the two sub themes of family influence; extended family and immediate family members, and their influence over career boundary formulation and permeability.

Influence of Immediate Family

The influence of immediate family in many of the interviews did not tend to be explicitly orientated towards a particular occupation. Instead, participants were encouraged to explore more general careers, and advice that was given by immediate family members was useful in the development of career choice. For example a respondent stated:

“Yes, my dad encouraged me to think about the future, but not in a specific direction. Um, I don't remember him ever saying that I should be this or that.”

(Participant 6, Male, Caribbean, IT consultant)

This respondent highlighted that for him his immediate family did not push him in any one career direction. For him there was no specific vocational area that he was encouraged to pursue, but he was persuaded to be mindful of his decisions and think of the future, perhaps about aspirations that he wanted to achieve and what career he really wanted to pursue or

follow. This form of career direction and advice is exploratory in nature, encouraging the participant to think aspirationally, without specific occupational constraints. This would allow the participant to be able to explore professions, organisations and occupations with ease and without constrictions, which may have resulted in higher career decision making self efficacy. Higher career decision making self efficacy can help to alleviate potential career boundaries from developing.

Similarly, another participant stated that her parents had some influence over her career choice but not in a particular direction.

“My mum wanted me to be a high achiever she really wanted me to go to Oxbridge, my dad wanted me to go to university and get a respectable job, something like medicine, law or accounting, but I couldn’t count.”

(Participant 17, Female, Marketing, African)

The above participant stated that her mother and father both wanted her to become high achievers and her dad wanted her to have a “*respectable job*” such as law or accounting. Other participants stated that their parents wanted them to get “*a job, but not in a particular direction*”. This adds support to the view that immediate family members added opinions and support and shaped the career actors development.

Another participant also had parents who did not emphasise a particular career or profession that they should pursue, but offered support.

“Yeah so my parents, I would speak to them all of the time about what I wanted to do, they were useful. I did different roles with my parents to test them out. My dad got me roles with his colleague doing accounts one time, then I’d do IT with my mum, so yeah, I found it quite cool.”

(Participant 2, Female, Caribbean, IT consultant)

The above participant had parents who were entrepreneurs and therefore she had opportunities to explore occupations first hand without barriers to access or restrictions. The respondent had been exposed to advice and professionals from different occupational areas enhancing her career knowledge and ‘knowing whom’ and ‘knowing how’, which are both aspects of intelligent career competencies (Arthur 1994). Intelligent career competencies may have removed the potential impermeable career barriers or ‘reluctance to move’ highlighted by Gunz *et al.* (2000). In terms of careers advice, her parents gave her the opportunity to

explore different careers first hand. This experience provided an increased level of career self efficacy to enable her to make more informed career choices, and her response to this was a positive one. These quotes suggest and support the view that family helped shape the career exploration and subsequent career choice.

Another participant stated that:

“My parents definitely, they wanted me to go to university and get a degree, some sort of professional job. There was no precise direction, just get a good job.”

(Participant 17, Male, African, Financial services)

This participant’s experience was similar to the previous participant in that his parents wanted him to have a more professional job and follow a specific career path, e.g. “go to university” but the actual type of job was not specified. The expectation of getting a good job by following a “promised path” of career success, such as going to university to gain respected employment was slightly more directional than the previous two examples. The perception of a good occupation in this household was a professional job. This shows that this participant’s parents highlighted human capital as a precursor for career success and a way to remove external career boundaries.

Another participant stated that his parents did not really have a preference for specific occupations but were strict educationally:

“My parents were quite strict educationally we had to get home 15 minutes after school, my dad used to set extra homework. There was no specific career direction such as being a doctor or a lawyer, but I was encouraged to finish A-levels and go to university.”

(Participant 12, Male, African, Law professional)

This participant stated that there were clear educational standards that he and his siblings had to adhere to. This is highlighted by the participant stating that his father used to set them extra homework however this strictness did not appear to extend to a specific career direction. Again, similar to the previous quote, the parental career guidance was to follow a promised path of careers secured by the investment in human capital, by completing A-levels and then going to university. The guidance that immediate family had over career choice and career decision making was not necessarily for a specific career, but there was a propensity for the

current sample to be guided towards professional jobs that followed on from university careers, such as law and medicine. Therefore, immediate family may have an influence over career choice in this sample. This influence was related to advice and guidance on careers in order to increase human capital levels and to finish formal traditional education, and thus gain a good professional job, rather than a specified single occupation. In doing this parents may have believed that career boundaries such as race or gender discrimination would be removed.

Contrastingly, a minority of participants experienced more specific career direction from their parents and immediate family with regards to what careers they should pursue.

“I wanted to be president of Ghana, [but] my mum said that politics was a dirty game and [encouraged] me not to get into it.”

(Participant 3, Female, African, Law professional)

As a small child she aspired to be the president of a country. Her mother encouraged her not to pursue a political career due to the moral taint of politics. This participant gives evidence to the view that some participants in this study did have more specific career guidance. In this case the participant’s mother erected a career barrier around a political career.

Another participant also highlighted that their parents had a more directive approach to his career choice:

“I received career guidance from my parents they wanted me to do the usual you know, law or medicine, but they wanted me to succeed academically.”

(Participant 21, Male, African, HR professional)

This contrasts with other participants’ description of career guidance received from their parents, which was less concerned with a specific job and more concerned with increasing the level of human capital. This could be due to the prestige and stability associated with both medical and law careers.

Another participant reiterated this:

“There were only a few accepted careers, such as being a doctor, lawyer or an accountant”

(Participant 17, Female, African, Marketing)

Another participant stated that his parents, his father in particular, had more of a direct influence in his career choice.

“I received guidance from my dad a lot, who encouraged me to go into teaching, got experience of it but I wanted to make my own path. My mum supported me in whatever I wanted to do...I wanted to also be a snowboarding instructor, but my dad shouted at me, considering that I had just finished my degree.”

(Participant, 14, Male, Caribbean, Financial services)

This quote highlights that the participant had a difference of opinion in the career path that his father was encouraging him to pursue. In contrast, the participant's mother was less specific but generally supportive of his career choice. When he expressed interest in working as a snowboarding instructor, his dad displayed anger at this decision, possibly due to the initial waste in human and social capital gained from a university course.

These quotations suggest that some of the participants had much more direct career advice and that their parents had a large influence over their careers. The majority of the participants' parents were accepting and encouraging to their career exploration, however, some participants received a more directive career guidance experience, and others' career guidance was more casual. The theme of family shows that both extended and immediate family had some sort of influence over these participants' career decision making and career exploration. The main finding here is that the majority of the participants interviewed stated that their guidance was in the direction of professional jobs to get a degree and to do well.

Influence of Extended Family on Career Choice

From discussions and interviews with the participants a recurring theme was the influence of the extended family members in the career choice process. Extended family had a significant influence over career choice and career exploration. One participant explained that an

extended family member had perhaps more influence over his career direction than his parents did:

“My parents were illiterate; instead, one of my cousins was interested in further education. My parents couldn’t afford to pay my secondary school fees, so I copied my cousin and went to free teacher training college.”

(Participant 3, Male, African, Financial services)

This participant was brought up in Ghana, where secondary education was not state funded. The participant stated that through observing his cousin the participant was able to formulate career ideals to emulate. This is evidence of career role models providing alternative career knowledge to the participant questioned. Due to the barrier of not being able to afford further education the participant had to develop strategies to overcome the barrier, by emulating a career role model that came from an extended family member. Extended family members in this case were used to increase career self efficacy, career knowledge and career confidence as they acted as career role models.

Another participant had a similar experience:

“I didn’t have guidance from many people, I didn’t have mentors, but I had a cousin, who I followed and watched what he did.”

(Participant 4, Male, Caribbean, Management consultant)

The above participant also stated that a cousin helped him to develop career decision making skills. These skills were developed through observing his cousin’s career enactment and in doing so the participant was provided with clear ideas and was able to emulate the career choices of his cousin. He also stated that he did not have any traditional, clear career guidance from many individuals and did not have official career mentors to give him career guidance. This participant gained career guidance from emulating his cousin’s career enactment. Career role models allow the individual to explore and learn about careers vicariously, about benefits and disadvantages of careers, and can remove external career boundaries.

Another participant stated that an extended family member had a level of influence over his career choice:

“I moved around a lot as a kid, as a small child I had an aunty who told me that I was going to be a lawyer, but other than that, not much in any particular direction.”

(Participant 6, Male, African, Law)

The above participant stated that moving locations in his childhood may have meant that he did not form solid career role models. He did gain career guidance from an aunt, who stated that he was going to be a lawyer. This seems an extremely formative statement made by his aunt as the participant did eventually pursue a law career. Other participants had experiences where cousins gave indirect career advice vicariously, by being observed and their education or work preferences and decisions being watched.

Another participant stated that:

“I don’t think I can remember, maybe an uncle who was always into business and that gave me the inspiration to do my own thing, that’s what drives me. I don’t think I can work for someone else... I want to develop something for my own people. My plan B is to do a Masters, which I will use as a net to fall back on and then get a job with another blue chip company in management consultancy and IT.”

(Participant 7, Male, African, IT)

The above participant highlighted the advice of an uncle and explained that he was an inspirational figure in shaping his career ideas. An uncle did develop his career ideals of being a ‘business man’, which gave him the career self efficacy and confidence to try the same thing. The latter part of the quote suggests the effects of this career role model as it helped the participant to develop career plans into realistic career ideals. His uncle enabled him to develop entrepreneurial thoughts as the participant was able to raise career self efficacy vicariously through his uncle’s career journey and career success. The participant also states that he wants to develop something *‘for his own people’* this suggests that he would like to develop something to aid black Africans. This suggests that this career role model allowed him to develop realistic career achievement goals.

Another participant received advice from extended family members, her aunts:

“My aunts who both started to study law but stopped, they used to tell me what to expect and they used to give me advice. They let me know about the studying and workload involved, they gave me a laptop also for university and some books and encouragement.”

(Participant 9, Female, Caribbean, Law)

The above quote also adds to the view that extended family did help her to develop realistic career goals. Her aunts did not just give her theoretical career advice; they were able to give her physical tools such as text books and a laptop, as well as advice to enable her to navigate her new educational environment. They informed her about what to expect at university, what was involved within the course and gave her positive encouragement. This participant was the only participant to discuss how the extended family encouraged her towards a chosen career. The career role models discussed the realities of pursuing the chosen career and the educational path, thus a more practical experience of career guidance was developed in this participant. This also increased her career self efficacy and developed the ‘knowing how’ component highlighted in the intelligent career.

Therefore, extended family in this sample, including aunts, cousins and uncles, seemed to have an influence also over career exploration and career choice, which was either instead of or as well as parental advice. Family was a salient theme in this sample, parents and immediate family were mostly encouraging and nurturing to the career exploration of the participants. Extended family was also implicated in the choice of careers in the sample, through vicarious observation or actual verbal advice, and enabled the sample to remove career boundaries by making them more permeable.

In this sample due to both ethnic groups, black African and black Caribbean, being traditionally collectivist societies, families tend to play an important role in the upbringing of children within their families to maintain family values and traditional cultural views. The inclusion of family as a theme highlights the importance of family in collectivist cultures and their place in the development of career choice. Although some of the participants identified were born in collectivist countries and the rest were brought up in homes where collectivist ideals were expressed, the influence of both immediate and extended family on career development and choice was salient within the sample (Triandis 2008).

7.3 Educational Experiences

Another key theme highlighted repeatedly within the interviews was the role that educational experiences played in the development of career choice. Educational experiences can provide a prerequisite for the development of careers in many individuals' lives. Both traditional and contemporary career theories highlight this trend, for example Super (1957) and Levinson's (1978) career stage theories highlight that the early stages of career enactment begin with exploration in order for the individual to gain knowledge about different occupations. The sample had varied educational experiences spanning not only the UK, but also West African and Caribbean countries. The following section will discuss the sub themes developed and highlighted within the interviews.

Non UK Educational Experience, and Experience after Arriving in the UK

Some participants had educational experiences that spanned two countries (African or Caribbean, and the UK). Based on this difference in educational styles and experiences, some participants highlighted differences or adjustments that had to be made in educational styles, evidence of which has been recorded in the research interviews.

"In primary school after I moved from Ghana, when I came here, I found it a struggle to fit in and adjusting to the curriculum. In secondary school I found it hard, I was an average achiever, but some of the students were quite racist to me."

(Participant 6, Male, African, Law professional)

The above participant stated that on arriving in the UK, he found it a struggle adjusting to the UK curriculum. This would have an effect educationally but additionally, psychological issues may have also had an impact in terms of the participant's academic confidence, which would be a barrier to developing human and social capital in order to develop realistic and achievable career goals and experiences. Additionally the participant also highlighted that secondary school, where academically he was average, provided problems, and highlighted that some students gave him racial abuse. This may have had a negative effect on his academic achievements and self confidence, which additionally may have also led to the development of a negative self image that may provide career barriers in the future. Therefore the current quotation shows that the educational experiences in other countries may have had a negative effect on his career decision making skills.

Another participant had a similar experience in adjusting to the educational style in the UK.

“In primary school, it was fun because I was in Ghana, in secondary school in the UK, where I experienced bullying it took a while for me to adjust, then I got corrupted and my mum was a single parent.”

(Participant 7, Male, African, IT consultant)

The above participant echoes the findings from the previous participant in stating that the move to the UK caused him problems. He found school in his previous country a fun and positive experience; this developed his confidence educationally and academically. In contrast, on arrival to the UK he experienced bullying, which was a negative experience and may have impacted his self confidence and self esteem. The adjustment to the UK system may have taken time, and then the participant became distracted by various environmental triggers such as friends and romantic relationships. This may have also been impacted on due to the fact that the participant was from a single parent family, which may have affected his career self efficacy. Another participant had similar experiences when he came to the UK:

“I was nine when I came to the UK, learning the language was difficult, I could only say hello when I arrived so it took me a while to get better, my parents advice was just to keep my head down and read, read, read.”

(Participant, 20, Male, African, Finance)

Based on these findings there is evidence to the view that the adjustment from one country to another and the differing educational experiences in the UK may make it difficult to fit in and to adjust to a new system. This could have had a negative influence over career exploration, career self efficacy and self esteem, possibly due to feeling under confident academically, which may have extended to the inability to ask questions and develop career knowledge.

Academic Experiences in the UK

Participants who had completed all their schooling in the UK highlighted that they were average students in general. Academic experiences were a salient theme due to the participants perceiving academic experiences as important milestones to career that can also develop human and social capital. The first participant stated that:

“Generally my experiences were very positive; I had a lot of support from teachers and parents, I was comfortable and could have applied myself better.”

(Participant 13, Female, Caribbean, HR)

This participant stated that her experiences were positive and helpful to her and that she received a lot of support from teachers. This shows that she does not attribute any academic lack of achievement to external reasons. Instead the participant highlights internal reasons as to why her academic experiences may not have been entirely positive. The phrase “**[I] could have applied myself better**” shows that the participant sees her own lack of internal motivation or desire as the boundary to her academic achievement. This lack of academic achievement may have had an impact on future career self efficacy and confidence in making career decisions.

Additionally, another participant highlighted a lack of internal motivation and effort towards academia.

“I was a friend to everyone, I got on with everyone, I was smart but lazy, I didn’t put enough effort in.”

(Participant 15, Male, African, Financial services)

Socially this participant highlighted that he was popular, “**I was a friend to everyone**”. However, this may have had an impact on his academic development due to the distraction of his friends and social activities. This participant stated internal reasons as to why he may have not succeeded academically: “**I didn’t put enough effort in**”. The participant attaches blame to himself for not achieving as much as he thought he could, with thoughts of regret at not placing more effort in his academic work. This quote therefore shows how academic achievement and regret could in theory impact future career self efficacy.

Contrastingly other participants highlighted less favourable career experiences that they received at school, which may have affected career self efficacy, self esteem and their own self perception.

“At primary school I realised that some of the teachers had more of a preference towards elite students. I started to go backwards in about year 3. I was an average student but my parents were really supportive

and encouraging, they gave me extra homework. I wasn't one of those black kids that could be ignored. My teachers were less attentive."

(Participant 9, Female, Caribbean, Law)

The above participant emphasised a feeling of neglect that she felt in her early educational career: **"I realised that some teachers had a preference towards elite students"**. The participant did not identify herself as an elite student instead she identified herself as someone who needed more attention academically. Another phrase that solidifies this view is that she stated she **"started to go backwards in about year 3"**, thus emphasising the need for more academic attention and support at the ages of seven to eight years old. Again, a salient aspect of academic performance within these interviews is that the participant blames her own internal motivations on this lack of academic success, which can be seen in the words, "I started", emphasising her part in the process. Additionally the participant highlights that due to the engagement of her parents in her education, she was able to develop academic self esteem from their encouragement and understanding. By emphasising that by herself she was an "average student" she is showing that her parents' involvement was able to increase her confidence in her ability. Her parents may have reduced the negative feelings that she felt at school, which strengthened her self esteem.

Lastly, by the participant highlighting that she **"wasn't just another black kid that could be ignored"**, she is emphasising that due to her parents' active participation within her educational experience, the teachers who seemed less attentive to her needs initially were more inclined to pay attention to her following parental concerns and communication within the school. She sets herself apart from the stereotype that black children are sometimes sidelined or ignored within the education system. This quote highlights the view that early educational experiences can shape career exploration and career achievement levels in individuals. Knowing whom and knowing how, components of intelligent career competencies both develop early and enable individuals to navigate careers intelligently. These skills are initially formed within an educational environment and then when formed, can extend to organisational settings.

Other participants have highlighted that their educational experiences were not entirely positive. Negative experiences in education have the potential to extend and may impact future career directions and career choices.

“I went to 15 primary schools; I was expelled or suspended from most. In secondary school I was expelled also, but I still got 11 CSEs.”

(Participant 4, Male, Caribbean, Management consultant)

This quote suggests a less than favourable education experience, by attending 15 primary schools and being suspended or expelled from most of them, this would suggest that the participant may have been discouraged academically and had negative experiences educationally. However, these experiences did not seem to hinder his academic confidence as he went on to achieve 11 CSEs. These educational experiences, although negative, did not hinder the participants’ academic achievements, and did not act as impermeable barriers to his academic levels. The emphasis on the word “still” from the participant suggests that internally he is aware that these negative experiences could have impacted him in his future plans.

Thus, this section has highlighted the theme of education in the development of career. Educational experiences were both positive and negative and did impact the participants, however there was minimal direct blame placed upon the education system to explain the difficulties faced by the participants. Instead many participants highlighted the lack of internal motivations that may have had an impact on their educational achievements, suggesting that they place the blame on themselves rather than placing the blame on external factors. Early educational experiences have an impact on the development of career self efficacy; the confidence an individual has in their ability to make career choices. Academic confidence and academic skills have a close relationship to career goals and experiences. Social factors such as educational experiences and encouragement from parents and teachers can help develop the exploration stage of career development (Super 1957) and can develop intelligent career skills such as knowing how and knowing why. Therefore, early educational experiences had an effect on the career development of this sample by developing their career self efficacy as proposed by Lent’s *et al* (1994) social cognitive career theory. Positive educational experiences can make career boundaries more permeable, or barriers can become impermeable if the educational experiences are negative. The next theme that will be identified will be the impact of career guidance in shaping career goals and ambitions.

Career Guidance

Career guidance can be a very important aspect in the development of an individual's career. Professionals can provide vital career advice and knowledge. In general, the experience of career guidance was varied amongst the sample. Some of the sample stated that they did not receive any career guidance at all, which may have impacted their knowledge of certain careers and occupations that they could have explored. Also inadequate career guidance can aid in the formulation of rigid career barriers.

"[I didn't really] receive any career guidance from school, nothing was formalised."

(Participant 24, Female, African, Law)

The above participant stated that the career guidance she received was not formalised, which suggests there was informal guidance of some sort from school. This lack of career guidance could have led to lower awareness of the career choices that she could make, culminating in career boundaries that could only be navigated when these initial boundaries were removed by developing a knowledge about careers. Another participant also stated that there was a lack of formalised career guidance at her school, which had some sort of impact on the career exploration and self confidence.

"Not very much [careers advice] I went to school in Hackney, most students were from working class backgrounds and around 40% of the students were white. To my knowledge I wasn't even aware that there was a career office in school, I didn't know where it was at school."

(Participant 11, Female, African, Financial Services).

This participant highlighted that she didn't know the location of the careers office at her school which may have impacted on the quality of career guidance sought, and the variety of careers that she was exposed to. She attributed the lack of knowledge about the location of the careers office at her school perhaps being due to where she went to school, living in a working class area, with most students being from working class families. This according to the participant may have led to an under emphasis on career guidance. The participant's highlighting that **"around 40% of the students were white"** in her school, juxtaposed with her statement that she didn't know if there was a careers office, suggests that in some way the teachers may have felt that there was no need to include or emphasise career guidance due to the social background of the students.

The majority of the sample stated that the guidance that was received was generic and did not encourage people to think of careers outside of academia.

“Yes I did have some formal careers advice, which was helpful to a degree, but I found that the careers advice was quite prescriptive and didn’t encourage people to think outside of the box. I think that careers advice should focus on personal skills and study skills, not just purely on academics.”

(Participant 13, Female, Caribbean, HR)

The above participant highlights the prescriptive nature of the careers advice that she received and suggests that this could hinder the exposure and advice to careers that some people may receive at school, which may have an effect on career enactment in the future by restricting career paths. She also stated that the career advice that she received was useful to a degree, however she felt that it wasn’t always encouraging or tailored to the majority of students. By calling for holistic careers guidance in schools, the participant is highlighting her frustrations at the system of careers guidance. Thus, her perception of the career guidance within her school was that it did not give students knowledge of full range of careers, thus affecting her career knowledge and her “knowing what” skills, which the intelligent career competencies suggest is a characteristic of career development for knowledge intensive workers. Being aware of a full range of different careers allows individuals to develop strategies to overcome career boundaries by highlighting different entry points to careers.

Another participant stated that there was no specific or directional careers guidance at the college that he attended, but more general aspirational goal setting. Although this may have increased aspirations, it may not have provided the practical careers advice that may have been needed.

“Not at school, but at college it wasn’t career specific it was aspirational more goal setting really.”

(Participant 5, Male, Caribbean, IT)

This participant is further echoing the view that some of the current sample found career guidance to be nonspecific, but encouraging all the same. A minority of participants stated that the career guidance they received was simply not helpful at all. The participant below stated that because of such poor guidance advice in his schooling, he took ownership of his career direction and looked at other career guidance options. This participant became more

self-directed at a young age regarding his career due to the lack of encouraging or useful careers advice:

“Yes I was told I had the skills and qualities to become a bin man, or to do factory work, so I attended careers centres that were not linked to school.”

(Participant 4, Male, Caribbean, Management consultancy)

The participant was given poor advice, which he did not perceive as an impermeable barrier to career development, instead he saw it as a permeable boundary to career development. He then sought out careers information from careers centres that were not linked to school, which highlights his high level of determination and career self efficacy. Other participants had similar experiences.

“There was an attempt, not real career guidance, I wanted to do music, but the [guidance] was geared towards business studies”

(Participant 18, Male, African, I.T)

The above participant stated that he had a desire to pursue a music career however the guidance did not help him to explore this career avenue. Another participant also highlighted that her career guidance was not of much help to her career decision making efficacy.

“No [I didn't] receive any, not through the curriculum, no one last a lasting impression on me, no one ever got me, I usually got more of a telling off”

(Participant 17, Female, Marketing, African)

The above participant stated that the career guidance that she received was not of use to her as they were not able to connect with her or her interests. This may have contributed to narrow knowledge and a reduced level of career self efficacy and decision level. Therefore, the experience of career guidance in this sample is varied, some participants stated that they did receive career guidance, but it was slightly inadequate, some did not receive any at all, and for others it was not very helpful or even negative. The effect that the quality of careers guidance at schools and colleges had on the participants would have an effect on their career enactment, self efficacy and outcome expectations of their career, perhaps altering their career journeys (Lent *et al* 1994).

Aspirations

Another main theme in the sample is aspirations, in terms of what the respondents had wanted to do in the future when they were younger. This theme has been highlighted due to individuals having had aspirations in the past that were not being realised in the present due to the development of impermeable career barriers or more permeable career boundaries. Professions that participants had shown a preference for when they were younger included: astronaut, accountant, politician, fireman, footballer, pilot and journalist.

“I wanted to be a pilot because I thought there weren’t enough or any black pilots... when I was 11 and came to the UK I joined the training corps but I thought it was farfetched.”

(Participant 7, Male, African, IT)

The above participant highlighted that he had wanted to become a pilot due to the invisibility of black pilots in the profession. Instead of seeing the lack of career role models in the airline industry as a barrier to career development, the participant perceived this as a career opportunity. To make this career aspiration a reality, on arriving in the UK the participant joined a pilot training corps, but abandoned the aspiration because he thought the idea was “far fetched”, or a career that he thought was not achievable. The development of a career barrier during the process of joining the pilot training corps could have been a consequence of not seeing black pilots in his training environment and thus not being able to have a matched career role model that he could relate to. Therefore after the participant had developed a strategy to overcome initial career boundaries (by joining the training corps), more impermeable career barriers formed where he perceived being a pilot as non achievable. The participant below has highlighted two very contrasting professions that she wanted to pursue as a child, one being a barrister and the other a singer.

“I wanted to be a singer or a barrister, strange but true, I knew I wanted something, either one of the two... I still sing as a hobby then I realised I didn’t want a law career, it wasn’t for me.”

(Participant 13, Female, Caribbean, Recruitment)

She did attempt both, but found that law was not suited to her. The fact that she is still a singer but sings part time, suggests that she did not think she could make it into a viable career option. The participant stated that she “realised she did not want a law career, it wasn’t for [her]”. The fact that the participant came to the conclusion that the law profession was not

for her could have been due to a variety of reasons, nevertheless career barriers had been constructed in her mind about the applicability of these professions to her career choice.

Another participant stated that he initially wanted to be involved in the medical profession, like his parents. However, he changed his career aspiration due to a lack of motivation to study the profession.

“I wanted to be a doctor or something in the medical services like my parents, but this changed because I found out that I had to study for too long.”

(Participant 15, Male, African, Financial services)

The participant initially stated that he wanted to pursue the medical profession like his parents, which shows that in the first instance his parents acted as career role models, until he was able to judge his motivation to carry out the same career. This shows the link between educational motivation, self-esteem and career aspirations. Without educational motivation, the above participant did not feel able to pursue a medical career, as he was discouraged by the length of time it takes to study. This is therefore evidence of the construction of career barriers that developed due to the length of time it takes to study for a medical career and the lack of relevant career role models. Another participant stated that he wanted to become an astronaut.

“I wanted to be an astronaut, but I quickly learnt this was unattainable, as I didn’t know anyone who was an astronaut, everyone thought I was crazy”

(Participant 24, Male, African, Finance)

The above participant stated that his original career aspiration became “unattainable” mainly due to that he wasn’t aware of any one who was an astronaut in his immediate circle. This lack of knowledge about the career and lack of career role models he could emulate developed into a career barrier and he ended up pursuing another career area.

A change in career aspirations may have been due to a perceived lack of opportunity. This can be perceived as a career boundary if the participant then found ways in which to overcome this lack of opportunity, or would be perceived as a career barrier if the participant was not able to find ways in which to navigate the lack of opportunity.

“Well I became a teacher, as a child being a lawyer the path was not well known. When I started teaching, I became aware of other career choices because of my interest in economics.”

(Participant 24, Male, African, financial services)

The above participant highlighted that he became a teacher due to the lack of information about pursuing a law career. This can be perceived as an impermeable career barrier in the eyes of the career actor due to him not being able to access the information or the opportunities to become a lawyer. To navigate this barrier, the participant on pursuing a teaching career became aware of other professions due to his interest in economics. Therefore, this participant highlighted a career barrier to pursuing a career in law, but overcame this barrier via a teaching career. This participant was able to make more career choices by being boundaryless in his career, having pursuing teaching in order to gain access to another career.

Therefore in terms of aspirations participants in their earlier lives had high expectations for jobs and careers, which changed for reasons such as being aware of barriers to potential careers. These barriers sometimes remained impermeable and rigid in the eyes of the career actors due to reasons such as lack of racially similar career role models. In other cases there were barriers to their initial careers and participants instead chose other careers to pursue. The next theme that will be highlighted was that identified within the interviews as career boundaries and barriers.

7.4 Career Boundaries and Career Barriers

The next salient theme within the interviews was the perception of career barriers and career boundaries that may have thwarted or had a negative effect on career exploration.

Impermeable, rigid career barriers to the development of career, or permeable temporary career boundaries that can be overcome were highlighted. Some participants believed that there were rigid, impermeable barriers that would reduce their ability to achieve their career ambitions and future careers. This section will be divided into two, explaining both internal and external career boundaries. Internal career boundaries often include internal drivers such as a lack of motivation, self esteem or career self efficacy. External career boundaries include environmental hindrances such as racial discrimination or gender discrimination. Career *boundaries* can have a certain level of permeability depending on the perception of the career actors of these boundaries. In contrast career *barriers* are perceived as impermeable, rigid

and unachievable. The table below highlights the differences between career barriers and career boundaries.

Concept	Description
Career barriers	Rigid, impermeable hindrances to career development.
Internal career boundaries	A decrease in internally controlled drivers. Lack of motivation, lack of self esteem that can be overcome by changing the perception of the boundaries or increasing knowledge and skills.
External career boundaries	Environmental hindrances, gender and racial discrimination that can be overcome by changing the perception of the boundary.

Table 7.2-differences between career barriers and career boundaries

Internal Career Boundaries

When asked if there would be anything that could get in the way of their career ambitions, many participants readily expressed internal factors such as internal motivation levels, effort levels and motivational drive.

“[The main boundaries are], myself, not being focused but I don’t think there are any external hindrances.”

(Participant, 5, Male, Caribbean, IT)

The above participant highlighted permeable internal career boundaries including lack of focus that could affect his career and does not highlight any external issues or hindrances to his career development. This highlighting of a lack of internal motivations and focus demonstrates that the participant perceives his career development as self controlled. The participant did not identify any external issue that would hinder his career development. This reliance on the self to maintain career development and aspiration was also echoed in other participants’ accounts of career boundaries. Another participant also stated internal aspects as potential boundaries to their career development.

“Laziness, loosing focus and other people interfering, I am focused, I will achieve this, it’s down to me”

(Participant 22, Male, African, I.T)

The above quote highlights how the participant sees his own career development as based on his own motivations. He believes that final success, is “*down to [him]*”, highlighting his perceived control over the situation. Another example from one participant stated that the main hindrances would be internal aspects such as lack of confidence or a personal lack of career direction or motivation.

“My internal confidence and being dynamic and flexible...although I am focussed on my goals, I also have a seven-year plan to successfully grow a business.”

(Participant 31, Male, Caribbean, Law)

This participant also identified aspects such as not being dynamic, confident or flexible enough. His seven-year career plan also evidenced his being self directed in his career, and shows future career foresight, goal setting and self-direction, which is an aspect of the protean career theory. He states that he is focused on his career goals and discusses this as if this is the only important element to developing his career. Once again there is no mention of negative external issues that could impact his career plans.

Another participant highlighted some internal factors that could have a negative impact on his future career development, as opposed to external career hindrances. The participant stated that:

“I’m a believer if I’m focused and determined I can make it irrespective of any issues.”

(Participant 24, Male, African, Financial services)

By identifying internal issues, such as being focused and determined, as a recipe for career success and career development, the participant does not highlight that any external issues should impact his career plans. Instead, the participant highlighted that “[he] could make it **irrespective** of any issues”. This suggests that the participant feels that external issues would have little or no impact on his career development in the future. The use of the word *irrespective* shows that he himself thinks that even if external factors are realised, they will not impact on his career development and that he does not acknowledge external boundaries as an issue to his career development. Another participant also highlighted that “*financial*” issues as a hindering her career ambitions.

Additionally another participant stated internal issues as being potential boundaries or hindrances to his career development.

“I don’t come from a technical background, I have intelligence, but technical knowledge can change quickly.”

(Participant 18, Male, I.T, African)

This participant highlights the lack of technical knowledge as a possible internal boundary to his career development. By him stating that “technical knowledge can change quickly” this suggests that if he keeps abreast of these changes he can overcome this career boundary. Another participant stated that a potential boundary to her career development could be “laziness, but I’m focussed, it’s down to me”. This quote states that the boundary to her career development could be her own laziness, but a way to overcome this boundary is changing her perception to become more “focused,” overall she believes she is in control of her career progression “it’s down to me”. This shows that her perception of career hindrances can be categorised as an external career boundary.

Thus, it can be observed that for some participants internal issues were highlighted as boundaries to career development that could be overcome. These internal boundaries identified were the only aspects perceived by some participants capable of affecting their careers. Participants more readily highlighted reduced motivation or negative perceptions towards career issues as hindrances to their career progression, and stated that if internal boundaries are not removed they could be perceived as hindrances to their career development. Some of the sample did not identify external career boundaries at all.

Internal boundaries may have been highlighted due to their permeability, as some participants felt that they could control their motivation levels. In contrast, less control can be exerted over external career boundaries. Participants who emphasised internal motivators to career development that could possibly affect their future career show the individual career ownership and individual emphasis of the career. The emphasis of protean and boundaryless careers is on the shift to individual career development and career ownership. This therefore could explain why some participants in the current sample more readily identified internal career boundaries as affecting their career development over external factors.

External Boundaries

Fewer participants highlighted external boundaries, such as discrimination towards race, gender, class, lack of networks or age, which may have had a negative effect on their career development. The participant below highlights a lack of career contacts as an external boundary to career development.

“The main boundaries are the fact I don’t have many connections, people I know, and my grades at undergrad and postgrad at university. Additionally other issues include the economic climate at the moment, also gender and ethnicity may have some effect on me in the future, for example my African surname, however I have had no real difference in the way that I have been treated.”

(Participant 3, Female, African, Law)

This participant stated many external boundaries that may have an effect on her career exploration. The first boundary highlighted was her lack of career contacts, or career networks, which has been highlighted by researchers describing intelligent career competencies as an important factor in the development of knowledge intensive careers. Without appropriate career networks career boundaries can form. Additionally the participant highlights her academic achievements or grades that she obtained in her undergraduate and postgraduates degrees as a hindrance to securing employment in the field of law. Lastly, gender, ethnicity and the economy were also highlighted as external barriers to her career development. The last observation that the participant made was that her surname, which is African, may make it difficult to secure employment and thus a career boundary.

This plethora of potential external career boundaries was described by the participant in a deliberate and frank manner. The next set of external career barriers to be highlighted will be the theme of race.

Race

Race was another salient theme and was highlighted as either an external career barrier that the participants had no control over, or a more permeable external career boundary that the participants highlighted as having little or no effect on them and that they could navigate with more ease. One participant stated that such a boundary was “[his] skin colour” (Male, African, IT), which was a view echoed by another participant. Race, which is a visible difference, was perceived by many participants as a potential career hindrance.

“I have fiscal issues [and] being a minority in a white only zone.”

(Participant 4, Male, Caribbean, Management Consultancy)

The above participant firstly highlights external issues such as the lack of capital “**fiscal issues**”, and then highlights “**being a minority in a white only zone**” as a potential career barrier. That he identifies himself as being in a white only zone is an interesting insight into his perception of his position. In a way, the white only zone suggests that he feels exposed or wary of his position in this zone. The use of the word zone is interesting as it highlights his career as a specific area or domain that he perceived may be reserved for white people only, this also suggests that he feels he is somehow not meant to be in this zone, or an imposter. This participant highlights being a minority as something that could be a hindrance to his career development now or in the future.

Another issue highlighted to do with race was the perception of having to work much harder than majority individuals to progress in their careers. The participant below highlighted these disparities and suggested that this was an unfair, yet real issue in her place of work.

“To be as good as your white peers, you have to work much harder; my manager doesn’t work as hard as me this is the reality for black women in the UK.”

(Participant 23, Female, Caribbean, HR)

By highlighting that “**you have to work much harder, to be as good as your white peers**”, the participant is suggesting that there is a disparity between the perceptions of the effort and achievements of black employees compared to white employees and that black individuals have to put in more work in order to be successful in the work place. Also, stating that she perceives that she works harder than her manager, further highlights the inequality that she feels within her organisation in terms of the effort that she has to put in to work. This shows that according to this participant, race is perceived as a career barrier; her race is impacting other individuals’ perception of her suitability to the role and her level of skill in the job. This, according to the participant, is the “**reality for black women in the UK**”, which suggests that she accepts that others may have this view and may not be able to change this perception.

Another participant offered a similar opinion: that black individuals have to work harder than other races in their careers. This supports the view that there are some external environmental

career barriers to do with discrimination that may occur in organisations that is perceived by black knowledge intensive workers.

“Absolutely, Catholic schools are demographically stagnant; you have to be twice as good to get the same recognition. There are low or no expectations of some people. However, I think today things are less obviously bigoted.”

(Participant 5, Male, Caribbean, I.T)

The above participant has highlighted that at his secondary school being an ethnic minority meant that he had to **“be twice as good to get the same recognition”** academically, and that there were low or no expectations of some pupils. This suggests that the early stages of some individuals’ career exploration can be hindered by barriers to education and career advice by having low expectations of some races over others. The participant then suggests that the racial discrimination faced in today’s society is less obviously bigoted or less explicit.

Another participant stated that he perceived that in his organisation there was a barrier or a glass ceiling hindering career progression. This perceived hindrance is explained as a permeable career boundary, the removal of which is dependent on him.

“Within my organisation there seems to be a glass ceiling for black people, most senior managers I’ve seen are white middle aged men. This is an issue I think I’ll have to battle with... but progression is up to me.”

(Participant 20, Male, African, Financial Services)

By using the phrase “glass ceiling” the participant is highlighting that he perceives an upper level that black people within his organisation can reach, and which he has observed that black individuals have not been able to permeate. He states that **“most senior managers... are white middle aged men”**. This highlights that he has not been able to form career role models and so has not been able to see this role as achievable for him. The participant has also identified that *he* would have to deal with the glass ceilings, but attributes his career success and the eventual overcoming of these career boundaries to his internal motivation, as opposed to the external motivation that he had identified.

This view was also reiterated by other another participant below who discussed a lack of black individuals at his career level.

“Where I am now there is a glass ceiling, it’s harder to progress in my current role... there’s not many black project managers, the dynamics sometimes make me feel marginalised. I’m usually the only black person in the room at meetings, this shouldn’t go against you, but it does.”

(Participant 21, Male, African,

I.T)

The participant stated that he perceived that his career progression may be difficult in his current organisation. He stated that dynamics of the organisations made him feel marginalised as he is often the only black person in the room. This position he feels may work against him and become a hindrance.

Another example of a perceived glass ceiling can be observed in the quote below, where the participant states that there is a career bottleneck in his organisation in terms of black career progression.

“Diversity is bottlenecked at the lower levels there are tons and tons of ethnic minorities at the lower end of the scale. In my last law firm there was ONE black trainee solicitor, she may have got the job to tick a box, she now goes on all the university open days, they promote her, but she’s the ONLY one!”

(Participant 19, Male, Caribbean, Law)

The above participant highlighted that in his opinion there is a concentration of minorities at the lower level of his current organisation, highlighting his perception of a glass ceiling within his current organisation. The participant then discusses his last organisation there was one black trainee solicitor who they promoted, it can be gleaned from his statement that she was the token trainee, who was sent to events to try and display themselves as a diverse employer.

Another participant stated that the law profession has racial barriers related to racial identity:

“Yes I think that in Law, to get a training contract the main issue is your name on your CV, if you have an ethnic name it’s harder. My name isn’t, but at the interview stage I did get funny looks. My skin colour is an issue, but I am part of the Black Solicitors Network, but the number of black people in this profession is very low, there are hardly any.”

(Participant 3, Female, Caribbean, Law)

The participant above has also highlighted the view that an ethnic name may have hindered her future job search, but she was not affected by selection stage stereotype that may have occurred due to her European sounding first name and surname. By highlighting the hindrance of race, the participant is explicitly viewing race as an issue to future career progression, so being part of a specialist career network may allow the participant to navigate through this boundary with more ease. She states that an individual's name can be an initial career barrier and perceives it to be harder to navigate through the law profession **“if you have an ethnic name”**. Additionally, the participant states that although she didn't face the name barrier, she received different treatment when she arrived at interviews. This suggests that the racial career barriers perceived by the above participant include implicit and explicit discrimination.

Another participant highlighted that he did feel that some racial discrimination occurs in the world of work, but highlighted that it was also implicit racism rather than explicit. He stated that:

“I'm not saying that it doesn't happen, it's not so blatant, this IS a white country.”

(Participant 8, Male, African HR)

By identifying that *“it's not blatant”* shows that the discrimination seen in organisations is hidden or less open, which he justifies and rationalises by stating adamantly *“this IS a white country”*. By highlighting and emphasising the word IS the participant is also stating the obviousness of this implicit discrimination.

Other participants highlighted the barrier of race but stated that it wouldn't affect them:

“No I don't necessarily think so, I may have been oblivious as I was the only black person in that organisation, but I thought that they understood me more as a person, rather than a black person only... [in the future] in some circumstances yes it is definitely a factor to an extent which may affect if people employ me in the future and how I develop, but I don't think I'll let it affect me.”

(Participant 11, Female, African, Financial services)

The above participant highlights that in her current organisation, she did not perceive race as a barrier to her progression or career enactment, however she highlighted that there may be issues in future jobs. The participant also highlighted that she **“doesn't think that [she'll] let**

it affect [her]”, signalling that even if it race did emerge as a hindrance she wouldn't allow it to impede her career. This shows a dichotomy between a career barrier such as race, which the individual has no control over and the participant's perception of race, stating that she would not let this barrier affect her career. The above participant highlights race as an external career boundary rather than an impermeable career barrier.

Another participant stated that he did not think race would be much of an issue in his profession and does not perceive race as hindering his career development.

“Race shouldn't be much of an issue as in HR it's all about the bottom line in this industry therefore race shouldn't make much of a difference.”

(Participant 21. Male, African, HR)

The above participant highlighted that due to the nature of the industry that he was in his colour was not an issue, which essentially echoes the colour blind theory, which suggests that all individuals are the same irrespective of race, gender or age (Tarca 2005). This view is reiterated by many other participants, the view that race would have little or no impact on their career development and career success, showing that they perceived race as an external career boundary.

When asked if race had an influence on career experiences, the same participant stated:

“I don't think so, but you never know I don't carry that kind of stuff around. I know I have to be better from what my parents used to say.”

(Participant 8, Male, African, HR)

The participant above highlights that race is something that he doesn't carry around, suggesting that race is a burden or a negative issue to carry. The participant is acknowledging that race was an issue in the past and still could be, but within his own experience not a currently salient issue in his career, thus identifying race as an external career boundary.

Another participant stated that being a

“working class black male it would be harder but not impossible, I will get there in the end”

(Participant 19, Male, Caribbean, Law)

The above participant states that although his class and his race may be a hindrance to his career development, he will overcome this. This is an example of the perception of race for this participant as boundary to career development.

Another participant stated similar views to the previous participants in that he would not allow race to make it hard for him to achieve his career goals.

My skin colour, but once I start getting business, they'll be no stopping me... there are loads of things that could get in the way of me achieving my goals, but I won't allow them to, for example, money, professional issues, colour, but I'm not going to let them, I'm going to jump over them, like Usain Bolt."

(Participant 7, Male, African, IT)

The above participant again highlights many external career boundaries, such as **“money, professional issues, colour”** but similar to other participants, highlights that he won't let them stop him in the achievement of his career aims. He stated that his **“skin colour”** or race may be a potential hindrance to his career enactment but suggests that he will **“jump over”** these external boundaries. This metaphor of jumping over career boundaries shows how he perceives potential career boundaries as a temporary facet within his career. Another participant stated that:

“No, not at all, I wouldn't let it [race], I try and make my actions and behaviour the same as everyone else's so that's never an issue.”

(Participant 1, Female, IT, Caribbean)

The above participant highlights that she doesn't want her race to ever be a reason for someone to use to discriminate against her. Assimilation or blending in with others and being the same as everyone else are strategies that she uses in order for her to navigate through this external boundary of race. Another participant stated that race could be an issue due to her African name she highlight that it could be a potential barrier to her being selected.

“Sometimes it goes against me, my name most people can't pronounce my name, but I have never been one to think that my race will hold me back. Although my cousin changed her name by deed poll to Linda Brown and she got a lot more interviews.”

(Participant 22, Female, Marketing, African)

The above participant stated that she “*has never been one to think that my race will hold me back*”. However she counts examples where race has been a career barrier to others. Her cousin changed her surname from an African name to a British surname; this led to her receiving more interviews. Overall the current participant mainly perceives her race as a career boundary as she believes that her race will not hold her back.

One other participant stated that he did not believe race was a career barrier, when asked if race could affect him in the future,

“No, never you can achieve anything you want in life, I am fed up of black people blaming [their race on things], no its because they are ignorant, it’s harder, don’t get me wrong certain doors are closed, but who would have thought we would have a black president. [It’s] never been an issue.”

(Participant 20, Male, African, Finance)

The above participant states that race had never been an issue to his career development and that the racial climate has changed since the election of Barak Obama as President of America. This view has been discussed as part of a post prejudiced discourse, which states that there is a decreased level of racism due to some black individuals having high positions in society. The participant highlights that his race could be a potential barrier to his career success but for him, “*it’s never been an issue*”.

Therefore, the theme of race in this sample is varied. Some participants highlighted race as a permeable boundary that they could overcome and others highlighted how the boundary of race can be an impermeable barrier. Race is acknowledged as a potential problem but at the same time a distance is drawn from the barrier. The theme of race was mostly described as something that is perceived as implicit, or not blatant, discrimination. The majority of participants also stated that race would not or could not explicitly effect their career development and perceived it as an external career boundary, which they did not perceive as relevant to their careers. Contrastingly the lack of internal motivations and tenacity were highlighted as more of a hindrance to their career enactment than race.

7.5 Boundarylessness

This section will highlight topics centred on the concept of contemporary careers, such as boundaryless and protean careers, which are careers that are not bounded by one organisation or one employer. The sub themes are networks, being in charge of careers, and entrepreneurship.

Networking

The questions here centred on being part of professional networks and having a career mentor and whether this had been helpful to their career. The majority of the participants were part of professional networks such as the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Chartered Institute of Marketing, diversity networks and the Law Society. Other participants had career mentors, but this was a minority. Many participants expressed that they would like career mentors, which is highlighted as an important aspect of the intelligent career as it is related to knowing whom, which can develop career knowledge and career contacts.

“Yes at my organisation I have a counsellor and career mentors who help me manage my career and I also read a lot of books.”

(Participant 5, Male, African, Financial services)

This participant highlights that the career mentor helps him with the management of his career as well as offering guidance and opinions on training and development. Additionally, the participant is displaying protean career tendencies as he also reads career development literature in order to be self directed and in charge of his career development.

Another participant stated that she also had a career mentor who allowed her to be aware of career opportunities that may not have been previously realised.

“Yes I do have a career mentor who was helpful to let me see opportunities that I didn’t see.”

(Participant 1, Female, Caribbean, IT)

The role therefore of the career mentor to this individual is one of guidance and advice. Other participants stated that they did not have career mentors, but wished they did:

“I don’t have a career mentor, but I need one.”

(Participant 27, Male, African, IT)

This participant highlighted his need for a career mentor as he believed it would help him explore his career. By highlighting this need, the participant is aware of the merits of the ‘knowing whom’ in the intelligent career, and how it can develop an individual’s career competencies and career self efficacy. Another participant stated that she does have some sort of contact with another professional in her field, but wished for a more formalised, helpful relationship:

“I don’t, [there is] a black barrister I am in touch with, but I definitely wish I had one.”

(Participant 9, Female, Caribbean, Law).

Another participant, when asked if she had a career mentor, stated that she didn’t have one:

“Actually, No I don’t think I do, as a Black female in Nottingham, I think I stand out.”

(Participant 13, Female, Caribbean, HR)

By stating that she thinks she “**stands out**” she may be highlighting that there is a lack of black females in Nottingham who are able to give her advice and guidance based on her career and career choices. She may believe that having a career mentor would allow her to navigate the career landscape more easily. This would support intelligent career competencies as ‘knowing whom’ allows an individual to be able to navigate careers more confidently (DeFellipi and Arthur 1994). Additionally another participant stated that there were a lot of development opportunities, but not necessarily personal connection with a career mentor:

“[In my organisation]they do have a lot of development opportunities, at work and training, Everyone has the same opportunity, also a weekly catch up with managers where you can discuss any issues. I don’t know many people personally in this industry.”

(Participant 29, Male, Caribbean, FS)

The above participant has highlighted that he feels free to express any career related issues with his managers. Due to this participant not knowing “**many people personally in this industry**”, having approachable managers for him was an important aspect of his career development. Another participant demonstrated a similar rhetoric:

“Yes there is a mentor or a buddy system in the organisation and it has helped me out a lot.”

(Participant 27, Male, African, IT)

Therefore, in this section it can be seen that the networking style of the sample was that the majority of participants had a professional network, but only a minority of the sample had career mentors, and those that didn't wished they had. Some highlighted that the influence of a career mentor would be very useful to their careers and that having an opportunity to utilise professional networks would aid their career development more.

Career Ownership

The theme of career ownership was highlighted within the interviews. An individual who expresses career ownership is characteristic of having a protean career attitude, which has been linked to knowledge intensive workers. Career ownership allows an individual to plan development opportunities without seeking the validation of their organisation or employers in order to fulfil their career goals. Some of the participants stated that they felt more in charge of their career than their employer.

"[I am] definitely 100% I fortunately maintained contacts e.g. barristers, chambers, I have really good contacts who have my back."

(Participant 9, Female, Caribbean, Law)

This participant highlights that she is 100 per cent in charge of her career from maintaining her career contacts; she has been able to use them to assist her in navigating the law profession. Highlighting that she is "100%" in charge of her career demonstrates her perception of the extent to which her career is self-directed. By stating that these contacts "**have her back**" she suggests that they support her and have her best interests at heart. Another participant stated that also he was more in charge of their career than others:

"Yes I am, I go out and look for training opportunities."

(Participant 30, African, Law)

The above participant has highlighted that he has a self-directed career where he is responsible for finding training opportunities to develop himself. This additionally gives evidence to the view that more individuals, especially knowledge intensive workers are becoming self-directed in their career management. Other participants, however, stated that their employers were more involved in their career development:

“The organisational culture is very proactive about career progression. It adds to career clarity.”

(Participant 1, Female, Caribbean, IT)

This participant’s organisation takes more of an active role in the development of their staff’s careers. This is expressed as part of an organisational culture that develops individual’s careers. She feels that this adds to a clear career structure and career path for her within the organisation. This participant indicates that she is less self-directed in her career.

Additionally, participants stated that in terms of training opportunities, they as well as the employer were involved in identifying specific opportunities, almost sharing the responsibility.

“If I needed training, and I identified it, then it would be fine, so it’s probably a bit of both.”

(Participant 5, Male, Caribbean, IT)

The participant above states that the responsibility is shared, therefore he has a less self-directed career. Another participant stated that they would look for more training opportunities due to the demands of the job.

“As I work as a consultant, it is important that I keep up to date with information and techniques, so it’s both myself and the organisation that look for training opportunities.”

(Participant 10, Male, African, Financial Services)

Therefore the majority of the sample highlight that they are in charge of their careers, finding training opportunities alone. This is a key part of protean career development, where individuals are in charge of their career progression and training. The current participants appear to be identifying with the protean career view. The identification of the protean career and the individual aspect of career development show that there is an emphasis on the individual in contemporary career theories.

Entrepreneurship

Another topic that emerged from the interviews was the desire to be entrepreneurs; some participants were already doing this in addition to their main employment, or wanted to. This is an extreme form of self directedness, showing evidence of being directed by the individual’s values as opposed to the organisation’s values.

“Yes I would want to set up my own business, but not sure what in yet.”

(Participant 25, Male, Caribbean, Financial services)

Another participant had similar views:

“Yes I definitely want to set up my own business and feel I have the skills to do so.”

(Participant 13, Female, Caribbean, HR)

The above participants highlight that they are interested in setting up their own businesses, and that they feel that they have the skills to be successful. This shows a high levels of career self efficacy and career confidence. Another participant described that they would want to set up businesses but highlighted boundaries or hindrances to this.

“No I don’t want to run my own business, in the past yes, but realistically no because laws and legislations and a lot of striking off goes on in black and Asian firms. Banks don’t want to lend, there are constant checks and a high level of monitoring. It seems that clients more readily complain about black lawyers. In a firm there’s more protection and it’s more secure. Also there’s more control over a work life balance.”

(Participant 9, Female, Caribbean, Law)

This participant felt that the legislation and laws and vulnerability due to her race may make running a law firm something unrealistic for her to pursue. She highlights that she perceives that there is a lot of “striking off” of minority law firms and suggests this is an unfair amount. She also perceives that clients treat black lawyers differently: **“clients more readily complain about black lawyers”**, highlighting the inequality that she perceives black lawyers are faced with. The participant identifies race and monetary reasons as barriers to setting up her own business.

The participant below highlights that she has mixed feelings regarding setting up her own business due to certain barriers and so she would not actually pursue it.

“Yes and no, I would want to because I have a lot of ideas, but I am risk averse and have no capital.”

(Participant 16, Female, Caribbean, Law)

The participant states that due to her being risk averse, she sees an entrepreneurial career as being not realistic. One participant did want to establish his own business:

“My aspiration is to have a business that’s self operating, one that can survive without me, an online e-commerce based one”

(Participant 29, Female, African, Finance)

Therefore, some of the participants questioned would set up their own businesses and are in charge of their careers, but feel they would need to research the area and perhaps have more capital. One of the boundaries to entrepreneurship was the possible vulnerability that their race would be subject to when setting up a firm. In terms of being in charge of careers, some of the participants stated that they were far more in charge of their careers than their organisations, which points to a high level of career ownership in the sample and thus protean career perception.

7.6 Experience of Work

This section will discuss the different experiences that the participants have had in the working world. This was identified as a theme due to individual training experiences and how this has affected their career development.

Training

A sub theme in the theme of experience of work is the theme of training. Some participants stated that they received on the job training, with a distinct lack of formalised training.

“We had general training, but it wasn’t specific enough.”

(Participant 12, Male, African, Finance)

The above quote demonstrates that the participant would have liked more formalised training within his organisation. Another participant stated she would have liked more opportunities to develop herself within the organisation in order to develop her skills and her career.

“I haven’t had the opportunity to do any shadowing of senior partners, which I would like to do... also I go to free seminars, speeches and talks, Law is always changing, so I always have to keep up by training myself.”

(Participant 9, Female, Caribbean, Law)

The above participant states that she would like the opportunity to shadow other members of staff; however despite this she displays self-directed attitudes such as identifying training

opportunities for herself in order to develop her own career. Additionally other participants stated that:

“I have had on the job training but I would have preferred more formalised training.”

(Participant 13, Female, Caribbean, HR)

This participant has echoed other participants in that she would have like more formalised, training as opposed to informal on the job training. This participant has not highlighted that she has searched for more formalised training, which shows that she is not as protean in her career attitude as others within the sample. Other participants stated that they received adequate training within their organisations.

“Yes I receive a lot of training, all the time, there are 6 strategic business clients we work with and we train with all of them.”

(Participant 7, Male, African, IT)

The above participant highlights an extremely formalised form of training within the organisation, training holistically with the main clients of the business. Other participants also agree with this point:

“Yes I have had a vast amount of training, it’s a graduate role, so I have to do a lot, which gives me a nice level of technical knowledge.”

(Participant 5, Male, Caribbean, IT)

Therefore, in relation to training the participants have had both on the job and off the job training. Those who had a lot of on the job training, pointed to the desire to have more formalised training.

7.7 Summary

In summary, the current qualitative research phase, which included interviews with 16 black knowledge intensive workers within the UK, highlighted specific themes. The research question that needed to be answered in this phase of the research was:

What are the experiences and nature of the boundaries that black Africans and black Caribbeans face?

The following will summarise the findings from investigation of the above question.

- The majority of participants were not directed in one type of career by their parents, but were encouraged to explore a wide range of careers with parental support. Therefore the immediate family acted as career role models and mentors to the participants in order for them to be able to explore different careers and occupations. This may have affected the level of career self efficacy and self esteem that the participants had historically, which would have played a role on their self efficacy at present. This was perceived as a way in which individuals could navigate career boundaries.
- The extended family were perceived by the participants as effective career role models. These members enabled the sample to navigate career boundaries and make them more permeable. This may be due to the sample being from collectivist societies. In collectivist societies the importance of extended family is seen as vital in the upbringing of children and will mean that career role models can be sought from this group. Uncles, cousins and other extended family became implicit role models that some of the sample followed in respect of modelling their own academic or career related goals. This may have been due to many reasons: including the lack of directed and clear institutional career counselling at schools or colleges.
- Career guidance emerged as largely inadequate in the sample, and some participants sought career guidance from other sources. This did not enable the participants in this study to navigate careers adequately, and thus inadequate career guidance can be perceived as a career barrier.
- Career aspirations were observed in the sample: pilots, barristers and politicians. These career aspirations were sometimes perceived as unachievable and thus abandoned by the participants, and so rigid career barriers were perceived.
- Therefore black African and black Caribbean knowledge intensive workers were heavily influenced by family members, but more so by extended family members

acting as career role models, where participants often mirrored or made career choices vicariously. Career aspirations were influenced by later educational or occupational impermeable career barriers or more permeable career boundaries.

- The sample did not seem to have had problems entering certain knowledge intensive professions such as financial services, accountancy or management consultancies. This adds more evidence to the diversity research in that it shows that some professions have more barriers to entry than others: the law profession was highlighted as a more difficult profession to break into in comparison to finance, accountancy or management consulting.
- Hindrances to career enactment were divided into themes such as internal and external career boundaries and impermeable career barriers. Hindrances to career were generally conceptualised as career boundaries as they were perceived to have some degree of permeability. The sample more readily suggested internal boundaries, such as lack of motivation, lack of internal drive and lack of self-esteem, rather than external career boundaries, such as economic or discriminatory career boundaries. Many participants stated that they would not let internal motivations hinder their career development.
- The theme of race was salient amongst the sample, some participants perceiving race as an impermeable barrier to career, but the majority perceived it as a permeable boundary in the workplace that they could jump over and navigate with hard work.
- Some of the sample were members of professional networks, however participants did point to wanting career mentors in order to enhance their careers. This may have had an effect on the 'knowing whom' element of the intelligent career.
- The sample did feel that they were on the whole in charge of their career and training opportunities, which supports protean career theories. Half of the sample also had entrepreneurial self- directed career attitudes.

Therefore, to conclude we can observe in this sample that there are varied themes that have emerged including: hindrances, educational experiences, family, boundarylessness, experiences of work and aspirations. The aim of the qualitative phase of the research was to highlight the career experiences of black knowledge intensive workers. The participants stated that in terms of hindrances there were internal and external boundaries and barriers; educational experiences that were both negative and positive; family expectations; support and more purposeful intervention. The sample did have career types that were more synonymous with boundaryless and protean career attitudes and high aspirations.

8 Discussion

8.1 Introduction

The research questions were concentrated on investigating the nature of career boundaries that black professionals may face and the extent of the boundaryless career within the sample. Previous chapters have discussed the background to career theory, the context and methodology. This section will explain the current findings in the light of previous research investigations, and will discuss the career enablers highlighted by the sample, and what were perceived to be career barriers and career boundaries.

The research questions of this analysis were:

- 1) To what extent are black African and black Caribbean knowledge workers' careers boundaryless and protean?**
- 2) What are the experiences and nature of the career boundaries and barriers that black Africans and black Caribbean's face?**

The following section will answer the research questions by discussing career facilitators, career enablers, career barriers and career boundaries.

8.2 Quantitative Research Implications

This section will answer the research question: 1) To what extent are black African and black Caribbean knowledge workers' careers boundaryless and protean? The participants in the current study scored highly in the Briscoe *et al.* (2006) boundaryless scale, with the majority of participants identifying with the concept. This suggests that the participants were comfortable cross collaborating on projects with other organisations and other members of staff.

The current sample also demonstrated a preference for collaborating with others from different organisations whilst remaining bounded to an organisation, possibly for job security. This finding suggests that the current sample identified with the boundaryless career but only partially and is in contrast to many theoretical descriptions of the theory. The boundaryless career rhetoric states that individuals are moving to an absolute acceptance of boundaryless career characteristics at a rapid rate, but this has not been supported by the findings of the

current research (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). Career mobility and the boundaryless career seem to be characteristic of individuals working in the knowledge economy, who have been described as crossing boundaries with more ease than in the past, rather than having a completely boundaryless career, which has seamless career enactment, irrespective of location (Donnelly 2009, Inkson 2006; King *et al.* 2004). Instead, what has been observed in the current research is a preference for cross collaboration on projects, which is defined as psychological, internal boundarylessness but not physical mobility and not measured by physical career moves (Sullivan and Arthur 2005). Therefore the extent to which the current sample identifies with boundaryless career characteristics is approximately 50 per cent, in other words, they have psychological mobility and are more comfortable working with others across organisations rather than moving across organisations.

Organisational mobility is an aspect of the boundaryless career and measures the extent to which an individual would want to work with single or multiple employers. This was measured within the current investigation through the statement: “If my organisation provided life time employment, I would never desire to work anywhere else”. The sample had a low preference for organisational mobility (58 per cent) suggesting that some of the sample preferred the security of an organisational setting as opposed to multiple organisational settings. This also could be due to the uncertainty of the UK labour market and increasing unemployment rates possibly affecting the participants’ perception of secure employment. Thus individuals may not have felt comfortable with the concept of a non-organisational based employment due to the greater uncertainty in this form of employment.

The protean career characteristics and the self-directed career attitudes scale (Briscoe *et al.* 2006) measured the extent to which individuals consider themselves responsible for their own careers (“*I am responsible for my success or failure in my career*”). The current sample had an 83 per cent level of a self directedness. This suggests that the individuals who were questioned were concerned with learning on a continuous basis, had ownership of their career development and work challenges (Hall 1996; Hall and Moss 1998). This is another distinct element of those who work in the knowledge economy (Donnelly 2009). The self-directed career level was extremely high in this sample, thus they identified strongly with being in charge of their careers and having career ownership over the development of their careers.

The values driven scale (Briscoe *et al.* 2006) assesses the extent to which individuals pursue their career using their own values, versus organisational values (Volmer and Spurk 2011). The following statement was used to gauge the extent to which the participants were values driven: “*what’s important to me is how I feel about my career success, not how other people feel about it*”. The current sample scored moderately on this scale, 63 per cent of the sample agreed with the statements in this scale and identified with using their own values to navigate their careers, as opposed to those of the organisation, which is a major indication of a protean mind set. This level of convergence with the values driven scale could be due to the economic climate and may show that in order to keep their jobs the sample did not want to be seen as overtly antagonistic to the employer’s organisational values. Sharing values with an organisation is a key component of matching models of career such as Holland’s (1973, 1985, 1997) person–environment fit model, if an individual shares the values of a profession they are more likely to fit into the organisation.

Organisational values are also a key component of organisational culture because they form a basis for the ideals and basic assumptions in which the organisation operates (Schein 1992). Therefore in an organisational environment, to share values with that organisation is a key component of gaining organisational commitment and developing organisational satisfaction. This research highlighted that protean career attitudes were not fully identified within the current sample.

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self directedness	4.1	0.6
Values driven	3.8	0.7
Boundaryless	4.0	0.7
Organisational mobility	2.6	1.0
Race	2.3	1.3
Family support	2.1	1.2
Gender	2.0	1.4
Motivation	2.2	1.2

Table 8.1 Means and standard deviations of quantitative questionnaires

In comparison to the current research investigation, Briscoe *et al.* (2006) conducted a series of studies where boundaryless and protean scales were validated: 83 executives from an American manufacturing company were tested using both boundaryless and protean scales;

the sample was found to have a 78 per cent level of self-directedness, an 83 per cent level of having a values driven attitude, were 88 per cent boundaryless with a 64 per cent mobility preference. In the current sample, only the boundaryless scale had a higher result, which could be due to Briscoe *et al.*'s (2006) investigation having focussed on fewer individuals from a single organisation. Contrastingly, the current investigation used a larger sample, from multiple organisations within knowledge intensive firms. The current participants may be more familiar with working with a variety of individuals across multiple firms as opposed to just one. The current research highlighted that the sample were neither fully protean nor fully boundaryless in their career expression, and supports the view that this career theory has been overstated in the literature (Sullivan *et al.* 1998, Sullivan and Baruch 2009).

Volmer and Spurk (2011) research investigated if there was a relationship between protean and boundaryless career attitudes and career success. Their sample consisted of 116 professionals. The descriptive statistics highlighted their sample as having an average of 3.9 of self directedness, 3.3 values driven level, 3.3 level of organisational mobility and 4.0 level of boundarylessness. The Volmer and Spurk (2011) sample had the highest level of organisational mobility. In comparison to the current sample, who had a 4.1 level of self directedness, a values driven level of 3.8, organisational mobility level of 2.3 and a boundaryless level of 4.0. The current samples identification of organisational mobility was markedly different from Volmer and Spurk's sample.

Another research investigation which used the protean scale only by Briscoe *et al* (2006) by De Vos and Soens (2008) found that their sample had a 3.8 protean level (including values driven and self directedness). The current samples average protean score was 4.0 showing a .2 level difference. McArdle *et al* (2007) used the boundaryless scale only and found that their sample had a 3.6 level of boundaryless where as the current samples level of boundaryless was 3.4. Therefore the current sample's level of boundarylessness and protean-ness is comparable to other research studies using the Briscoe *et al* (2006). None of the samples had extremely high levels of either protean or boundaryless career outlooks and the current samples findings are comparable with past research using the scale.

The next section of this discussion will discuss the research findings in three different categories encompassing both the qualitative and quantitative career findings. The three categories that will be discussed will highlight career enablers, career boundaries and career

barriers exposed in both the quantitative and qualitative research investigations, which can be seen in Figure 8.1 below.

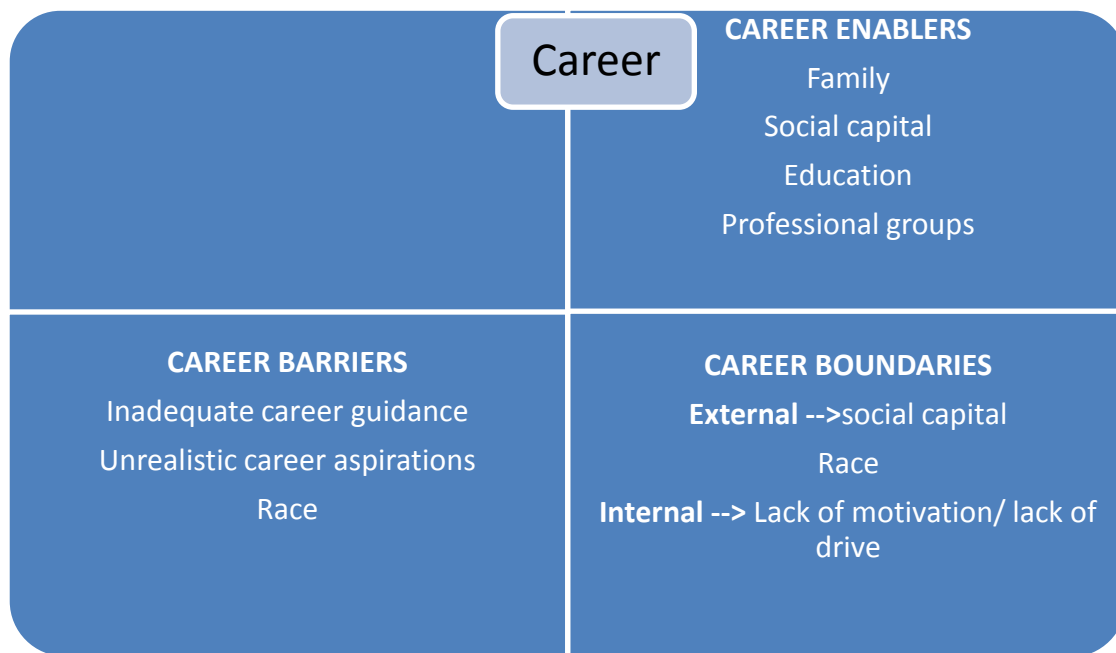


Figure 8.1- Differences between career barriers, boundaries and career enablers

8.3 Career Enablers

Career enablers can be defined in this research as external influences that appear to have enhanced or supported an individual’s career. Career enablers can allow individuals to navigate career boundaries and make them more permeable. The career enablers that will be discussed in this chapter include the family support received by the majority of qualitative participants, the educational level and professional groupings that were measured by the quantitative analysis. Career enablers have a positive motivational effect on those who were questioned and enabled participants to navigate the career landscape more confidently and effectively.

Family as a Career Enabler

The majority of participants in the qualitative interviews were not encouraged to pursue one narrow career direction by their parents, but rather were supported by parents to explore a variety of careers. Participants’ extended families offered career guidance and acted as role models, giving the participants the opportunities to explore careers securely. Some parents and other extended family members had a positive and directed effect on the career decision

making of those who were questioned. This research finding and the influence of family members in the development of the career has been investigated by social cognitive career researchers such as Krumboltz (1976).

According to Krumboltz (1976), individuals can form career role models, and through their vicarious experience an individual can learn about careers and be influenced by others. This includes learning and gaining experiences and skills through observation of the behaviours of others or by gaining new information and ideas through media, family members, books, movies and television. Career formation in the current sample was influenced by the immediate family who acted as career role models. The sample then observed their career role models' career successes and attempted to emulate them, whereas failures may have been vicariously learnt from and avoided.

An additional aspect of Krumboltz's (1976) social learning theory of careers includes instrumental learning experiences that occur when an individual's behaviour is positively reinforced or punished. Positive academic or career behaviour is more likely to be reinforced and thus more likely to be repeated, avoiding punishing behaviours that may lead to an increasing dislike of performing these behaviours. In terms of choosing a career, instrumental learning processes can emerge when an individual's behaviour is reinforced by exploring careers, which is more likely to be repeated if this positive reinforcement occurs.

The findings from the interviews highlighted that participants' extended family members were also viewed as career role models, thus the experiences and skills of uncles, cousins and aunts were internalised and modelled by some of the sample. The results showed that extended family members acted as career role models for the participants to explore careers vicariously and achieve career success. This finding is also supported by other socio cognitive career theories, including Lent *et al.* (1994). Lent *et al.*'s (1994) socio cognitive model of career decision making posits that career role models, which can include parents, may have an effect on the career decisions of their children, much like Krumboltz's (1976) theory. This initial impact on the participants may have led to meaningful career experiences, which may have developed their current career choices.

Other aspects of the socio cognitive career theory state that outcome expectations may impact an individual's career choices. Outcome expectations are moderated and influenced by career

goals, which organise, guide behaviour and increase the likelihood that career expectations will be achieved. Career goals can include occupational aspirations, plans or decisions that can organise and guide behaviour. These career goals can be influenced by familial influence and role modelling. According to Bandura (1977a), vicarious learning by observation or modelling of relevant others can increase career self-efficacy and decrease career barriers. The more similar the career role model (age, physical characteristics, sex, education, status and experience), the greater the effect will be in developing higher career self-efficacy (Bandura 1977a). Therefore having a family member as a career role model will increase the likelihood of being influenced by them due to sharing similar experiences and physical characteristics.

Pearson *et al.* (2001) investigated African American women and their perception of family influence over their career choice and found that there were familial emphases on education, family relationships and the family's social and economic resources. This supports the current research and highlights similar experiences to the Pearson (2001) research study such as the positive influence of family and close friends on the development of career choice by those interviewed in this investigation.

Research by Hackett and Betz (1981) suggested that a lack of career self-efficacy can be a career barrier for those who are in the early stages of career exploration. Self-efficacy is defined as the confidence an individual has in their ability to choose and have a certain career. The sample interviewed would have greater career self-efficacy from the immediate and extended family that gave some of those who were interviewed, direct and indirect career guidance. Additionally, Caribbean and African countries tend to be collectivist in nature, focussing on the group rather than the individual; therefore extended families' interest in career guidance is expected.

Research by Triandis (2008) found that African countries rate highly on the collectivist scale. To this end, research conducted in collectivist countries found that fathers are very important as career role models in the development of an individual's pursuit of an MBA (Agarwala 2008). This shows that having a collectivist cultural stance is linked to the extent to which family is involved in the career decision making process. Family networks can increase the levels of outcome expectations through the identification of career role models; therefore culture has an effect on career decision making. This study is linked to the current research

investigation as career decision making was moderated and influenced in some cases by extended family. In collectivist cultures there seems to be greater involvement of extended family over the individual's career development (Agarwala 2008).

Therefore, "family interest and support" in the formulation of career decisions can be perceived as a career enabler as it positively affects the sample's ability to navigate through their careers. Those individuals who received a lack of positive familial support highlight this as a hindrance to their career development. Thus to conclude, family role models had a distinctive part in shaping the participants' careers. On the whole, positive career role models from immediate and extended family enabled the sample to navigate the career landscape and to increase career knowledge, and thus can be perceived as a career enabler. Triandis (2008) showed that familial involvement in career decision making can have a positive effect on the development of careers. Super's career stage theory (1957), career self-efficacy and social cognitive career theories are able to explain to some extent the effect that family members can have on the development of career choice (Krumboltz 1976; Lent *et al* 1994) as they provide explanations of career role models in the career exploration phase of an individual's life. The next section will highlight the effect that career networks have on the development of careers.

Career Networks as Career Enablers

Career networks, which are an element of intelligent career competencies (knowing whom) (DeFellippi and Arthur 1994), were perceived as a career enablers by the majority of participants. Some individuals within the qualitative interviews highlighted that they were part of professional networks and had career mentors. These career networks enabled individuals to navigate their careers more effectively. Those who did not have career mentors or were not members of professional networks highlighted a desire for this competency as there was a perception that these networks would have a positive impact on their careers.

The inclusion of professional networks is of real importance in the current flexible boundaryless working environment (DeFellippi and Arthur 1994). Research by Eby *et al.* (2003) found that three components can assist an individual to navigate through their new boundaryless career with more ease: "Knowing why", which involves a person's motivation and identity; "knowing how", which looks into skills and expertise; and "knowing whom", which looks into professional relationships and contacts. Eby *et al.* (2003) found that

individuals who high higher levels of knowing why (proactive personality and open), knowing how (career skills) and knowing whom (a mentor or internal networks) competencies reported greater levels of perceived career success. Therefore the participants in this investigation could navigate their career with more ease.

Knowing whom is closely linked to social capital, which is defined as the qualities that represent networking relationships with peers, superiors and subordinates. Such relationships are important as they can help regulate and facilitate career advancement. Demographic similarities based on race, sex, status and educational levels can increase social capital (Coleman 1988). Bandura (1999) also stated that demographic similarity would increase the likelihood of having career role models that are influential to careers. This would include career role models of the same gender, of a similar age and the same race. However, having no or limited social capital can impede career navigation, which may be perceived as a hindrance to careers (Thomas 1990). Thus, social capital (knowing whom) is an important aspect for knowledge intensive workers, and can provide individuals with important career role models and mentors who can assist them in navigating their careers successfully. In other words, having career networks and career mentors aid the career navigation of participants, therefore a career network can be observed as a career enabler.

Protean Career as a Career Enabler

Protean career competencies include being values driven and having self directed career ownership (Hall 1976). The current sample felt that they were on the whole in charge of their careers and were responsible for identifying their own training opportunities, as was highlighted specifically in the qualitative section of the research investigation. Protean career outlook can be perceived as a career enabler due to protean characteristics being a key component in the development of knowledge intensive careers. For example, De Vos and Soens (2008) found that protean career competencies were related to high levels of career satisfaction, career insight and career self-management. The findings from the current sample were that participants had a high level of self-directed career management, emphasising self-directed career management over organisational career management. Although there is no link in the current research with self-directedness, career satisfaction, career insight and career self management, career self management is an important aspect of a self-directed career.

Chudzikowski (2011) compared business graduates from 1970 and 1990. It was found that the 1990 graduates made more career transitions in the first 15 years of their careers than their 1970s cohort. The 1990s participants seemed to move through organisational boundaries with more ease by addressing the form of organisational movements, (horizontal, vertical and organisational). This research investigation highlights that an aspect of a protean career is self-directedness and shows that the cohort from the 1990s seemed to have moved vertically and horizontally in their careers. Linked to the current research investigation, the sample did identify with the protean career ideals and the participants in the current study may have moved through organisational boundaries more rather than remaining in one organisation for a prolonged period of time.

Educational Level as a Career Enabler

Positive educational experiences were related by some of the participants, and can be perceived as a career enabler. These positive educational experiences may have created a high level of career knowledge and career decision making self efficacy (Lent 1994). Additionally human capital theory can also provide an explanation of how important educational experiences are in the development of careers. Human capital theory suggests that the investment of education and training can lead to human resources gain and improvement in employment (Nafukho *et al.* 2004). Human capital is linked to the intelligent career competencies of the boundaryless career (knowing how) (DeFellippi and Arthur 1994).

The positive educational experiences of the sample and subsequent academic self efficacy may lead to higher levels of career self efficacy and the confidence to explore different careers. Positive educational experiences relate to human capital, as an individual who has greater academic self -efficacy is more likely to then continue to invest in themselves by gaining further qualifications and thus gaining greater human capital (Bandura *et al.* 2008; Bong and Skaalvik 2003). Individuals, who experienced negative career experiences in the UK due to relocation, may have initially experienced reduced career knowledge and self efficacy and potential reduced human capital levels.

In the knowledge intensive industry, human capital has been highlighted as an extremely important aspect of gaining and sustaining employment (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). Therefore, within the quantitative sample human capital and education were seen as important aspects of career development and career choice. Once this investment in human

capital has been gained, the sample viewed other potential hindrances to career development as permeable boundaries to career that could be overcome by increasing internal motivations such as self belief and self worth.

Additionally, the quantitative phase of the research highlights how educational level is a career enabler. It was found that there was a significant link between the level of education and the boundaryless mind-set within the sample. Individuals with postgraduate certificates had the highest levels of boundaryless career outlook. This finding supports the view that individuals with higher levels of education are likely to have more boundaryless career outlooks than those individuals with lower levels of education (Segers 2008). Therefore education can be observed as a career enabler due to higher levels of education being linked to higher levels of boundaryless career competencies. This finding is also supported by Segers *et al.* (2008) and Briscoe *et al.* (2006). In Briscoe *et al.*'s (2006) second investigation it was found that there was a significant difference in mobility preference between the different levels of education; MBA students had a clear mobility preference. This identifies that level of education can to some extent be a correlating factor between a boundaryless and protean mind-set.

Segers *et al.* (2008) additionally found a significant difference between career enactment and level of education: having a higher educational level was positively related to physical career mobility, career self management and psychological mobility. This finding may be explained by higher levels of education being linked to higher levels of human capital, and thus to individuals being more confident moving between organisations. Individuals who attend prestigious universities can develop greater social capital, which forms the “knowing whom” aspect of the intelligent career (DeFellippi and Arthur 1994). This “knowing whom” component can develop an individual’s networks and contacts within an industry, helping individuals to progress through the knowledge intensive economy more smoothly.

Additionally, the type of tertiary education that was received also became a career enabling factor and correlated with aspects of the protean and boundaryless career. In the quantitative phase of the research it was found that individuals who attended Russell Group universities had the highest level of boundarylessness, suggesting that they were more comfortable with working across organisations with collaborations and on team working projects. Although the current research did not find a significant correlation between the type of university studied at

and the expression of boundaryless and protean career, there was a near significant difference found between those who attended Russell Group universities and those who did not attend universities at all, this finding is supported by social and human capital theories. Social and human capital theories posit that an individual can increase career advancement by investing in education, skills and career networks. Research to support this has been undertaken by researchers such as Segers *et al.* (2008).

Segers *et al.* (2008) also found that having increased social capital is important in the enactment of careers, especially in knowledge intensive workers. In the current research, those who attended international universities had the lowest level of boundaryless career preference as they may have identified less with the boundarylessness career concepts such as moving between several organisations, due to the lack of social capital, than individuals who went to university in the UK. This could be due to the collectivist nature of the countries the participants previously lived in, which may have led to greater exposure to traditional career patterns as opposed to boundaryless ones.

Triandis (2008) states that African countries tend to rate highly on the collectivist scale, and based on this, individuals from collectivist societies may not identify with the lateral career movements identified by boundaryless careers. Instead, more traditional career paths may be the norm in Caribbean and African countries. Therefore, a significant difference was found between those who studied in international universities and those who studied at Russell Group universities in their preference for the boundaryless career. This could be due to cultural differences and the acceptance of boundarylessness in the UK, which may not have been mirrored in certain African or Caribbean families, which often harbour collectivist cultural ideals emphasising group progression rather than the individual career progression (Triandis 2008).

Therefore, the previous research supports the finding that educational level has an effect on a boundaryless mind-set; although this can also be perceived as a criticism that the boundaryless mind-set is an elitist concept. It suggests that the more human capital an individual possess the more boundaryless their career mind-set, suggesting that the boundaryless career is an elitist concept. Having the freedom to move around organisations may not be a realistic ideal for those who do not have enough human or social capital to be able to navigate organisational boundaries. This would concur with the view that those who

can afford to navigate through organisational boundaries, due to an increased social and human capital developed through university, will take advantage of cross collaboration and cross organisational boundary careers (Sullivan *et al.* 1999, 2009; Inkson *et al.* 2012). The current research has highlighted that educational level is linked to boundaryless and protean career theories, allowing those with higher human capital levels to be more effective at navigating the modern career landscape. This therefore shows that education can be perceived as a career enabler and highlights how important education can be in forming career self efficacy and self esteem. The next section will assess how age can be perceived as a career enabler.

Age as a Career Enabler

An interesting, yet counter-intuitive finding resulted from the quantitative research investigation between different age groups and boundaryless and protean career competencies. It was found that there was a significant difference between age group and self directed career outlook. Participants aged 51–60 had the highest level of self directedness; this suggests that individuals nearest to retirement age identified with protean characteristics of being more in charge of their career development than were the organisations that they worked with. Age group was also a significant factor in the level of boundarylessness in the sample; participants aged 41–50 had the highest level of boundarylessness, suggesting that they were more willing and comfortable working with others collaboratively on projects. This finding is in contrast to other research studies, which have often found that younger participants have a higher level of protean and boundaryless career enactment.

An example of this can be found in research by Segers *et al.* (2008) who observed that younger individuals were more likely to possess boundaryless and protean ideals than older individuals. This finding was explained by younger individuals being free to explore their career and being able to afford to be less bound to their careers, suggesting that this age group were more in charge of their career development than their employers in comparison to older participants. Additionally, protean career outlook from the original research was observed as something reserved for younger individuals who are inclined to be more flexible and dynamic in their career development.

The finding that older workers have higher levels of boundarylessness and self directed career preferences is also in contrast to developmental stage theories. Developmental stage

theories such as Super's (1957) suggest that during maturity an individual will be in the maintenance phase of their careers, where the individual is more concerned with holding on to the skills and the position they have within an organisation. However, the current research found that the individuals with the highest levels of boundarylessness were in the 51–60 age group and the individuals with the highest levels of self directedness were aged 41–50. These findings could be due to older individuals being more in charge of their careers in the knowledge economy and the proposed extension of the retirement age, meaning that older workers may have an added enthusiasm for their careers and ownership over it at this age due to lower financial or familial responsibilities.

Therefore, age in this research investigation can be perceived as a career enabler for protean and boundaryless career outlooks. It would seem that greater age correlates with a higher propensity for boundaryless career in this investigation.

Professional Group as a Career Enabler

Through the analysis of quantitative questionnaires it emerged that certain professional groups accepted boundaryless career competencies more readily than other professionals. A significant difference was identified in the quantitative research between professional groups and their level of boundarylessness and self-directed career management. Management consultants had a significantly higher level of boundarylessness than any other professional group. This demonstrates that management consultants may have a higher propensity for boundarylessness and protean career competencies, thus professional group can be observed as a career enabler to the boundaryless and self-directed careers.

Management consultants perceive that they have greater ownership of their careers, training and development than any other occupational group investigated within this research study, such as HR consultants, finance workers and IT consultants. This finding can be explained by the view that management consultants often work in fast paced environments and will therefore be familiar with identifying their own training needs and thus be more self-directed in their organisational learning and career progression. This is supported by literature that knowledge intensive workers are less bound to the organisation and in turn more in charge of their careers (Barley and Kunda 2004). Kitay and Wright (2007) also suggest that management consultants are more often in transit and thus used to manoeuvring around

organisational boundaries. Therefore, the finding that management consultants have a more boundaryless mind-set than individuals of other occupational groups is supported by the previous research and is an intuitive finding within this research investigation.

Furthermore, management consultants have been described as archetypal employees of the knowledge economy, who tend to have dynamic, highly intelligent characteristics and a high level of expertise and skill in specific given areas (Tams and Arthur 2007). Management consultants may have scored significantly highly on the boundaryless scale as they may have been more comfortable than other professional groups in working and collaborating across teams and working with different types of organisations. This research finding is supported by Sullivan and Arthur (2005), who divided boundarylessness into four quadrants. The findings from this research support the third quadrant, which highlights low physiological mobility, but high psychological mobility. These are individuals who have a high expectation of their own employability, and who can sometimes find growth outside an organisational setting; such as management consultancy. Therefore the significant finding that management consultants identified more with boundarylessness is supported by previous research.

Therefore, career enablers can be defined as factors that have enhanced or supported the sample's careers. These career enablers include: family, social capital or career networks, education and professional groups. Family advice and guidance provided positive career role models and enhanced levels of career self efficacy. Social capital and career networks were highlighted by the sample as factors that will enhance their careers and provide advice and guidance about specific careers. Educational levels and professional groups also demonstrated a positive link to the development of boundaryless careers. Therefore the career enablers and enhancers in this research are those aspects that have enhanced the careers of the sample. The next section of this thesis will discuss the nature and extent of the career barriers and career boundaries that have affected the sample.

8.4 Career Barriers

The terms career boundaries and career barriers have been used interchangeably and there have been calls in the literature that these terms should be more clearly defined (Arthur and Sullivan 2005). Career barriers have been highlighted in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the current research investigation and are defined as we can see in the below table as rigid, impermeable, finite obstacles to career development.

Career barriers

Impermeable

Inflexible

“Thwarting conditions which may hinder career development process” (Crites 1969)

Multiple negative stimuli that may affect confidence

Internal barriers: fear of failure, low career self-efficacy

External barriers: gender stereotypes, male managerial model

Table 8.2: Career Barrier Characteristics

The concept of career barriers has developed from research into the career attempting to explain women’s career progression. The aspects of career that have been highlighted as career barriers within this research include unrealistic career aspirations.

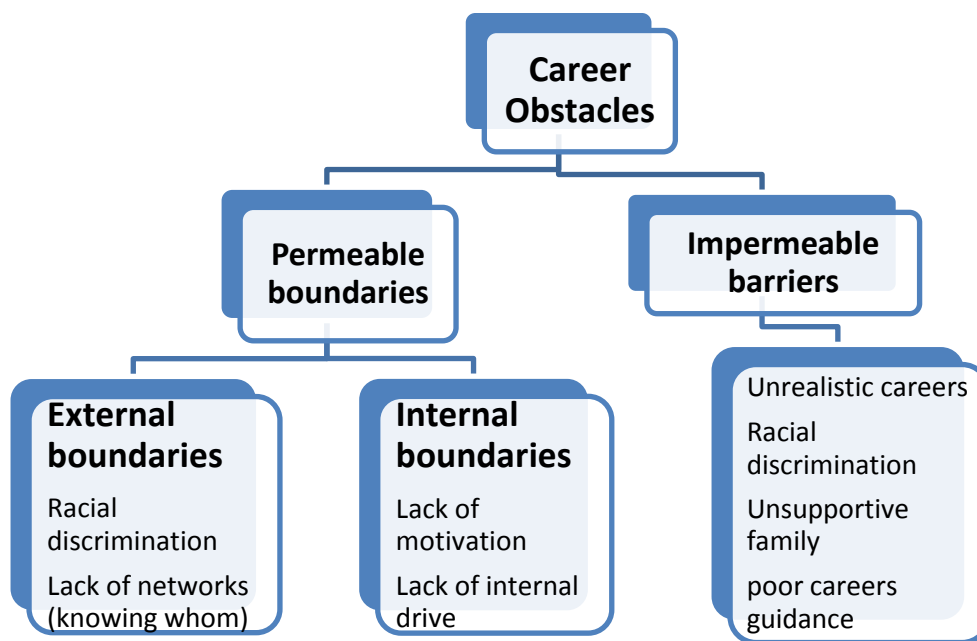


Figure 8.2: Nature and type of perceived career boundaries and career barriers.

Figure 8.2 highlights the differences between career barriers and career boundaries that were perceived by the sample. Impermeable career barriers were identified as poor careers guidance, unsupportive family and racial discrimination; these barriers were perceived as inflexible and hard to navigate. Career boundaries were perceived as being more flexible and participants believed them easier to navigate than career barriers. Career boundaries were divided into two sections, internal and external. Internal career boundaries included a lack of internal motivation. External career boundaries included a lack of professional networks and

mentors, and racial discrimination. Racial discrimination has been identified as both a career barrier and career boundary because participants perceived it as either an inflexible career barrier or a flexible career boundary: some participants perceived racial discrimination as external to them and that it would not affect their careers directly, thus seeing it as a flexible career boundary they could avoid by working hard. Whilst participants perceived racial discrimination as something they could overcome, they also acknowledged it as potentially damaging to their career development, and therefore a career development hindrance. The next section will discuss the career barriers perceived by the sample.

Inadequate Careers Guidance as a Career Barrier

Career guidance received in primary or secondary education may be the first formal setting in which individuals can experience and explore careers with trained professionals. If this interaction is not positive or helpful participants may develop poor career self efficacy and career barriers may formulate in the minds of career actors (Gunz *et al.* 2000). The career guidance received by the sample within their educational environment was perceived as generally inadequate, and did not enable individuals to explore or examine careers at an early age. This may have lowered the career self-efficacy of the sample, but this could have been moderated by familial interest in the participants' career exploration. The social cognitive theory of career development integrates career self-efficacy as an important factor in career decision making (Lent *et al.* 1994). The lack of clear, formal or appropriate career guidance may become a career boundary later on in life due to the lack of information about certain careers and occupations. This may become a career boundary as described by Gunz *et al.* (2000) as a "reluctance to move", where the career actor constructs boundaries in their mind due to poor career advice. If there is a continued lack of clear career guidance, these boundaries are more likely to affect career actors as they may not be aware of career opportunities that may be available to them.

According to DeFellipi and Arthur (1994), the lack of adequate formal career guidance may also lead to a decrease of two career competencies: knowing how and knowing whom. Knowing how, is the extent to which an individual has work related skills and knowing whom is the extent to which an individual has the contacts needed to be able to navigate the career landscape. If an individual does not receive adequate career guidance in the initial stage of their careers it may affect the industry knowledge needed to navigate the knowledge

economy, and individuals may not be aware of avenues or pathways to their desired occupation. Therefore, the lack of clear career guidance early on in careers may have an effect on the development of career boundaries later on in life (Gunz *et al.* 2000; DeFillipi and Arthur 1994; Lent *et al.* 1994). This is a factor that may have affected the current sample.

More traditional career theories, including Super's career stage theory (1957), can also provide an explanation as to how the inadequate career guidance perceived by the current sample can affect an individual's career in the long term. Developmental stage theories explain the different career levels an individual may experience through their life time. For example, the growth stage of careers (0–14), where the self-concept develops through identification of family and school figures; the exploration phase (15–24) where the individual develops and studies career options and a stronger notion of career. The current research has found that career role models in the form of family often had a positive effect on career development and career guidance and also had an effect on the awareness of careers. The current research findings are supported by Super's developmental stages theories (1957), where family and formal career education are also highlighted in the exploration phase and as a key aspect of the development of career concepts. Thus, traditional career theories can also apply to the current research findings based on the importance of career guidance to initial career experiences. Therefore, positive career experiences are important to the development of a confident individual, capable of navigating through the employment landscape with ease.

Career Aspirations as Career Barriers

A salient finding within the qualitative research interviews was that some of the participants highlighted certain career aspirations as their preferred careers at a young age, but did not subsequently pursue them in later life. In this regard, the participants cited an awareness of impermeable career barriers, or as Gunz *et al.* (2000) highlighted: “a reluctance to move” from the career actor leading them to abandon these career aspirations. Participants may have abandoned these initial career aspirations due to the development of career barriers, rigid hindrances to career development in the careers that they aspired to. Additionally there were some reports that career aspirations were abandoned due to a lack of similar career role models or career contacts in these aspirational careers. This shows the importance of career role models and career self efficacy in career exploration; additionally how the lack of career

role models can lead to the perception of impermeable career barriers (Hackett and Betz 1981; Lent *et al* 1994, Gunz *et al.* 2000).

Other participants highlighted that they saw their career aspirations as unrealistic and generally not achievable, and perceived this as an impermeable career barrier. Other findings highlighted that lack of certain career experiences or lack of business contacts were perceived as permeable boundaries, as individuals believed that they could change these boundaries positively. Therefore, certain career aspirations that some participants may have held at a young age were perceived as unrealistic and unachievable. The current group did not perceive many rigid impermeable career barriers to their career development. Rather, the sample more readily highlighted flexible career boundaries.

Race as a career Barrier

Although the majority of participants in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research did not highlight race as a rigid, impermeable barrier to their career advancement, there was minimal acknowledgement that race could be perceived as an impermeable career barrier. This shows that despite some participants having highlighted it in theory as a rigid barrier to break through, in practice they externalised this threat and expressed that they would not let this affect their career progression in the long term. In this case, race has been perceived by the sample to some extent as both a career barrier and a boundary.

Figure 8.2 highlights the nature of the career boundaries that were faced. Race was expressed as an external, permeable boundary by most, which was also perceived as moveable. The lack of career mentors was highlighted as an external boundary to the pursuit of their careers, however the sample did highlight this as something that they had control over. Another boundary recounted by the sample was the lack of knowledge of certain careers, which was a product of poor career guidance. Initial recruitment into careers such as accounting, finance, IT and recruitment was not perceived as a problem; however the maintenance of these careers was highlighted as possibly being difficult.

This research question, which addresses the nature and type of boundaries faced, addresses research calls made by Sullivan and Baruch (2009) and Inkson *et al.* (2012), who highlighted that there is a need for clarity in the definition of the term career boundaries and for research

to express the nature of the boundaries faced by individuals. This research clarifies the nature of the boundaries faced by black knowledge intensive workers.

8.5 Career Boundaries

Following a call for a clearer distinction between career boundaries and career barriers (Gunz *et al.* 2000), the distinction between career barriers and career boundaries has been defined in this thesis. Career boundaries have been defined by several career researchers “as things that separate or surround careers” (Gunz *et al.* 2000). Career boundaries can be viewed as flexible and dynamic, and within this research have been defined as external factors that negatively affect career progression, such as race and lack of social capital. Career boundaries can be either internal or external. Internal career boundaries highlighted within the current research investigation include such internal drivers as internal motivations to career success. External career boundaries included factors external to the individual, such as race or lack of social networks. The key characteristic of a career boundary is the permeability of the boundary (Gunz *et al.* 2000). Career boundaries are more permeable than career barriers. Career boundaries expressed within the current investigation include: the lack of professional contacts, which suggests a career boundary of lack of available networks, or knowing whom (DeFellippi and Arthur 1994).

Career boundaries
Permeable
Flexible
Objective – opinions on boundaries that many people have accepted about a profession
Subjective – opinions of careers that only some people have about careers
“Things that separate and surround things” Gunz <i>et al.</i> (2000)
Demand centered boundaries – surround occupational groups
Constructional – only permeable to the elite
Reluctance to select – on the part of selectors due to lack of expertise
Reluctance to move – boundaries that a person constructs in their mind’s mental barrier

Table 8.3: Career Boundaries Characteristics

The above table shows the components of career boundaries, such as demand centred boundaries, which are natural boundaries to careers that surround occupational groups, and the view that career boundaries are flexible. The current section will highlight the career

boundaries exposed within this research such as **race and lack of social networks**, which were perceived as external boundaries to careers.

Race as an External Career Boundary

External career boundaries are the concepts defined by the sample as outside their control. The sample made very few explicit mentions of any career hindrances being inflexible barriers, and there were minimal mentions of problems with being accepted or being recruited into professions such as financial services, recruitment and information technology due to racial discrimination. However, the law profession was highlighted by some of the sample as difficult to infiltrate, and was perceived as a demand centred boundary. The finding that being recruited into these professions was not explicitly difficult and was perceived as a career boundary, has not been stated in previous career research. For example, Fitzgerald and Weizman (1992) found that there was racial discrimination that occurred during selection and assessment; their sample explicitly highlighted racial discrimination as an impermeable barrier to career progression. This is in contrast to the current research study, where participants did not explicitly express such hindrances to their own career development.

The current research participants more readily suggested that internal boundaries such as lack of motivation or lack of internal drive were the only boundaries that could hinder their career development, but quickly emphasised how permeable these boundaries were by suggesting that they would not allow them to be a hindrance to their career development. This is in contrast to research by Bell and Nkomo (2001), who found that black participants more readily highlighted external barriers as hindrances, and white individuals were more likely to highlight internal boundaries as hindrances to their career development. The current sample highlighted internal boundaries to career development, similar to the white participants in the Bell and Nkomo research investigation (2001).

Other research by Longo and Strahley (2008) found that 70 per cent of the participants questioned highlighted gender discrimination as an impermeable career barrier. Foley (2002) researched glass ceiling perceptions in Hispanic law associates and found that their sample perceived a high level of external career barriers such as racial and gender. James (2000) researched race and related differences in promotions and the effects of social and human capital and found that race was highlighted as a career barrier to promotion. Kirton (2009) found, when researching UK business graduates found that they highlighted race as a

potential career barrier. These findings highlight more objectively how race indeed can be perceived as a barrier to career progression.

In contrast, participants in the current research investigation perceived their race as a permeable external career boundary that was within their control. This demonstrates that in the current qualitative sample, race was perceived differently than by participants in other research studies. Additionally, the quantitative questionnaire included a scale on race that measured the statement “my race has negatively affected my career”, the mean average scoring was 2.3 out of a possible 5 (strongly agree; indicating that explicit racism was perceived as a permeable career boundary and not an explicit negative issue within the current sample).

These differences in findings may have been due to changes in methodology; James (2000), Longo and Straehley (2008) and Foley (2002) used quantitative research methods in their research studies, which may have led to differences in responses. Additionally the aforementioned studies could have had different responses due to them being conducted in North America. These differences in methodology may have led to the differences in results.

Therefore the perception of race as a hindrance to career development was perceived as an external career boundary within the current investigation. This finding was also highlighted in the quantitative research questionnaire. Although there were no significant differences highlighted between black Africans and black Caribbeans and their levels of boundarylessness or protean career outlook; both ethnicities did highlight racial discrimination as a career boundary which could affect their progression. Due to calls in the research for boundaryless career investigations to research different populations (Sullivan *et al.* 1998; Sullivan *et al.* 2009) the research tested the boundaryless and protean mind-sets of black African and black Caribbean knowledge intensive workers. It was found that they had extremely similar levels of protean career outlook and boundaryless career outlook. Research has not currently been identified that can support or refute this finding. However, race was not explicitly highlighted as a problem or hindrance by many of the participants in the qualitative interviews either; which highlights the view that race has not been explicitly highlighted by all as an impermeable barrier to career development.

The mid-level bottleneck theory can offer a useful explanation of the differences in perception of race between participants in the previous and current research investigations. Mid-level bottlenecks occur when organisations stereotype minorities as having reduced management capabilities and the white majority group members as being more competent for management positions than members of minority groups. Additionally, these negative views that may be harboured about minority capabilities in management positions extend to the view that other employees may prefer to be supervised by white people in positions of responsibility, thus perpetuating the phenomenon of in group domination of mid and senior level positions (Yap and Konrad 2009). The current sample did not perceive many mid-level bottlenecks, and if they did they were not attributed to race. Many participants' accounts did not corroborate with the aforementioned theory. This could be due to the participants not perceiving this issue as not related to their personal career journeys; the current sample may not have been exposed to such explicit, negative attention based on their race. This could explain the difference in perception of race in this research study and previous research investigations.

Additionally, the colour blind theory is another theory that can aid the explanation as to why race was perceived as a permeable, external boundary to career development (Ansell 1997; Shelton *et al* 2005). The colour blind theory posits that everyone should be or is treated equally regardless of race and instead individuals should be or are judged on merit (Ansell 1997; Shelton *et al* 2005). The perception of equality in the labour market may have developed from the view that investment in human capital would allow a minority individual to navigate through the negative effects of racial discrimination and thus be judged on merit, as the colour blind theory states (Nafukho *et al.* 2004). Some of the participants may have held this view and perceived explicit racial discrimination as a permeable boundary to careers as they may have believed that meritocracy operates in the UK. They may have also perceived that employment discrimination based on race is a subjective opinion and not an objective facet of the labour market. Therefore the participants within this study may have perceived they could develop their careers, regardless of any explicit form of discrimination.

Another theory that can explain the sample's perception of race is the concept of bi-culturality. This concept emerged from the career experiences of racial minorities in the workplace, which is described as the navigation struggle of being in two distinct cultural worlds (Hopkins 1987). Bell *et al* (1987) suggested that stress caused by constantly moving

between two cultures may be confounded by the view that white dominated organisations are often unaware that their norms and values may highlight cultural distinctions for minority groups. This may lead to minority groups feeling alienated in trying to solve organisational cultural dissonance by identifying with the majority race's organisational cultures in order to navigate their careers and minimise internal conflicts. Conflicts may emerge when minority group employees try and integrate themselves to the majority cultural norms of the organisations (Thomas and Alderfer 1989). The current sample may have been integrated into the white majority group within their organisations and thus perceived race as an external boundary to their career development.

Additionally, the introduction of employment legislation can also explain why some participants perceived racial discrimination as a career boundary. Employment legislation such as the 1976 race relations act outlaws any act of discrimination based on race, colour or nationality. This act appears to deal with the poorer treatment that ethnic minorities may face in the workplace and thus participants in the current research investigation may have felt that as explicit racial discrimination within the workplace is illegal it is thus less prevalent and thus less likely to occur to them.

Workplaces appear to be improving and, due to employment legislation, attempting to remove racial discrimination from the workplace, thus the current participants may have felt racial discrimination was irrelevant to them. The majority of the current sample did not identify with the view that racial discrimination had an effect on their career progression and mostly perceived it as a career boundary within their control.

The career boundaries within this sample included race, which was perceived as external and permeable, in addition, internal boundaries such as lack of internal motivation and drive were more readily implicated as permeable career boundaries.

8.6 Linking findings to Career Theories

Contemporary career theories and competencies	Authors	Summary	Relevant to current study
Boundaryless	Arthur and Rousseau (1996)	Careers have no limits No constraints Career self management Moves through many organisations Movements can be lateral Psychological mobility	Sample related to boundarylessness management consultants and boundarylessness. University studied at and Boundarylessness
Protean competencies	Hall (1975)	Self directed career Driven by individual values Personal responsibility for career success and development	Average levels of Values driven but high levels of self directedness in quantitative and qualitative research interviews. SD and management consultants
Intelligent competencies	DeFellippi and Arthur (1994)	Motivation, identity, key skills, expertise and reputation. Knowing why motivation to work, identity, personality, self concept Knowing how human capital, or skill needed Knowing whom relationships inside and outside of work	Qualitative interviews highlighted a link to intelligent competencies. Knowing whom sample highlighted that they wanted more career mentors and to join more networks. Knowing why high motivation to work lots of self esteem and self concept. Knowing how sample had high levels of human capital
Post corporate	Pieperl and Baruch (1997)	Leaner, flatter, entrepreneurial organisations Contractors Flexible and dynamic	The findings do link to this theory organisations are becoming leaner and flatter and relying on contractors. Therefore individuals are becoming more flexible and dynamic in their careers. The current research highlights some of these opinions however, individuals are also tied to their organisations for security.
Kaleidoscope	Maniero and Sullivan (2006)	Changing career patterns by the rotation of different aspects of their lives Authenticity/Balance/Challenge	The theory states that individuals rotate different aspects of their lives. The current research did not highlight any aspects of work life balance or familial strains as a career barrier or boundary.
Portfolio	Handy (1994) Bradley <i>et al.</i> (2000)	Independent working style Wage work Fee work Home work and gift work	Independent working style was highlighted in the current research however the definitions of wage work, fee work, home work and gift work were not highlighted in the current research investigation.
Developmental stage theories	Super and Levinson	Careers develop based on ages and life stages	Finding that older individuals were both more self directed and boundaryless is counter to developmental stage theories. Stage theories state that from the ages of 40-60, an individual should be in decline or the maturity phase.
Schein's Career Anchor theory	Schein (1974)	Individuals are motivated by 8 career anchors or drivers. Such as :stability, entrepreneurial creativity and pure challenge	The theory reveals the motivation for pursuing careers, however this was not explicitly tested within the current research.

Table 8.4 Career theories and relevance to the current research

The current research investigation has been concerned with the boundaryless career theory which includes intelligent and protean career competencies (Greenhaus et al 2004). Some

other contemporary career theories that were highlighted in the introductory chapters can be seen in table 8.4 above. Table 8.4 shows the applicability of some of these other theories to the current research investigation. Schein's career anchor theory (1974) explains that an individual's career values and attitudes are consistent throughout their career, after some adjustment in the early stages. These career anchors or drivers act to encourage individuals to pursue their careers. Throughout the career, the individual gains awareness that allows them to develop positive and negative views about their career and developments for the future (Beck and La Lopa 2001). As a classic matching model an individual's career anchor or their occupational driver and their work environment needs to be congruent to achieve higher levels of organisational commitment.

The career anchor model can be linked to the current research as a high level of motivation in the sample was linked self directed career management, an aspect of the protean career competencies. Motivation can therefore be perceived as antecedent to the protean career. This can be linked to the career anchor theory because career anchors can be conceptualised as an individual's underlying motivation to work. The difference between the career anchor theory and boundaryless career theory is that Schein's model (1974) is less flexible and it states that an individual can only have one or two anchors throughout their life time. In contrast the boundaryless career model leaves room for contextual and individual changes of opinions and career drivers.

Criticisms of the career anchor model include that it does not apply to minority groups or women as the original model was tested on 44 male MBA students. The applicability of this model to the working population has not been fully ascertained. Therefore the career anchor model can be used in the current research as it highlights the importance of motivation as a precursor to the development of protean career competencies. Thus the career anchor theory although useful, was not fully highlighted in the findings of the current research. Another contemporary career theory which will be discussed will be the portfolio career theory.

The portfolio career as described by Handy (1994) is the exchange of full time employment for independent working, where an individual contracts (wage work or fee work), home work (tele-working), gift work (working for free) and study work. Portfolio workers can be characterised by self employment, contracting work and charging fees for outputs and services (Gold and Fraser 2002). The current research findings did not focus on the portfolio

career. Issues of self employment or contracting were not explicitly found in either the quantitative or qualitative aspects of the research. A small amount was found in the qualitative interviews with some participants highlighting that they would like to be self employed, however many participants cited both career barriers such as lack of information about starting a entrepreneurial endeavour; and career boundaries such as lack of capital or contacts to start a business. Another contemporary career theory which was discussed in the introductory chapter was the kaleidoscope career theory.

The Kaleidoscope career describes how individuals can change career patterns by the rotation of various aspects of their lives in order to arrange their relationships and roles in new ways. The three categories are: “authenticity”, where an individual’s values are aligned with the organisations’ values and organisational culture; “balance”, which concerns the level at which a person can achieve a work–life balance; and lastly “challenge”, which is concerned with an individual’s need for stimulation in work, which may advance careers. The findings of the current research study can be linked to the authenticity aspect of kaleidoscope career as this aspect is related to the values driven aspect of Briscoe *et al*’s (2006) protean scale.

The values driven scale highlights the difference in career ownership and motivation for maintaining a career. The values driven scale attempts to identify and establish that an individual will use their own values to drive their career development as opposed to an organisations values. The acceptance of organisational values over an individual’s own values can be viewed as a central aspect of the traditional, bureaucratic career as described by Kanter (1989). This can be linked to the authenticity aspect of the kaleidoscope career as it describes and represents the extent to which individual values are aligned with the organisations culture. The sample's score on the values driven scale was on average scored 3.8 out of 5, showing that most participants identified with their own values as opposed to the organisational values. Therefore, the kaleidoscope career theory in part can be related to the current research findings as the authenticity factor is related to the values driven scale developed by Briscoe *et al* (2006). However, the remainder of the kaleidoscope career theory was not explicitly highlighted in the current research investigation. The next theory which was discussed in the chapter two are the developmental stage theories.

Developmental stage theories can be linked to the current research due to the finding that participants aged 51–60 had the highest level of self directedness; suggesting that individuals

nearest to retirement age identified with protean characteristics of being more in charge of their career development than the organisations that they worked with. Also participants aged 41–50 had the highest level of boundarylessness, in the sample. This is contrary to developmental stage theories such as Super's (1957) who suggested that during maturity an individual will be in the maintenance phase of their career, where the individual is more concerned with holding on to the skills and the position they have within an organisation and aligning their values to the organisation, as opposed to having a significant level of career ownership. Therefore the current research findings can be aligned to both protean and boundaryless career competencies as the sample did identify with both components of the boundaryless career theory. The findings did not identify fully with developmental stage theories and were not fully related to kaleidoscope, portfolio or post corporate career theories.

8.7 Chapter Summary

The main research questions were 1) To what extent are black African and black Caribbean knowledge intensive workers' careers boundaryless and protean? 2) What are the experiences and nature of the career boundaries and barriers that black Africans and black Caribbeans face?

The current chapter has discussed the findings of the research in comparison to other research that has been conducted on boundaryless career theory. Research question one the extent to which the sample are boundaryless and protean can be answered. From the quantitative questionnaire phase of the research, we can observe that the sample do not entirely identify with boundaryless and protean career competencies. For boundaryless career competencies, the participants seemed more comfortable cross collaborating with colleagues on projects and had a high level of boundarylessness, but were not as comfortable being organisationally mobile or moving from organisation to organisation. Similarly, for protean career competencies, participants were very self-directed in their career development and planned training opportunities themselves, however they shared organisational values as opposed to having their own individual values. This shows that the sample were not fully protean and boundaryless in their career expression, which contrasts to the founding theories of boundaryless careers (Arthur and Rousseau 1996).

Also addressing research question one highlighted the relationships between demographics such as ethnicity, gender, age, education and professional groups and boundaryless career

competencies. The quantitative results identified that management consultants had higher levels of boundarylessness and self directedness than any other knowledge intensive professional group within the sample. Additionally, level of education was correlated with higher levels of boundarylessness, and individuals who attended higher ranked universities in the UK also had higher levels of boundarylessness. These findings are supported by previous research by Segers (2008), who also found that different professions had differing levels of boundarylessness. Additionally, a counter intuitive finding was found when examining age groups: the 41–50-year-olds had the highest level of boundarylessness in the sample and the 51–60-year-olds had the highest level of self directedness. This finding is in contrast to other research studies, which have often found that younger participants have a higher level of protean and boundaryless career enactment (Segers 2008). The two ethnic groups had no significant differences, and there were also no significant differences in male and female identification with boundaryless and protean career competencies. The two ethnic groups had no significant differences, and there were also no significant differences in male and female identification with boundaryless and protean career competencies. This shows that there is a relationship between certain demographics and protean and boundaryless career competencies.

Research question two, what are the nature and experiences of the career boundaries and career barriers faced by black knowledge intensive workers was also answered. Career boundaries were expressed as flexible, and either internal or external. Racial discrimination was highlighted by most as a permeable external boundary, which the majority of participants highlighted as not having an impact on their career development. Additionally, the sample in occupations such as IT, human resources and finance did not highlight difficulties with getting into or maintaining these professions. This was in contrast to the law profession, which individuals highlighted as particularly difficult to gain employment within. Also the lack of career networks, including mentors, was perceived as a hindrance to career development that the sample could potentially overcome. The internal career boundaries that were perceived included a lack of motivation, which could be overcome.

Therefore three research questions have been answered and it is suggested that the sample did not fully identify with protean and boundaryless career competencies. There are links with demographic characteristics such as age and professional group and boundaryless and protean career competencies. Lastly, there are differences between career boundaries and career

barriers. Career barriers are more rigid and inflexible and career boundaries have been identified as flexible and permeable.

A review of research conducted by Kenny and Briner (2007) highlighted that there is a plethora of research that has investigated the selection phase with ethnic minority candidates and the barriers identified in that phase. This research has added to boundaryless career theory because it has investigated the antecedents to career decision making and how important career competencies such as “knowing whom” can be to the development of careers. Additionally, extended family (and not just immediate family) was found to have had a significant aspect on the career decision making of the sample. In terms of experiences of career, the sample highlighted that they were self-directed, but would prefer to have career mentors to enable them to navigate their careers with more ease.

Therefore the current research findings have added to the data on boundaryless career theory and have made the theory relevant to an increasingly diverse workforce. Sullivan *et al.* (1998), Sullivan and Baruch (2009) highlighted that boundaryless career theory needs to be more inclusive, and the current research contributed to that. The next section will therefore discuss the theoretical contributions and limitations of the research.

9 Conclusion

This chapter will discuss the theoretical implications of the current research, focussing on the applicability of boundaryless and protean careers to the current sample and where the future for contemporary career theories lies in expressing the realities of modern, knowledge intensive black workers in the UK.

9.1 Theoretical Contributions

The theoretical contributions from the current research aim to increase the knowledge of boundaryless career theory and extend this theory to black knowledge intensive workers in the UK. The finding that, despite a strong preference for internal psychological boundarylessness or working with individuals across organisations in this sample, organisational mobility was not as widely preferred indicated that the boundaryless career theory was not identified with fully within the current sample. This adds to the view that there has not been an absolute paradigm shift in career expression amongst workers to a more seamless flexible career (Sullivan *et al.* 1998, Sullivan and Baruch 2009; Inkson *et al.* 2012).

At its core, the boundaryless career theory is the idea that individuals are un-bounded by one particular organisation and highlights that an individual can develop their career without organisational constraints or hindrances (Inkson 2006). The findings from the current research do not fully support the boundaryless career concept. The participants in the current study share characteristics similar to those described in Sullivan and Arthur's (2005) research. Quadrant three in their theoretical paper highlights individuals who have low physiological mobility but high psychological mobility. These individuals are able to craft and change the perception of their jobs to offer them more variety and greater psychological freedom while remaining within an organisational setting (Greenhaus 2004). This characteristic is shared with the current sample, who seem to have crafted their jobs within the boundaries of organisations while demonstrating a psychologically boundaryless mind-set and being comfortable with collaborating with individuals within other organisations.

The extant research on the boundaryless career is conflicted: some research holds the boundaryless career as an absolute paradigm shift in careers (Arthur and Rousseau 1996;

Sullivan and Arthur 2005); however, this paradigm shift has not been accepted by all career researchers (Sullivan 1998, Sullivan and Baruch 2009; Inkson *et al.* 2012). This suggests that contrary to some literature (Arthur and Rousseau 1996) careers are not entirely boundaryless or protean (Sullivan *et al.* 1998, 2009; Inkson *et al.* 2012). Additionally, Sullivan *et al.* (1998, Sullivan and Baruch 2009) state that there has been an exaggeration in the literature concerning the term “boundaryless career”, and that there has been a lack of empirical evidence to support this apparent paradigm shift of careers. The current research findings support the view that careers have not entirely become boundary free, and add to the empirical evidence of the spread of boundarylessness careers in the UK.

In general the sample seemed self-directed and had more ownership of their careers, scoring highly on the self directedness scale. This level of self-directedness appears to be an indicative feature of workers in the knowledge economy, who work in fast paced environments, possess a high level of flexibility, and respond rapidly to clients’ demands (Alvesson 2001). Contrastingly, the participants in the investigation’s sample scored lower on the values driven scale; which measures the extent to which individuals use their own values versus those of the organisation to navigate their careers. This difference could be due to a general feeling of insecurity during the difficult economic climate, prompting greater identification with values of the organisation in a bid to increase job security. Therefore, a contribution of this research has been to determine that black knowledge intensive workers on the whole seem to be psychologically boundaryless in their career exploration rather than comfortable with physical movements as the extant boundaryless literature has emphasised (Arthur and Rousseau 1996).

This research investigation did not concur with the reported link between young individuals and boundarylessness (Segers *et al.* 2008). The view that the concept of boundarylessness is reserved for younger individuals, who have more freedom in their career enactment with higher levels of education, has not been identified within this research investigation. Older participants scored more highly than younger participants regarding boundarylessness and self directedness. This was a counter intuitive finding and a possible result of those workers in the latter stages of their careers being more familiar with cross collaborating on projects, more comfortable with being self-directed in their career development and more adventurous as a result. Additionally, the boundaryless career theory could also be identified as an elitist concept reserved for those with a particular level of education and experience (Segers *et al.*,

2008). This assumption can be developed by building on the work of Sullivan and Arthur (2005) who highlighted that higher levels of psychological boundarylessness are linked to individuals who have higher educational qualifications.

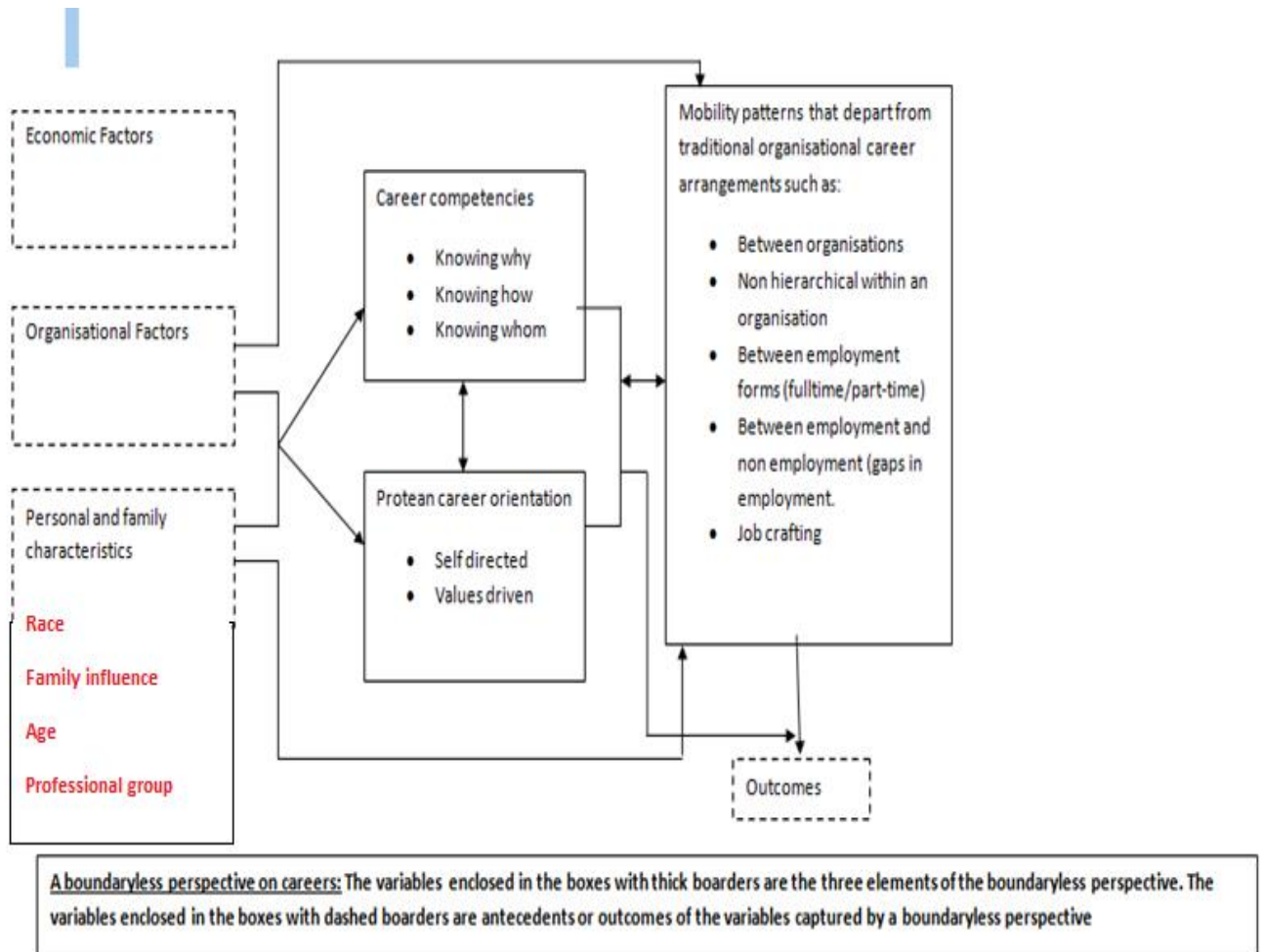


Figure 9.1: Adapted Boundaryless Career Theory Diagram

Figure 9.1 above shows the contribution to the boundaryless career theory that the current research has added. The red text highlights how personal and family characteristics including: race, familial influence, age and professional group have a significant effect on the expression and the level of boundaryless. This information was gleaned from the current research, which found a significant effect of age and professional group from the quantitative phase, and race and family influence from the qualitative phase. This indicates that boundaryless career theory needs to be adapted to fit the ever changing world of work in a diverse setting. In doing this, boundaryless career theories will be applicable to more diverse groups and include more aspects of individuals' lives and how the boundaryless career impacts the development of individuals' careers.

9.2 Attached Boundarylessness

To explain the extent to which this sample identified with both protean and boundaryless careers, the term “attached boundarylessness” will be used to define the current sample’s relationship with boundaryless and protean career competences. Attached boundarylessness identifies those who are psychologically boundaryless, but prefer the security of working in an organisation. Attached boundarylessness also highlights individuals who are self-directed in their careers, but prefer to identify with the values of an organisation. This attachment to the organisation may be due to a variety of reasons, for example the economic climate and those who remain linked to an organisation due to organisational security. Due to the current UK and worldwide economic crisis and the well reported damaged labour market, job security has been seriously affected. This reduction in job security may have hampered the current sample from embracing the boundaryless career in its entirety and thus the finding that participants are more attached to organisations and less willing to be organisationally mobile is not surprising.

Work by Gunz *et al.* (2000) found that in order for career boundaries to be more permeable, career actors must be aware that a career role change actually exists and is possible. Secondly, the career actor should be able to assess the achievability of making career transitions or have a high level of knowing how, as stated by intelligent career competencies (Arthur *et al.* 1996). Lastly, the work role transition has to be attractive to the career actor. These determinants of boundary permeability are applicable to the current sample for example determinant one is linked to “knowing whom” of the intelligent career as participants need to have researched careers in order to increase their knowledge and possible movement towards that career. The current sample highlighted that they would have benefitted from enhanced career networks and career mentors in order to develop their career development. The second aspect of boundary permeability is linked to career self efficacy or the career actor becoming aware and increasing the confidence that they have in achieving that career, as was observed in the current sample. This aspect of boundary permeability links to the psychological boundarylessness observed in the current sample. The last tenet of boundary permeability, the attractiveness of work role transition, is the attractiveness of the potential movement to the career actor.

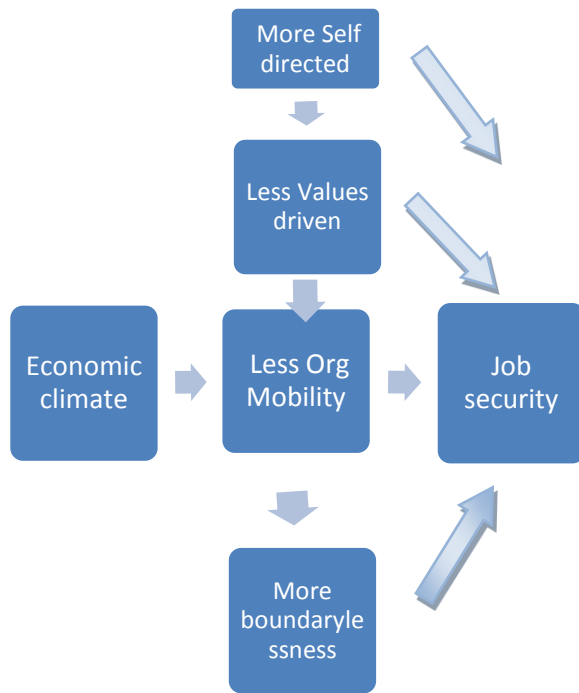


Figure 9.2: Attached Boundarylessness

Attached boundarylessness therefore is the phenomenon that was displayed within this sample. Its characteristics, which are observed in figure 9.2 include: being more psychologically boundaryless, collaborating with project teams within and across organisations but staying within the confines of one organisation. Additionally, attached boundarylessness includes the protean career outlook, which involves a high level of self-directed career ownership, or individuals having an active role in shaping their career development, yet aligning themselves with the organisation's values in an attempt to maintain job security. This is therefore contrary to the view of the boundaryless career developed by Arthur and Rousseau (1996), which includes free boundary crossing as and when the career actor sees fit to move between organisational boundaries. The term attached boundarylessness is a more realistic description for the current research and highlights the extent of boundarylessness in the sample as it includes taking into account the context, or the economic climate, as a reason why the sample may have not preferred organisational mobility and were not absolutely values driven.

9.3 Addressing the Criticisms of Boundaryless Career Research

Widening the Scope of Boundaryless Research

The current research investigation has firstly focussed on a large range of knowledge intensive organisations and professions such as: management consultants, IT consultants, human resources workers, marketers, lawyers, accountants and financial services workers, across a spectrum of organisations throughout the UK. The inclusion of a variety of industries and organisations has addressed the criticism made by Pringle and Mallon (2003), who called for research to focus on a variety of organisations and occupational groups to test the accuracy of the boundaryless career theory. The current research has successfully addressed this criticism by researching boundarylessness in a variety of different occupational groups, in order to test the applicability of the metaphor and to test the theories validity.

Humphries and Gatenby (1996) state that career theories have developed to portray minority groups as “the other” who have alternative career patterns. By focussing on two specific ethnic groups, the current research has attempted to take minority groups out of the guise of “the other” with different career paths and has shown that the career patterns of black Caribbeans and black Africans in the UK are not alternative in their career expression. By focussing on two minority ethnic groups and their expression of boundarylessness, this research investigation has attempted to highlight how the groups’ career expressions are not so radically different from the majority group expression of boundarylessness. The current levels boundaryless and protean career enactment as measured by Briscoe *et al’s* (2006) revealed levels of boundarylessness and proteanness in similar levels to Volmer and Spurk (2011), Briscoe *et al* (2006), De Vos and Soens (2008) and McArdle *et al* (2007). This shows that Black Caribbean’s and Black African knowledge intensive workers extent of boundaryless careers are similar to that of majority populations.

Research area	Existing research	Contribution
Clarification of the terms career boundary and career barrier	Gunz <i>et al.</i> (2000)	The current research clarified the terms: career boundary “flexible, permeable”; career barrier “rigid, impermeable”.
Boundaryless career has been exaggerated	Sullivan <i>et al.</i> (1998, 1999, 2009) Inkson <i>et al.</i> (2012)	The current sample did not identify with the theory fully, supporting the view that the theory has been somewhat exaggerated
Boundaryless career research	Pringle and Mallon (2003)- doesn't focus on a variety of organisations Kenny and Briner (2007), Sullivan and Baruch. (2009) - Research doesn't focus on minorities	Researched in a wide variety of organisations. Research focused on specific ethnic groups.
Boundaryless career methods	Inkson <i>et al.</i> (2012) Not enough empirical evidence	Used mixed methods to investigate the extent of boundarylessness and nature of career barriers and boundaries faced.

Table 9.1: Contributions to Theory

Addressing Boundary Permeability- a criticism of Boundaryless Career Theory

The theory the current research has specifically investigated was the boundaryless career theory. One of the criticisms of the boundaryless career theory is the need for boundary permeability to be addressed in relation to specific minority groups in order to understand the unique boundaries that may be faced by specific racial groups (Sullivan *et al.*, 1998, Sullivan and Baruch 2009) highlighted a Pringle and Mallon (2003) argue that boundaryless career theory is limited by its lack of attention to a diverse range of groups. The research also calls for more investigation into the internal, psychological aspect of boundaryless careers; this will enlighten and enrich the extant research on boundarylessness. In particular, the current research highlighted concepts such as career barriers that included unrealistic career aspirations and race to a certain extent.

Contrastingly, career boundaries are concepts which were perceived as more permeable and flexible than career barriers, and included external factors such as race and lack of career networks, and more internal motivational barriers such as lack of motivation. What can be observed from the current research is that race has been perceived as a career barrier, with some highlighting race as a hindrance in their careers and identifying it as a potential glass

ceiling to their career progression. However, in general, the majority of respondents in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research did not identify race as a rigid barrier and stated that the concept would not have a negative effect on their career progression, viewing race as more of a permeable external boundary. This shows that the boundaries and barriers in careers are distinctive, different and prevalent within this research investigation, and when referring to race, it has been simultaneously highlighted as a career barrier and a career boundary.

The current research has addressed the idea of boundary permeability, which has been described correctly in the criticisms of career research by Gunz *et al.* (2000), who stated that careers themselves have not become more boundaryless, but boundaries have become more complex. Sullivan *et al.* (1998) have also criticised the boundaryless career lexicon as being over emphasised and exaggerated as a career alternative for some populations. The current research investigation addresses the question of boundary permeability and highlights how race and lack of career knowledge and career networks were perceived as permeable boundaries to careers, whereas some career aspirations and race to a certain extent were considered to be impermeable, rigid barriers for the sample. Therefore this research has highlighted a difference in permeability of career boundaries based on an individual's perception of their careers.

Figures 9.2a and 9.2b depict how this research has aided the boundaryless career theory research. Firstly the clarification in the terms "career boundary" and "career barrier" can be observed in the images below. Career barriers have been highlighted as rigid, external and internal to an individual and impermeable. In contrast a career boundary is conceptualised as a free flowing, flexible and dynamic way of describing career obstacles.



Figure 9.3a: Career barriers, adapted from Gunz *et al.* (2000) and current research, text in black highlights current research findings

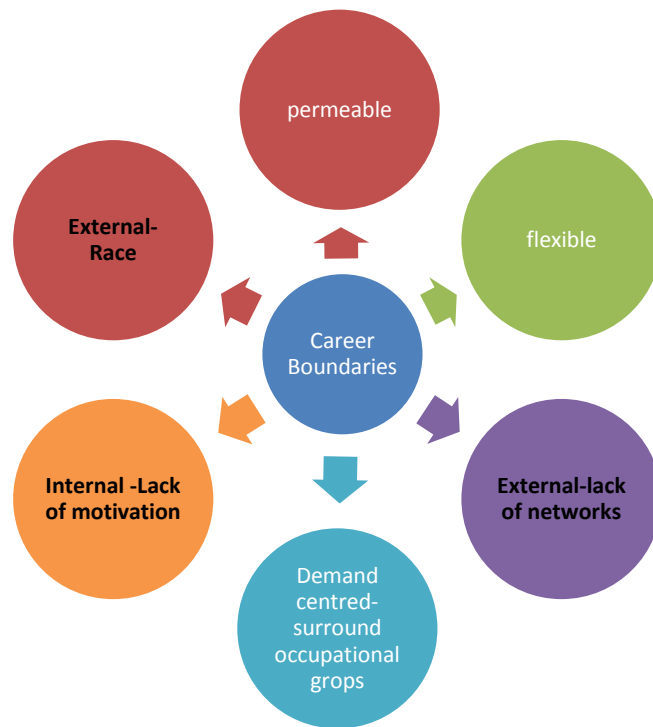


Figure 9.3b: Career boundaries adapted from Gunz *et al.* (2000) and current research, text in black highlights current research findings

Figures 9.2a and 9.2b depict the differences between career boundaries and career barriers, something that career researchers have been called on to clarify (Gunz *et al.* 2000). Image

9.2a shows that career barriers are full of impermeable, rigid and inflexible hindrances to an individual's career development. Additionally, the findings from the current research suggest that barriers in the shape of unrealistic career aspirations, external perceptions of race and some facing unsupportive immediate family members limited their career development. These barriers were external and internal having rigid and immovable characteristics.

The current research does highlight that in the experience of some of the sample's careers, more flexible, less rigid career boundaries occur. Career boundaries that were highlighted include internal boundaries such as lack of internal motivation, and external boundaries such as lack of career networks and career mentors and the concept of race. This shows the extent of the boundaries and boundary permeability that has been observed in this research. The research addressing the permeability of career boundaries is minimal and does not offer many explanations of how to overcome such career hindrances. The current research highlights the characteristics of career boundaries as being more permeable, flexible, dynamic and evolutionary. This concept enables individuals to think of solutions to overcome and perceive hindrances differently in order to increase career satisfaction and career success.

Therefore, in order to investigate if black knowledge intensive workers are different from the mainstream in their career outlook; the current research used a quantitative phase to investigate the nature of physical mobility faced by black Caribbean and black African workers in the UK, and a qualitative stage to investigate the nature of their careers, the nature of the boundaries that may have been faced (including boundary permeability) and techniques that they have used to overcome such boundaries. Arthur *et al.* (1996) highlighted techniques to overcome such boundaries for boundary crossing, (knowing why), looking outside the organisation for identity, career marketability and skills based information (knowing how), and establishing networks of influence (knowing whom), are all techniques to overcome career boundaries. Additionally, a psychological aspect of boundarylessness such as identifying with the profession as opposed to the organisation has also been highlighted.

The current research has addressed the research gap outlined in Sullivan and Baruch's (2009) (see Table 9.1) research, who called for research into the boundaryless careers of minorities in majority populations. As highlighted in the previous sections, many career barrier investigations have been conducted in the USA with minority groups. This shows that there is prevalence within career literature of investigating majority populations only, which gives an

unbalanced view of the development of careers in this increasingly diverse and globalised world. The current research has added to contemporary career theory literature by adding data to the concept based on minority groups.

Clarification of Career Barriers and Career Boundaries- a criticism of Boundaryless Career Theory

Another theoretical contribution will be the clarification of the terms career “boundary” and career “barrier”. Boundaryless career theory has been often criticised that those terms have been used both synonymously and interchangeably (Sullivan *et al.* 1998, Sullivan and Baruch 2009; Inkson *et al.* 2012). Career barriers have been highlighted as impermeable, rigid mechanisms that an individual finds it difficult to navigate through; contrastingly career boundaries have been perceived as more flexible and permeable (Gunz *et al.* 2000). The clarification of these terms will enable researchers to conduct more research using these concepts to regulate the spread of these career theories and utilise their efficacy.

Additionally, the concept of a career barrier has been useful in career literature as a concept that has allowed career researchers to become aware of the hindrances that some groups may face (Crites 1969). Current criticisms of the concept of career barriers are that how individuals move around these boundaries in order to achieve career success is not adequately addressed. Instead the concept of a career barrier explains why individuals may find it difficult to navigate careers, but does not provide solutions as to how they can improve their careers. Contrastingly career boundaries offer a more flexible concept that explains how individuals navigate through their careers. Using both concepts allows career researchers to understand the conceptual differences that may affect career decisions and career maintenance.

Contributions to Policy and Practice

Policy/ practice area	Contribution
Investors in People/ Diversity policy	Give tailored career advice to different minority groups. Research has added knowledge to the post selection phase of black workers career development which was reported as lacking (Atewologun and Singh 2010 , Kenny and Briner 2007)
Enhance career counselling in the work place (Watts 1996)	To be aware of the development of career boundaries and career barriers and ways in which these can be minimised. These can be minimised by using the intelligent career competencies (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). This can be highlighted in those who want to work abroad, also in older workers
Increase career guidance in primary and secondary education	Qualitative interviews showed that career guidance in schools was not useful. In order to make individuals aware of possible career choices and remove potential career barriers, money should be invested in order to retrain and enhance this.

Table 9.2- contributions to policy and practice

The current section will highlight the contributions to government policy and human resources practice that the current research can contribute to. Employment policies such as Investors in People (2008) and diversity agendas should include careful examination of separate ethnic groups’ specific career boundaries and barriers in order to enhance career development and career advancement within that organisation. Having tailored career advice would enable each individual to feel an integrated part of the organisation. Atewologun and Singh (2010) and Kenny and Briner (2007), state that currently not much is known about the post selection phase of ethnic minorities’ career experiences. The current research fills this research gap as it provides examples of minorities’ experiences of work whilst they are established in the job and highlights their experiences of career boundaries and barriers.

Policy makers should also be aware of the potential triggers to the development of career boundaries or career barriers that black knowledge intensive workers may face. This will enable policy makers to develop ways to minimize the formation of career hindrances and find ways to develop the careers of all staff. This can be achieved by utilizing tools such as minority career networks and career mentors in developing and enhancing levels of career decision making self efficacy in order to make career boundaries more permeable. This can be an essential factor in the development of internal, subjective careers.

Human resources professionals should also be aware of contemporary career theories, such as the boundaryless career theory in order for them to encourage employees to develop competencies needed to have successful careers in a modern climate. Giving advice about the skills and competencies needed to succeed in knowledge based industries will allow black knowledge intensive workers to enhance their human capital and their careers. The current research also found that the lack of career mentors and career networks were perceived as external career boundaries.

Also human resource workers can incorporate boundaryless career knowledge to expatriate workers. The increase in expatriates has been linked to the boundaryless career theory. In research by Cao *et al* (2013) participants were found to have a significant level of protean career, which shows the link between boundaryless career theories and expatriates. Therefore Human resource workers can explore the boundaryless career theory which includes intelligent and protean concepts in order to prepare and highlight those who are more inclined to pursue expatriate careers.

Another factor from the research that could influence policy makers and career practitioners could be to increase career guidance within secondary and tertiary education establishments in order to allow black students to be aware of the breadth and depth of careers available to them. This is linked to the research finding in the current study that a lack of career guidance in schools was perceived as a career barrier as it did not enable the participants to make informed decisions about their career choices. Career counseling can remove career barriers and maybe able to them to be perceived as permeable career boundaries, or remove boundaries and barriers all together. Lent *et al's* (1994) socio-cognitive theory of career states that career role models, outcome expectations and career self efficacy can mediate the development of career barriers. The importance of clear and motivational career guidance can

improve career self efficacy levels. In a paper by Watts (1996), it is stated that career counseling should be able to encourage, emphasise and explore the notion of careers that incorporate lateral, horizontal and vertical movements.

Human resources workers can also act to attempt to remove some of the boundaries concerned with the 'knowing whom' aspect of intelligent career competencies, having formal career mentoring programs and formal networks within organizations will significantly enhance the development of social capital within organizations (Arthur and Rousseau 1996).

Additionally, human resources practitioners should focus on the boundaryless career competencies of older workers, as a finding from the current research showed that individuals aged between 40–60 possessed higher levels of boundaryless career competencies and self directed career competencies. They felt more comfortable being in charge of their own careers and collaborating with others on projects and team work. Human resources departments should be available to nurture the career competencies and develop the skills of older workers. Therefore the current research has been able to enhance the boundaryless career theory by showing that not all participants follow boundaryless career paths in their entirety. Policy makers should be aware of older workers and develop their skills, whilst developing more career mentoring programs and better career guidance in schools.

Therefore the current research should be used to develop the careers of minority workers, more specifically black workers. This should be achieved by increasing diversity policies to include tailored career advice to minorities, including advice on intelligent career advice and giving tailored and specific advice to older workers to develop the careers of the black workers in the UK.

9.4 Research Limitations

As with any research investigation, limitations do occur, this section will discuss the limitations of the current research. The first limitation to the current research investigation emerged from using the opportunity sampling method in the qualitative research phase. Opportunity sampling occurs when interviews are conducted with available groups and a small effort is made to engage in systematic sampling. This method is common when researching smaller groups or difficult to access groups. This is a problem when trying to generalise findings to a wider population and is found in the majority of social science

research studies (Silke 2001). Due to the exploratory nature of the qualitative phase coupled with a hard to access sample, opportunity sampling is a perhaps inevitable aspect of social sciences research. To address this limitation, the research design could have attempted to use a more random sampling method. However, to mitigate this limitation, quantitative questionnaires were used in order to have findings that are more likely to be generalizable.

Additionally, access to knowledge intensive organisations or virtual groups also may have been hindered due to data protection rules, this may be an issue in the potential completion rate of online questionnaires. Additionally an issue with questionnaire surveys is self selection bias (Thompson *et al.* 2003). Self selection bias suggests that there are some individuals in any population who would be more willing and likely than others to complete online surveys. Therefore, the probability of certain individuals to respond to online questionnaires, may lead to a systematic sampling bias (Wright 2005). Although these limitations with quantitative research methods have been highlighted, the ease of use and being able to access such small minority populations are large benefits of using such research methods. Additionally, the use of mixed methods should offset some of the limitations of both research paradigms.

Researchers have found evidence to suggest that researchers' attitudes can also influence the outcome of interview research (Rosenthal 1976). This could manifest itself in subconscious messages being expressed to the interviewees whilst they give the expected or required answers. To counter this effect, if the researcher makes the participants aware of their ethical rights with regards to the research investigation, for example their right to withdraw, this may minimise any subconscious messages given by the researchers. For example, before each interview, the standardised instructions were explained, which included the right to withdraw, informed consent and confidentiality. This was repeated at the end in the debriefing session, thus ethical issues were controlled. Therefore, limitations exist in the form of experimenter effects of qualitative interviews, self selection bias of the quantitative questionnaire phase and using opportunity sampling. These limitations are common in social science research investigations and the current sample has used a mixed method design in order to deal with the limitations of both quantitative and qualitative research phases.

9.5 Research Implications

This research investigation has many implications for human resources practitioners and knowledge intensive organizations that may be keen to enhance their career counselling, learning and development, and diversity agenda. Firstly, research that focuses on minority populations' career development is lacking in existing research. In a research review by Kenny and Briner (2007), it is suggested that there is a distinct lack of research into the careers of minority groups in a UK context this claim is also echoed by Sullivan and Baruch (2009). Diversity career management has become an important tenet of contemporary careers within organizations. Due to a global workforce, being seen as having a fair and inclusive career development process will aid organizational wellbeing and productivity.

The second implication for this research investigation is to add to existing boundaryless career research. It has been reported that career research has focused quite heavily on North American research. Ethnocentric research that focuses on one majority group within Western settings has been criticized by many researchers. Scholars should research individual and organizational factors that may impinge upon career journeys of a diverse work force (Kenny and Briner 2007). Ituma and Simpson (2007) stated that more specific, research needs to be conducted on intra-cultural groups, such as specific minority groups within countries. This research has fulfilled this call for research, investigating two specific ethnic groups and careers in a unique research context.

The third implication of this research investigation is that as many studies of boundaryless careers have mainly focused on quantitative research methods, more specifically on the inter organizational career movements of workers; the current research has attempted to rectify this by using a mixed method research design. There have been calls for research to look at the psychological aspects of career boundaries (Sullivan 1999, Sullivan and Baruch 2009). To do this, both quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews were used to gain a holistic view of the career experiences. Although questionnaire methods in research have the benefit of being easy to administer, relatively cheap and prescriptive, researchers have highlighted some failings of the positivist, reductionist research method (Griffiths 1999). The problems highlighted with positivist research methods include an overemphasis on generalizability and ignoring nuances that may be important to the research question in hand. This was counterbalanced by the qualitative research, which added context of the unique career

journeys faced by the sample in a way an empirical investigation would have not been able to. This has added to the career literature, making it more representative of the sample.

A fourth implication of the research would be to clarify the terms boundaryless and the distinction between a career boundary and a career barrier. Within the literature, such as Gunz *et al.* (2000) and Sullivan (2007), it is highlighted that both terms are frequently used interchangeably but lack the necessary clarification. This research aimed to clarify the terms in order to aid other research into boundaryless careers and career barriers. It was highlighted that career barriers are more impermeable and rigid blocks to black African and black Caribbean knowledge intensive workers' career development and expression of career. Boundaries on the other hand were highlighted within the literature as being more permeable, less rigid and in general more flexible, highlighted as things that "separate and surround things" (Gunz 2000). Therefore, this research has enhanced boundaryless career literature by focussing on two specific ethnic groups, using mixed methods to enhance career theory and clarifying the terms career boundary and career barrier. This is useful for other career research that may be focused on the boundaryless career concept.

9.6 Suggestions for Further Research

Suggestions for further research arising from this research thesis will be discussed below. The first recommendation would be to simply replicate this study in the same occupational group to investigate whether similar research findings will arise. Additional measures should also be included, such as familial status, e.g. married or single and number of dependents; research has highlighted that this may affect the expression of boundarylessness in the sample (Segers 2008). Additionally research should also be conducted comparing one minority group with other minority groups, such as Asian knowledge intensive workers, and with white majority group workers. This is so a comparison can be made between groups to observe if levels of boundarylessness significantly differ from group to group. This will add to boundaryless career research and other researchers' calls for intra cultural research in career research (Ituma and Simpson 2007).

Also research can be conducted in other countries to add to the boundaryless career portfolio of research and to add to the work by Ituma and Simpson (2007) in African emerging markets such as South Africa, Ghana and Kenya. This will add to boundaryless career theory being more robust, flexible and relevant to the globalised and changing working environment. Also

in terms of the methodology, an attempt should be made to address the long term effects of this career type on the individual, therefore longitudinal studies should be conducted to enhance boundaryless career theory. This would make boundaryless career theory more robust, dynamic and established as a career theory as it would be able to show links to other concepts and lifestyles. Additionally, possibly using life history methodology or interpretive phenomenological analysis to analyse qualitative interview data will enhance the theory to achieve greater depth to the research investigation on boundaryless careers. By using qualitative research paradigms, more depth can be given to the concept of boundaryless career.

To conclude, further research investigations should replicate the research in this investigation, concentrate on longitudinal studies and ensure that the differences between boundaries and barriers are respected and highlighted. Additionally, research should also in the future compare minority and majority groups' expression of their careers and boundaryless career theory, and also be conducted in emerging markets such as Brazil, Ghana and South Africa.

9.7 Personal Reflections

The process of research and pursuing doctoral research has been a highly beneficial yet challenging one for me. Having to be extremely self motivated and organised has been difficult at times. The skills I have refined have been advanced presentation and writing skills, clarity of expression, and a renewed knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research analysis. Problems in accessing gatekeepers effected the swift collection of data for both the interview and questionnaire stages; perhaps using my networks more would have enabled me to access a wider group of research participants. Despite this, I was happy with the total amount of research responses I received and it allowed me to draw interesting conclusions.

Some positive aspects of the research were that it enabled me to communicate with very interesting individuals about the development of their careers. I was privileged to hear the accounts of those who were kind enough to respond the research request. The whole process has increased my self confidence and self esteem.

9.8 Conclusion

Thus this research aimed to add to the rich amount of career theory and to place contemporary career theory into the managing diversity agenda. With an increasingly diverse and global economy, being aware of different contemporary career paths is becoming ever more important. This research fills calls for research that looks at highly skilled minority groups from non European ethnicities (Ituma and Simpson 2007). This research provides an insight into the nature of professional service workers in the UK.

Also this research provides additional information to the boundaryless career theory, that in this economic climate, the idea of a significant career, totally unbounded by any constraints, rules or norms may be over exaggerated or totally unrealistic a view shared by Sullivan et al, (1998), Sullivan and Arthur (2009). The current research shows that in the sample, total boundarylessness or protean career expression was not expressed in its entirety, and that the concept or metaphor, although useful and revolutionary, it is not entirely adaptable to the current context.

The terms career barrier and career boundary also needed to be clearly differentiated, in a call by Gunz *et al.* (2000) it was stated that the terms are often used interchangeably within the research, which has led to confusion of the terms. Within the current research, a clarification of the terms has been reached to an extent; with career barriers being described as rigid, impermeable structures, whereas career boundaries are seen as more flexible, free and malleable structures that people can navigate through with relative ease. Human resource professionals within professional service organisations need to be able to help their staff navigate through the ever changing organisational climate with adaptable skills, and projects that allow them to work with different teams, and increasing the knowledge and support of their staff in the management of their careers.

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Appendix A- Confidentiality form

Brunel Business School Research Ethics Confidentiality Form

This is to confirm that the research project “*Is boundaryless career applicable to all? A career investigation of Black Caribbean and African Professional service workers*”. This research is being undertaken by Grace Mansah-Owusu, 0401713 in part fulfilment of the degree of PhD Management Studies will be viewed for assessment purposes only, by the Brunel Business School from October 2009 until October 2012.

Appendix B- Interview participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet

1. **Title of Research:** Is boundaryless career applicable to all? An investigation of black Caribbean and African knowledge intensive workers.
2. **Researcher:** Student Grace Mansah-Owusu on PhD Management Studies, Brunel Business School, Brunel University.
3. **Contact Email:** grace.mansah-owusu@brunel.ac.uk
4. **Purpose of the research:** The purpose of the research is to investigate how your career has shaped in your life time, any difficulties that you have faced and how you have overcome them. This will inform current research as it will allow human resources departments to target specific ethnic groups and find solutions to difficulties in upward career progression.
5. **What is involved:** Those involved will be asked to talk about their career experiences to date, and talk about any issues or boundaries that may have arisen that may have hindered career progression. These will be informal, interviews which will be recorded and transcribed. All data will be anonymised and company organisation details will not be used to protect participants. The second phase of the investigation will be to complete a questionnaire about careers.
6. **Voluntary nature of participation and confidentiality.** The participation in this investigation is entirely voluntary, and confidentiality will be held most carefully. The Transcriptions and video recordings will be stored in a private file which will be held in a secured way.

Appendix C- Interview Participant consent form and demographics

Participant Consent Form

Many thanks for agreeing to participate in my research project. The project has to be completed in part fulfilment of my degree programme and so your assistance is much appreciated.

Consent:

I have read the Participation Information Sheet and hereby indicate my agreement to participate in the study and for the data to be used as specified.

Name of participant or informed third party: [NAME OF PARTICIPANT]

Signature:

Date:

Interview participant demographic information form

Age range 16-24____ 25- 35____ 36-45 _____ 46- 60 _____ 60+_____

Gender: Male_____ Female_____

Nationality_____ British born? (Yes/No)_____

Ethnicity : Black British African_____ Black British Caribbean _____

Mixed black heritage (Please specify) _____ Any other background (Please specify)

Highest education level

Secondary school___ GCSE___ A level/ NVQ/BTEC___ Undergraduate degree___

University___ Post graduate___

Appendix D– Boundaryless questionnaire

In this survey, you are invited to give your opinions on your career experiences. There are no right or wrong answers and your answers are entirely anonymous. They cannot be traced back to you, or your particular workplace. There is no obligation for you to take part, and your decision does not affect your employment in any way. People who complete this survey need to be currently employed, whether on a full-time or part-time basis in the following professional services occupations: Marketing, Recruitment, Financial Services, Accountancy, I.T, Management Consultants and Law professionals.

The questionnaire is likely to take you about 15 minutes to complete. All answers will be treated in the strictest confidence and no information from any individual questionnaire will be released to anyone. Your consent to join the study is indicated by submitting the questionnaire.

1) Gender Male Female

2) Age

18-24 25-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56-59
60+

3) What Region from the UK are you from

London, South East, North East, South West, West Midlands, East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside

4) Ethnicity

Black or Black British – Caribbean Black or Black British –African Any other
Black Background

5) Mark the professional group which best describes your Job.

Marketing Law Human Resources Accounting and Finance Information
Technology Management Consulting

6) How long have you worked in your current organisation

Less than one year 1-2 years 3-5 years 6-9 years 10-15 years 16+

7) What is your highest level of education

GSCE A-Level Undergraduate Post graduate diploma Masters degree PhD Other

8) Name of last university Studied at

Additional Questions

- 35) My race has positively impacted my career
- 36) My gender has negatively impacted my career
- 37) My extended family (uncles, aunts, cousins) have influenced my career direction.
- 38) My lack of motivation has sometimes hindered my career development